



**Media Contact:**

Katelyn Yoshimoto

312.573.5492

katelyn\_yoshimoto@jtpr.com

**THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST INVITES CHICAGOLAND CITIZENS TO PUT THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES *ON THE TABLE***

*Building and maintaining strong, safe and dynamic communities is on the menu for thousands at 99th anniversary mealtime conversations*

**CHICAGO – February 19, 2014** – In communities across the region from Alsip to Zion, thousands of Chicago-area residents will come together in small groups on Monday, May 12 to break bread and discuss how to collaboratively build and maintain strong, safe and dynamic communities. This imaginative public square, an initiative The Chicago Community Trust is calling *On the Table*, is designed to generate new ideas, inspire bold solutions, and cultivate relationships and collaborations to improve communities region-wide.

The goal is to have more than 10,000 people of all ages, from all walks of life and socio-economic circumstances, participate in 1,000 substantive mealtime conversations on May 12 to commemorate The Chicago Community Trust's 99th anniversary. Thousands more will be connected to the conversations through social media using the #OnTheTable2014 hashtag.

The topics, issues and ideas discussed during each of the *On the Table* conversations will be completely organic and driven by the interests and perspectives of the participants and the opportunities and challenges in their community that are most important to them.

To date, more than 250 hosts have signed on to participate, including corporate CEOs, elected officials, community organizations and non-profits, news media organizations, schools and faith communities from across Chicago and throughout the Collar Counties.

The project harkens back to The Chicago Community Trust's founding nearly a century ago, when Chicago banker Albert Harris hosted a similar mealtime conversation during which people who cared about the region combined their philanthropy to maximize their charitable impact. Since its founding, the Trust has awarded approximately \$1.8 billion in grant funding to more than 11,000 local nonprofit organizations – that includes more than \$170 million in 2013.

"*On the Table* is a unique and compelling way for the Trust to invite Chicago-area residents to come together for meaningful and inclusive discussions about the collective future of our communities," said Terry Mazany, president and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust. "These conversations will provide a forum to explore what it means to be part of a community in the 21st century and inform our work to improve the quality of life and prosperity of our region and its residents."



At the conclusion of the events on May 12, The Chicago Community Trust will send every participant a simple email survey, compiled by the University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, to learn more about their participation in this project, the interesting ideas they discussed and how this experience may impact their civic engagement moving forward. The Trust will publicly share these outcomes, including trends, common themes and new collaborations developed to advance some of the ideas and solutions generated.

*On the Table* is made possible through the financial support of corporate sponsors, including Allstate Insurance Company, Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, Bank of America, Comcast NBCUniversal, ComEd, Holland Capital Management LLC and PNC Bank. The project Steering Committee is being co-chaired by Leslie Bluhm, founder of Chicago Cares, and Carole Brown, managing director at Barclays, who are both also members of the Trust's governing board.

For more information or to sign up to participate as a host or a guest, Chicago-area residents can visit [www.onthetable2014.com](http://www.onthetable2014.com) or call 866-737-6951.

*For additional media resources and downloads, visit: [www.onthetable2014.com/media-room](http://www.onthetable2014.com/media-room)*

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### **About The Chicago Community Trust**

The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. The Trust, together with its donors, grants more than \$100 million annually to nonprofits working to develop new audiences to sustain the region's vibrant arts organizations, protect the human services safety net for those hardest hit by the recession, stem the devastating effects of foreclosures on our neighborhoods, elevate teaching to meet world-class standards and improve conditions for healthy and active lifestyles. By connecting the generosity of donors with the needs of the community, the Trust ensures that our region thrives today and for future generations.