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THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST'S "ON THE TABLE" RETURNS FOR THE FOURTH YEAR

Groundbreaking civic engagement platform, pioneered in Chicago, being replicated nationally

CHICAGO – March 7, 2017 – The Chicago Community Trust today announced the return of its annual region-wide civic engagement initiative [On the Table](#) on Tuesday, May 16. *On the Table*, entering its fourth year, provides a yearly forum to elevate civic conversation, foster new relationships and inspire collaborative action across the region. Tens of thousands of Chicago-area residents are expected to gather in small groups to share a meal and discuss the challenges and opportunities our communities face, often inspiring new ways we can work together to make our communities stronger, safer and more dynamic.

“At The Chicago Community Trust, we aim to put community voice at the center of everything we do. By listening with full attention to the diverse voices within our community, we set the stage for meaningful collaboration,” said Terry Mazany, president and CEO of the Trust. “For the past three years, we’ve seen the power of people coming together with their neighbors to talk, listen, learn and take action, resulting in positive change in our community through *On the Table*.”

The Trust launched its *On the Table* initiative in May 2014 to elevate the invaluable act of convening for meaningful conversation – no matter the topic, location or time of day. The premise of *On the Table* in 2017 remains the same. Anyone can sign up to host a mealtime conversation – breakfast, lunch, dinner and everything in between – at a private residence, local restaurant, place of worship, library, office, backyard or other community location. A meal can be sit-down, catered, picnic or potluck – it is entirely up to the host to decide how the meal is designed. What matters most is that each host brings together a group of people for meaningful conversation.

Hosts are encouraged to sign up starting today at www.onthetable.com. There, hosts have access to a number of materials to help guide their conversations: a toolkit with conversation prompts, guides developed for youth and families and, new this year, the Trust will also provide resources for hosts who want to lead a conversation focused on equity and social inclusion – which has been a primary topic of discussion for the past three years.

The success of *On the Table* in Chicago has inspired similar initiatives in Toronto, Canada; Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; New Bedford, Massachusetts; Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio. In 2016, the Trust – with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation – hosted an *On the Table* learning symposium attended by more than 60 individuals from 40 cities, 25 states and Canada representing community foundations, government and nonprofit organizations that were interested in learning more and potentially replicating the initiative. In fact, in 2017, 10 cities across the U.S. will host their own *On the Table* initiative with funding from the Knight Foundation. Support for *On the*

Table is one part of Knight Foundation's efforts to help cities attract and keep talented people, expand economic opportunity and create a culture of civic engagement.

To learn more or to sign up to host an *On the Table* conversation, visit www.onthetable.com or call 866-737-6951. Join the *On the Table* 2017 conversation on social media using the hashtag #OnTheTable2017.

For additional media resources and downloads, visit: <https://onthetable.com/news-releases-media-downloads>.

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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 connects the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to nonprofit organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. Since our founding in 1915, the Trust has awarded approximately \$2 billion in grant funding to more than 11,000 local nonprofit organizations – including more than \$198 million in 2015. Our region is home to people passionate about their neighborhoods. People committed to making a difference. People divided by a legacy of segregation, separated by lines of class and race and opportunity – but there is much more that unites us than divides us. As the Trust continues our next century of service, we pledge to bridge these divisions and to champion the common good, creating a place where no one is left behind.