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## CONVERSATIONS THAT LEAD TO ACTION – THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST’S “ON THE TABLE” RETURNS FOR FIFTH YEAR

*Civic engagement platform brings together residents to build connections and explore how we can work together to make our region stronger*

**CHICAGO – March 20, 2018** – The Chicago Community Trust today announced the return of its annual region-wide civic engagement initiative [On the Table](#) on Tuesday, May 8. Over the past four years, *On the Table* has provided an annual forum for tens of thousands of Chicagoans to engage in meaningful conversation, develop new relationships and inspire action to make a difference in our communities.

“Since its inception in 2014, *On the Table* has demonstrated Chicagoans’ eagerness to come together to talk about the place we call home and share ideas for how we can make our communities even stronger,” said Daniel Ash, chief marketing officer, The Chicago Community Trust. “More importantly, we’ve seen these conversations lead to actions that have made a difference across the region. Hundreds of different ideas, collaborations and projects have resulted from *On the Table*, and this year we hope all participants will be even more intentional about making connections that will spark positive action and change.”

From a grassroots campaign reminding us that “[Hate Has No Home Here](#),” to creating and printing a [coloring book to help victims of sexual assault](#), organizing new [winter coat and book “giving events”](#) at neighborhood libraries, a proven alternative to the emergency room that provides [mental health assessment and peer support](#), a [party for homeless teens](#) – all can be linked to an *On the Table* conversation. Learn more about what has happened coming out of *On the Table* at [onthetable.com/after-the-table](http://onthetable.com/after-the-table).

The Trust launched *On the Table* – which has now been replicated in more than 20 cities across the country – in May 2014 to bring Chicago-area residents together in small groups to discuss how to collaboratively build and maintain strong, safe and dynamic communities. Each year, thousands have gathered for mealtime conversations in homes, at local restaurants, libraries, offices, places of worship and more to share their backgrounds and to discuss issues most important to them. The Trust believes that sharing these stories, experiences and hopes for the future helps us develop a deeper understanding of our communities and each other, and inspires us all to do more.

In 2016 and 2017, the Trust launched the [Acting Up](#) awards – an opportunity for residents to receive \$1,000 or \$2,500 to carry out an idea for community action and impact coming out of their *On the Table* conversation. Prizes totaling \$195,500 have been given to 135 diverse projects discussed

during *On the Table* over the last two years to benefit neighborhoods across the region. The Trust plans to reinstate this program in 2018. More information will be announced this spring.

Anyone can host an *On the Table* conversation. Those interested in doing so are encouraged to sign up starting today at [onthetable.com](http://onthetable.com), where hosts will have access to materials and resources to help prepare for and guide conversations.

Join a movement of thousands of Chicago-area residents who are working together for the public good. To learn more or to sign up to host an *On the Table* conversation, visit [onthetable.com](http://onthetable.com) or call 866-737-6951. Join the *On the Table* 2018 conversation on social media using the hashtag #OnTheTable2018.

For additional media resources and downloads, visit: [onthetable.com/news-releases-media-downloads](http://onthetable.com/news-releases-media-downloads).

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**About The Chicago Community Trust**

[The Chicago Community Trust](http://TheChicagoCommunityTrust), 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 \$236 million in 2016.