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Knight Foundation Commits \$70 Million to Community Foundations Nationwide

Initiative Aims to Advance “Informed, Engaged Communities”

MIAMI (Jan. 7, 2010) The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation announced today that it intends to invest \$70 million over the next seven years to community foundations serving cities and towns where the Knight brothers owned newspapers.

The new Community Foundation Initiative will deepen Knight Foundation's focus on fostering informed, engaged communities.

“Information is an essential community need and community foundations were established to meet core needs,” said Alberto Ibarguen, Knight Foundation’s president and CEO. “They also only exist and thrive because of community engagement and contributions. That makes them ideal partners to help us understand and advance local community engagement, focused on ensuring that these communities have the information they need to manage their affairs in our democracy.”

A new position will be created at Knight Foundation’s Miami headquarters to direct the initiative.

"Our goal is to better coordinate and focus our initiatives in the Knight communities and use our resources in the most effective way possible," said Trabian Shorters, Knight Foundation’s vice president for communities. “The new director will work together with foundation staff and advisory committees in each Knight community to guide the local foundations on use of the funds.”

Community foundations make contributions to local groups from funds established by individuals, families, businesses and others to address needs in specific geographic areas. These organizations offer a national funder like Knight the benefit of their grassroots grasp of issues. The grants will help community foundations enlarge their donor-advised funds supporting the work of local non-profits.

From 2000 to 2007, Knight contributed a total of \$69 million to create donor-advised funds at 25 community foundations. At \$70 million, this new initiative doubles Knight's current investment in community foundations.

Knight Foundation officials have begun reaching out to community foundations in the 26 Knight communities eligible to participate in the program.

The following are Knight communities: Aberdeen, S.D., Akron, Ohio, Biloxi, Miss., Boulder, Colo., Bradenton, Fla., Charlotte, N.C., Columbia, S.C., Columbus, Ga., Detroit, Mich., Duluth, Minn., Fort Wayne, Ind., Gary, Ind., Grand Forks, N.D., Lexington, Ky., Long Beach, Calif., Macon, Ga., Miami, Fla., Milledgeville, Ga., Myrtle Beach, S.C., Palm Beach, Fla., Philadelphia, Pa., San Jose, Calif., St. Paul, Minn., State College, Pa., Tallahassee, Fla., Wichita, Kan.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation advances journalism in the digital age and invests in the vitality of communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation focuses on projects that promote community engagement and lead to transformational change. For more, visit www.knightfoundation.org.

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