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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 27, 2017

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Largest One-Day, Citywide Community Conversation Slated for September
Long Beach Residents Are Invited to Join the Conversation

LONG BEACH, Calif.— We Love Long Beach, in partnership with the Long Beach Community Foundation (LBCF) and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, has launched a website, www.aroundthetablelb.com, to publicly announce ***Around the Table***, an innovative initiative coming to Long Beach this fall. On Saturday, September 23, 2017, this initiative invites Long Beach residents, non-profits, businesses, local government and the faith community together for the largest one-day, citywide community event in the history of the city.

Long Beach is one of 10 cities across the U.S. selected to replicate the On the Table initiative this year with funding from the [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#).

“Around the Table is an opportunity for Long Beach residents to connect and discuss the opportunities and challenges that are important to them. At the same time, they have the chance to join a national network of communities that want to share lessons around building city success,” said Lilly Weinberg, Knight Foundation director for community foundations.

The goal of *Around the Table* is to connect individuals in the Long Beach Community and provide them with an opportunity to discuss what makes Long Beach great as well as what participants can do collectively to improve the city.

“The *Around the Table* initiative capitalizes on that tradition of gathering around a table for a meal and provides a platform for diverse populations, as well as like-minded individuals, to gather and share dialog that will move the Long Beach community in a positive direction,” said LBCF Board Chair Gary DeLong.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for residents to come together and open a dialog in their community. Survey’s gathered from participants at each table will help guide the Community Foundation’s resources so that we may continue to address relevant community needs,” said LBCF President & CEO Marcelle Epley.

Twelve Long Beach Libraries, Rancho Los Cerritos, and The Attic are already registered to be SUPER hosts that can accommodate five or more tables of 50+ participants to join in conversation. All Long Beach Fire Stations will host tables and are expected to be registered in the next few days. Individuals are invited to host their own event with eight to 12 guests or join the SUPER hosts and facilitate a larger group if they are able. A table can take place anywhere...in front yards, in homes, at the beach, in the

park, at schools, at a hospital, at coffee shops, on boats, or in restaurants -- just to name a few options. It can be over breakfast, lunch, brunch, dinner, potluck, happy hour or simply wine and cheese. The *Around the Table* goal is to have more than 1,000 tables and 10,000 participants throughout Long Beach all participating on September 23, 2017.

"*Around the Table* aims to connect individuals and communities of differing perspectives and backgrounds," said Scott Jones, Executive Director of We Love Long Beach. "Talking and listening to neighbors is an important first step toward bridging our divides. When we come together as a community to learn from and with each other, we have the power to transform neighborhoods, and lives."

Around the Table is modeled after The Chicago Community Trusts' initiative called *On the Table*. Last May, The Chicago Community Trust hosted their fourth consecutive *On the Table* with tens of thousands of Chicago-area residents participating in order to inspire new ways people can work together to make communities stronger, safer and more dynamic.

Knight Foundation helped to expand the initiative to cities where it invests. 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. You can read more about this national expansion by clicking [here](#).

Long Beach community members interested in participating are encouraged to visit the newly launched website (www.aroundthetablelb.com) to learn more, sign up as a participant, or even register as a table host.

About Long Beach Community Foundation:

The Long Beach Community Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, public organization with more than \$31 million in assets and 145 charitable funds. It was established in 1996 to make strategic grants to nonprofits, and assist individual donors with their philanthropic goals today and through planned giving. Fees charged to manage funds at the Foundation are invested directly back into the community in the form of discretionary grants. LBCF's mission is to initiate positive change for Long Beach through charitable giving, stewardship, and strategic grant making with a vision of being the preeminent steward of endowments serving the needs of Long Beach in perpetuity.

LBCF operations are led by President & CEO Marcelle Epley and oversight is provided by Board Chair Gary DeLong, Vice Chair Robert Stemler, and Board members Blake Christian, Michele Dobson, Bob Foster, Tony Gales, Mark Guillen, Randal Hernandez, Donita Joseph, Annette Kashiwabara, Steve Keesal, Frank Newell, Judy Ross and Judy Vander Lans.

About We Love Long Beach:

We Love Long Beach, a volunteer-led 501(c)3 nonprofit is a catalyst of citywide neighborliness. Our desire is to create bonds of trust and care between neighbors, house by house, block by block throughout the city of Long Beach. We believe that each neighborhood has what it needs to build community, increase safety and raise the quality of life. Even more, we believe there is an inherent and untapped, abundance of gifts, talents, and resources within each of our neighbors just waiting to be discovered. These are the key ingredients toward building sustainable community together. To learn more, visit <http://welovelb.org>.

About the Knight Foundation:

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. It invests in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. The foundation's goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which it believes are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit knightfoundation.org.