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For immediate release

**Levitt Pavilions Sunsets; Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation
Becomes Main National Levitt Organization**
Change embodies creative placemaking focus for Foundation

March 31, 2016—Beginning next month, the work of the national nonprofit, Levitt Pavilions, will be carried out by the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation, furthering its mission to strengthen communities across the country through free, live music. As part of the transition,



the Levitt Foundation has unveiled a new logo reflecting its core values to support creative placemaking projects that are catalytic, dynamic and promote joy, inclusivity and connectedness.

“This exciting change signals our resolve to direct the majority of the Foundation’s philanthropy towards creative placemaking programs that focus on free concerts in public spaces” said Liz Levitt Hirsch, president of the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation. “With funding now geared to one main cause, it made sense to place the operations of our national organization under one roof and to function as the Levitt Foundation, thus sunseting Levitt Pavilions.”

Since its founding in 1963 by Mortimer Levitt, founder of The Custom Shop retail stores, and his wife, Mimi, the Levitt Foundation has provided funding to a variety of performing arts organizations and educational institutions. In the early 1970s, as summer residents of Westport, Conn., Mortimer and Mimi were approached to support a community-driven project to transform a problematic landfill into an outdoor music venue. They ultimately became the campaign’s largest private contributors, prompting the town to name its new pavilion after them. In 1974, the first Levitt Pavilion was born. Its continuing success in presenting free concerts to the community over the decades later inspired the Levitts to support free outdoor concerts in other communities across America.

During the mid-2000s the Foundation began to accelerate its venture philanthropy investments modeled after the Levitt Pavilion in Westport, partnering with communities in developing permanent outdoor Levitt venues to present free concerts. It then recognized a need to provide targeted support and resources to each local Friends of Levitt nonprofit in a growing number of cities. Hence, the national nonprofit Levitt Pavilions was founded in 2009, complementing the Foundation’s support by providing meaningful resources to its Friends of Levitt partners presenting free concerts in their communities. In recent years, Levitt Pavilions has created new programs like the Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards; commissioned a multi-year study researching the social and economic impact of Levitt venues; and has made the case—and raised national visibility for—the power of free, live music in public spaces to create joy and more vibrant communities.

Recognizing the deep impact of Levitt concert series in communities that collectively reach over 600,000 people across the country every year, during the past 18 months the Levitt Foundation has redirected its giving to focus on furthering the Levitt mission. With the transition, the mission remains the same: to empower communities to transform neglected public spaces into welcoming destinations where the power of free, live music brings people together and invigorates community life.

The Levitt Foundation's primary funding areas include:

- **Permanent Levitt venues**
 - *Provide seed funding to build or renovate a permanent outdoor music venue, known as a Levitt Pavilion or Levitt Shell, and multi-year annual operating support to partially fund a Friends of Levitt nonprofit partner that manages, programs and fundraises for the Levitt program of 50+ free concerts each year. These community-driven, public-private partnerships are typically geared to cities with populations over 400,000 and, while representing significant investments for the Foundation, each Friends of Levitt nonprofit partner receives the majority of its annual funding from the local community.*
 - *Permanent Levitt venues are located in Arlington, Texas; Bethlehem, Pa; Los Angeles; Memphis; Pasadena, Calif.; and Westport, Conn. Future venues are planned for Denver, Houston and Sioux Falls.*
- **Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards**
 - *Provide \$25K annual matching grants to 15 nonprofits operating in small to mid-sized towns and cities to activate neglected public spaces through the Levitt AMP Music Series of 10 free concerts each year. Reflecting the Foundation's ethos that all Levitt projects are community-driven, each year finalists are selected through an online public voting process.*
 - *2016 Levitt AMP Winners hail from Asbury Park, N.J.; Carson City, Nev.; Charlottesville, Va.; Cleveland, Miss.; Denison, Texas; Frederick, Md.; Greensboro, N.C.; Jacksonville, Ill.; Middlesboro, Ky.; Midvale, Utah; New Albany, Miss.; North Adams, Mass.; Sheboygan, Wis.; Trenton, N.J.; and Utica, N.Y.*

Both permanent Levitt venues and Levitt AMP sites present free, family-friendly concerts of the highest caliber in welcoming outdoor settings, inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to come together and experience a broad range of music genres and a shared sense of community.

The impact is far-reaching: activating once-neglected public spaces, ensuring access to the performing arts, spurring economic development, and amplifying community pride. Permanent Levitt venues have inspired additional investments, both public and private, including improvements to park infrastructure and the opening of new restaurants and retail in the venue's vicinity due to increased foot traffic. With this success, additional communities are seeking Levitt support for their own town or city. In the coming years, the Levitt Foundation anticipates expanding the types of projects it supports to further strengthen communities and ensure access to the performing arts in public spaces.

Learn more at <http://www.levitt.org>

The Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, private foundation.