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For Immediate Release

Levitt Foundation Announces Plans for New Levitt Venue in Dayton, Ohio

Levitt Pavilion Dayton's free concert series in Dave Hall Plaza aims to transform underutilized location into a thriving cultural destination for all to enjoy

December 1, 2016—Dave Hall Plaza, the southern gateway to downtown Dayton, Ohio, is slated to become home to the eighth permanent Levitt venue, offering 50 free concerts each year featuring acclaimed, award-winning talent as well as rising emerging artists. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2017, with free concerts kicking off in 2018.

Levitt Pavilion Dayton will join a growing national network of permanent outdoor Levitt music venues in Arlington, Texas; Bethlehem, Penn.; Denver, Colo. (opening in 2017); Houston (opening in 2019); Los Angeles; Memphis; Pasadena, Calif.; Sioux Falls, S.D. (2019); and Westport, Conn. Each Levitt venue is community-driven and locally supported, in partnership with the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation, and are powerful examples of creative placemaking at work—a community effort to transform an underused public space into a thriving destination through the arts.

In early 2014, the Dayton community reached out to the national Levitt Foundation to explore the possibility of developing a Levitt venue in their city. After conducting exploratory visits to two permanent Levitt venue sites in Bethlehem, Penn. and Memphis, city leaders and residents became convinced that a Levitt Pavilion would be the perfect vehicle for Dayton to come together as a community and help further a renaissance in the city.

Levitt Foundation Executive Director Sharon Yazowski said it quickly became clear to the Foundation that Dayton was an excellent community for a permanent Levitt venue. "Dayton's commitment to being a welcoming city and philosophy of inclusivity for its downtown redevelopment makes Dayton an ideal match for the Levitt program," said Yazowski. "In addition to its significant role in downtown revitalization efforts, the Levitt Pavilion in Dave Hall Plaza will bring together the diverse communities that call Dayton home, creating a vibrant destination where people of all backgrounds will have the joyful, shared experience of free, live music."

"The Levitt Pavilion here in Dayton will be a living room for our city—a safe, family-friendly environment in our urban core where everyone will be invited to enjoy the free concerts and celebrate the diversity of our community," said April Mescher, the project's director who serves as a liaison between the City, the Levitt Foundation, and Friends of Levitt Pavilion Dayton. "This renewed green space will also be ideal for a picnic, stroll or relaxing outdoors right in our city center."

To date, Friends of Levitt Pavilion Dayton—the local nonprofit that will manage, program and fundraise annually to support the new Levitt venue—has raised \$4.3 million of its \$5 million capital campaign goal, and expects to reach completion by early 2017. The City of Dayton contributed \$1 million to the project and the Levitt Foundation contributed \$500,000. Additional support has come from local foundations, businesses, individuals, and institutions.

CareSource, one of the largest managed healthcare companies in the U.S. with headquarters in Dayton, saw the value in supporting Levitt Pavilion Dayton, and its philanthropic arm, the CareSource Foundation, gave a grant of \$750,000—the largest in its history—to support the project.

“The Levitt concept provides the chance for people of all economic backgrounds to join together for a break from the pressures of life,” said CareSource Foundation Vice President Cathy Ponitz. “Even with many in the traditional workforce, living a paycheck-to-paycheck lifestyle is the norm. Often what gets lost is the opportunity to have fun. We believe, especially for the demographic of our consumers, this will be a gift that definitely keeps giving.”

“The level of support and commitment from the region has been overwhelming,” said Mayor Whaley of the Levitt project. “Over the past several years, Dayton revitalization efforts have gained momentum, with the City and our partners working hard to reenergize and renew interest in the city’s offerings...the Levitt Pavilion will give citizens a reason to check out what is going on in the center of their community.”

The Levitt Pavilion will play a vital role in The Nine redevelopment strategy, which repositions a dormant nine-block area as a lively neighborhood with the new venue in Dave Hall Plaza at the center, and local businesses have been very keen to support the project. “We concluded that the Levitt Pavilion would serve to create an enhancement sorely needed in that area...and create more of a community asset for those living in and near downtown,” said Nick Keyes, president of family-owned Dayton billboard company Key-Ads, whose company donated \$100,000 of in-kind advertising and promised to provide additional support for the first 10 years the venue is in operation.

The Levitt Pavilion will also complement the city’s other venues, including the RiverScape Pavilion, the Schuster Performing Arts Center, and the Victoria Theatre, offering programming and a range of artists not typically presented at these venues. In addition, the venue will be available for use by schools, arts organizations, community groups and other nonprofits.

The Levitt project shares close connections with the University of Dayton and Sinclair Community College, which formed solid partnerships with Friends of Levitt to help guide community engagement efforts, ensuring the Levitt Pavilion will involve and serve a wide and diverse group of individuals including students as well as military personnel and families from the nearby Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

“I became involved with the project because a Levitt Pavilion is more than a music venue, and it is a proven model. Dayton needs free music, community building and economic revitalization. Levitt offers all three,” said Jeff Ireland, Board Chair of Friends of Levitt Pavilion Dayton. “There are good things happening in Dayton and Levitt builds on them in a positive way. And each of the pavilions is unique, so we can put our own spin on the one here in Dayton.”

Upon completion, the Levitt Pavilion Dayton state-of-the-art amphitheater will accommodate up to 5,000 concertgoers in an open lawn setting. Cleveland-based design firm, Westlake Reed

Leskosky, is working to ensure the venue will reflect the downtown's historic aesthetics while celebrating the city's innovative spirit.

About the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation

The Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation is a private foundation that exists to strengthen the social fabric of America. Through its support of creative placemaking, the Levitt Foundation empowers communities to transform neglected public spaces into welcoming destinations where the power of free, live music brings people together and invigorates community life. The Foundation's primary funding areas include **permanent Levitt venues** and the **Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards**, an annual grants competition. The Levitt network of outdoor venues and concert sites collectively serves more than half a million people annually through **450+ free, family-friendly concerts in 22 towns and cities**. Permanent Levitt venues are located in cities as diverse as **Los Angeles** and **Pasadena**, Calif.; **Westport**, Conn.; **Bethlehem**, Pa.; **Memphis**, Tenn.; and **Arlington**, Texas. Each permanent Levitt venue is programmed, managed and supported by its own 501(c)(3) Friends of Levitt nonprofit organization, presenting 50 free concerts every year featuring high caliber entertainment of all music genres. Developing Levitt locations include **Denver** (opening 2017), **Dayton** (opening in 2018), **Houston** (opening 2019), and **Sioux Falls** (opening 2019) amongst other cities. Learn more: levitt.org