Community Engagement Focus of New Knight Foundation Grants

WICHITA, Kan. - 1/24/2012 - Increasing community engagement is the central focus of three new grants announced today by the Wichita Community Foundation. The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC), working with the Young Professionals of Wichita and Visioneering Wichita, will receive $125,000 for leading a community-wide discussion to set regional priorities for developing talent, place and opportunity in Wichita. Senior Services Inc. will receive $17,645 to enlarge their training programs for using iPad technology to Latino seniors. Real Men, Real Heroes will receive $2,783 for its teen mentoring program. The grants are part of the informed, engaged communities initiative of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

The WDDC grant, together with $82,000 in private and in-kind donations, will fuel a community wide discussion and resulting definition of the next level of development for Wichita. The goal is to answer the question: What priorities do we set to make Wichita an attractive place to live, work and play for the next generation of citizens. This grant award follows Knight's recent investment in the WDDC Design and Innovation Center which opened in August of 2011. The new Design and Innovation Center is a venue that fosters community dialogue on various quality of life initiatives.

Senior Services, Inc. will provide free technology classes for Latino seniors at its LaFamilia and Orchard Park sites . The one year project hopes to reduce the isolation of low income senior Latinos by training them on iPads in their native language. Real Men Real Heroes will use their grant dollars to build a diverse, multicultural team of teen mentors who will function as both role models and spokespeople for its ongoing work in the community.

About the Wichita Community Foundation
Since 1986, the Wichita Community Foundation has been serving the philanthropic needs of the Wichita community. The Foundation's goal is to build a stronger city by investing in people, organizations and institutions so they can contribute to their neighborhoods and communities. The Foundation supports programs, projects, and organizations that creatively and successfully bind the community together to enrich the quality of life for all citizens.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

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