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CONTACT:

SUSAN WOLFE, DIRECTOR
GRANTMAKING PROGRAMS
AND COMMUNICATIONS
(415) 882-7740 swolfe@koret.org

LEGACY AND VISION:

THE TAUBE-KORET INITIATIVE ON JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

(SAN FRANCISCO) -- The Koret Foundation and Taube Philanthropies have launched a major initiative focused on Jewish Peoplehood, committing close to \$100 million to the effort that has included capital projects, general operating support, and funding for Jewish cultural programs in the Bay Area, Poland and Israel, Koret President and Taube Philanthropies Chairman Tad Taube announced today.

For over two thousand years, the concept of Jewish Peoplehood has fascinated, intrigued, and perplexed Jews and non-Jews the world over. Is Judaism a culture? Can Judaism exist without Jewish religion? Are Jews an ethnic group? And how has the emergence of the State of Israel affected our identity and ethnicity? The very act of wrestling with these complex issues and questions has helped to define what it means to be Jewish in the modern world.

For many if not most Jews in America, Israel and throughout the Diaspora, the primary form of Jewish expression is no longer limited to religion or synagogue life, but encompasses the much broader aspects of culture -- history, heritage, the arts, family -- in a word: Jewish Peoplehood. Jewish community centers become vital spaces for Peoplehood programming. In the Bay Area, the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life in Palo Alto is a flagship of the two foundations' new initiative, which explores Jewish life, culture and identity through the twin lenses of legacy and vision. Also in place at the Peninsula JCC and the JCC of San Francisco, the Initiative supports the development of cultural, educational, and community programs that inspire a living Jewish heritage, encourage innovative expressions of Jewish life, and engage younger generations with our evolving Jewish identity. The Taube-Koret Initiative takes a renewed look at Jewish

Peoplehood, deepening adult Jewish engagement in the community and creating a broader approach to cultural programming.

“The Taube-Koret Initiative comes at a critical moment, when Jews have unprecedented opportunities to fully and freely express and embrace their people and their tradition,” says Dr. Arnold Eisen, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary and a Taube Foundation Advisory Board member. “It is crucial that we direct significant funding in support of initiatives that assist this growing awareness of and interest in Peoplehood. The result will be increased pride in all aspects of our Jewish heritage, stronger ties between Diaspora Jews and Israel, stronger relationships among Diaspora communities, and closer attachment of Jews to their local Jewish communities, including institutions such as schools and synagogues. I am very pleased that the Taube and Koret Foundations are taking action to seize these opportunities.”

Actively cultivating a thriving Jewish community, the Taube-Koret Initiative represents a logical progression building on the Taube Foundation’s Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland (JHIP). By supporting and creating educational, communal and cultural programs for the growing Jewish population in Poland, JHIP links Polish Jewry to Jewish communities in the United States and Israel. The JHIP expands the view of Jewish Peoplehood by celebrating 1,000-years of Jewish culture in Poland and awakening American and Israeli Jews to their heritage in ways that celebrate identity and continuity.

Among the programs supported are the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, the Jewish Genealogy and Family Heritage Center and Poland Jewish Heritage Tours.

Of particular funding interest are collaborations with and among Jewish organizations which celebrate the varying expressions of connection, continuity, and culture that derive from our diverse Jewish traditions.

“We are also interested in supporting programs that demonstrate the impact of Jewish tradition on Western culture and that encourage creative expressions of our Judeo-Christian values,” Taube said. “The historical legacy of the Jewish people has undeniably served as the cornerstone of Western civilization. That heritage is embodied in the Judeo-Christian values that form the underpinnings of American culture. Our collaborative Peoplehood Initiative explores and promotes programs which define Jewish Peoplehood in the context of (these) cultural and historical influences on Jewish, Western and Global Cultures.”