



For Immediate Release

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## **Utah Humanities Celebrates 40 Years of Improving Communities Through the Humanities**

Salt Lake City, Utah, February 23, 2015 – Utah Humanities is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout 2015, with a focus on how the humanities improve communities.

Utah Humanities (formerly Utah Humanities Council) is a 40-year-old nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding the role of the humanities in our everyday lives. Utah Humanities partners with organizations across Utah to offer free programs and events that help individuals and groups to think about the role of the humanities in building a better world. Utah Humanities reaches thousands of Utahns each year, in every corner of the state, involving people as planners, partners, and participants in improving their communities.

As part of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, Utah Humanities has a new look, new website ([www.utahhumanities.org](http://www.utahhumanities.org)) and new mission that are all intended to convey the dynamic, essential place the humanities have in our modern, technological society.

**Cynthia Buckingham, Executive Director at Utah Humanities, remarks that** *“Utah Humanities is celebrating 40 years of engagement, inspiration, and activism in 2015. Over the decades, we’ve experienced firsthand how deeply the humanities can affect individuals and communities. We are convinced that the humanities are more essential than ever and as an organization we claim that invaluable role with our new mission to ‘empower Utahns to improve their communities through active engagement in the humanities.’”*

*“Our programs span the state and have a track record of influencing communities in highly positive ways such as generating discussion of important issues, preserving Utah history, and providing life-changing education opportunities for adults living on a low income and at-risk students.”*

### **How can the humanities improve communities?**

The humanities have the power to help us become better individuals and to create better societies. Utah Humanities focuses on active use of the humanities in all of their programs where participants share their own experiences, consider other perspectives, and discuss ideas with others. Here are some specific examples of outcomes from UH programs:

- Adults living on low incomes, for whom attending college was a distant dream, are developing critical thinking and a deeper understanding of their world through their participation in a college level humanities course.
- Museums in small towns are learning the skills necessary to host a Smithsonian Institution travelling exhibition and involving the whole community in programs.
- Utah authors are increasing their readership and Utah readers are discussing important issues with internationally renowned writers face to face.
- Teens who hope to be the first generation in their families to win college degrees are setting themselves up for success in our Clemente Course.
- Veterans are processing their service experiences in reading and discussion groups and sharing their oral histories.
- Refugees are adjusting to their new homes while preserving their cultural heritage.
- Utahns in every corner of the state are participating in civil conversations about community concerns by exploring the perspectives of history, philosophy, and literature.

**About Utah Humanities:** Utah Humanities empowers Utahns to improve their communities through active engagement in the humanities. UH is funded through gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations, the Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts, and Parks Fund, the State of Utah, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Each year, the Utah Humanities makes possible hundreds of educational and cultural programs throughout Utah. For more information, visit [www.utahhumanities.org](http://www.utahhumanities.org) or [www.facebook.com/utahhumanitiescouncil](https://www.facebook.com/utahhumanitiescouncil).

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