



Host Guide

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

Thank You for joining the
Chattahoochee Valley's third
On the Table!

If you are a brand-new host, welcome aboard! If you are returning, welcome back! We're happy you're joining us on this journey for greater civic engagement and better connection – to each other and our community.

On the Table invites Chattahoochee Valley residents from diverse backgrounds, neighborhoods and perspectives to have mealtime conversations that build personal connections and explore how we can work together to make our communities stronger.

In 2017 and 2018, thousands of residents across the Chattahoochee Valley participated in *On the Table* conversations, leading to new relationships, elevated civic conversations and collaborative actions. These outcomes make our communities more connected, resilient and resourceful.

The Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley's involvement in *On the Table* stems from our belief that it takes ALL of us to build the community we want. Our mission of "enabling and promoting philanthropy that inspires, facilitates and fosters a vibrant and engaged Chattahoochee Valley" is geared toward helping people use their assets to improve their community. But who says those assets have to only be about money? We believe that people who feel connected are better, happier citizens who make their communities better.

on the table
your voice matters.

Community
Foundation
of the Chattahoochee Valley

Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley's On the Table conversations are part of a national initiative funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. On the Table replicates an annual civic engagement initiative of the same name developed by The Chicago Community Trust in 2014. Support for On the Table advances Knight Foundation's work to help cities attract and keep talented people, expand economic opportunity and create a culture of civic engagement. Knight Foundation believes that successful communities are equitable, inclusive and participatory. Additional support for the local project is being provided from the Community Foundation's Community Endowment Funds.

Before Your *On the Table* Event

1. Register Your Event

When you register as a host at OnTheTableChatt.com, you join a community of people who are leading important conversations across the region. You'll receive pertinent information about *On the Table* and we'll learn about you and your event. It will take you just a few minutes to register today at OnTheTableChatt.com.

2. Plan Your Event

- Choose a location for your conversation.** The discussions can be held just about anywhere – a library, church, neighborhood restaurant, office break room or even around your kitchen table. Hold your discussion wherever you can gather, talk and brainstorm with a group of 8-12 people.
- Plan your menu.** Food has a unique way of bringing us together. You can serve coffee and donuts, cookies and juice, or a four-course meal. Or you can host a potluck, brown bag or even meet at your favorite restaurant.
- Invite Your Guests.** The invitation list is up to you. Here are a few pointers:
 - Start with a few people you know – friends, family, colleagues and neighbors – then expand your circle.
 - Consider co-hosting your event with a local nonprofit organization, business or community group.
 - Try to create a dynamic table by inviting people from your network who don't already know each other or ask your guests to bring someone.
 - Eight to 12 guests per table is ideal. That way, everyone at the table has a chance to speak and be heard. If you want to host a larger gathering, consider having smaller groups of guests at separate tables – such as three tables of eight guests each – and reserving time during the event for each group to discuss and report out to the larger group.
 - Use an online tool like Eventbrite to manage your RSVPs, connect with your guests and share information about your event. (An Eventbrite tutorial is available at OnTheTableChatt.com.)
- Plan Your Conversation.** Consider whether you want to use the provided prompts or have a specific theme for your discussion; perhaps there is a particular topic related to your community or workplace that you'd like to explore. How will you use your *On the Table* conversation to unite your colleagues, friends, family and neighbors to lead change in your organization, neighborhood or throughout the Chattahoochee Valley? Also, consider asking your guests to ponder this question before they attend: "What will we do to create a stronger community?" Also available at OnTheTableChatt.com are conversation guides for families, youth and other specific topics.

3. Promote Your Event

Use tools found at OnTheTableChatt.com to promote your event. Download the *On the Table* logo to use on your invitation. Grab graphics for Facebook, Twitter or text messaging to share with your invited guests. Post news of your event on social media using the hashtag #ChattChat.

During Your *On the Table* Event

- 1. Prompt Conversation.** The fundamental question is: What can we do together to create a stronger community? Our conversation guidelines on the next page offer tips on encouraging productive discussion.
- 2. Encourage Solutions.** After your group discusses community challenges that concern them, consider transitioning the discussion to possible solutions. After all, we know that big ideas can come from small conversations.
- 3. Plan for Action.** *On the Table* is all about listening and learning from each other because we know that together we have the power to impact neighborhoods, communities and lives. If your table is ready to move your ideas to action, the Take Action Worksheet can help your group brainstorm and plan next steps. Actions can include convening a follow-up conversation, collaborating with an organization addressing the issue you discussed, or raising funds for a grassroots organization working to address a gap important to you. You may also want to consider applying for an Action Grant through the Community Foundation. Look for more information following *On the Table* at OnTheTableChatt.com.
- 4. Amplify Your Discussion.** Invite guests to share their thoughts, connections, commitments and photos using the hashtag #ChattChat.
- 5. Ask Participants to Complete the Survey.** (The last 10 minutes) Encourage participants to join their voice with thousands of others before leaving the table. If you chose paper surveys, pass them out to participants. Collect completed surveys and return them to the Community Foundation by Thursday, October 24. If you chose the text option, place the tent card on the table and have participants text OTTCHAT to 797979 to receive a survey link. Reserve ten minutes at the end of your conversation for everyone to take the survey.

After Your *On the Table* Event

- 1. Send Us Your Guest List.** Send a picture of your sign-in sheet to OnTheTableChatt@cfcv.com so we can share with your guests a link to the survey and future *On the Table* updates. Note: We won't solicit them for anything and we won't share their information.
- 2. Thank Your Guests.** A day or two after your discussion is over, thank your guests for attending your event. If some actionable ideas came from your discussion and you or someone from your group plan to spearhead any of them, mention that you'll be back in touch with information on how to be a part of the action.
- 3. Share What Happened.** We'd like to know the outcomes of your discussion. Share your success stories, challenges and ideas with us:
 - Post on Facebook or Instagram using #ChattChat.
 - Leave a message at 706-718-9565.
 - Email OnTheTableChatt@cfcv.com.
 - Send a note to: Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley, *On the Table*, 1340 13th St., Columbus, GA 31901

Guidelines and Prompts for Conversation



Guidelines

Do:

- Encourage guests to introduce themselves.
- Make sure each table has a host who helps ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate.
- Remember the value and benefits of diverse voices: Make sure everyone has a chance to be heard.
- Invite guests to follow-up and expand on their ideas.
- Invite guests to sign in using the sheet provided in the host toolkit.
- Share – and invite your guests to share – your photos, videos and stories using #ChattChat on Facebook and Instagram.

Don't:

- Micromanage the conversation; let it flow freely.
- Be judgmental or dismissive of any person's comments or ideas.
- Promote argument or unproductive debate.

Prompts

To help get your conversation started, we've compiled this list of sample conversation prompts:

- What brought you to the table?
- What are your hopes for our community, now and in the long term?
- What are the positive qualities or characteristics of our community? How can we leverage those attributes to strengthen our community?
- What does our community need? What can we do individually or collectively to address those needs?
- Let's choose a problem facing our community, neighborhood or region and discuss how we might solve it.
- Share one important thing we've accomplished here. What is one next step you would like to take, either individually or collectively, based on our conversation? (See the Take Action worksheet to help you plan your next steps.)

Also available at OnTheTableChatt.com are conversation guides for families, youth and other specific topics.

Thank You for Coming to the Table!