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**GRAND PARK SALUTES THE JOY OF READING WITH
“GRAND PARK’S DOWNTOWN BOOKFEST,” MARCH 2, 2013**

**– Event Gives Families, Community Members a Way to Share in Read Across America Celebrations and
Launches Permanent Installation of Grand Park’s Little Free Libraries –**

LOS ANGELES (February 19, 2013) – As part of the March 2013 celebrations for the National Education Association’s Read Across America Day, Grand Park today announced the creation of Grand Park’s Downtown BookFest, a multi-faceted, multi-generational community event that salutes the enjoyment of reading and the importance of literacy. Grand Park’s Downtown BookFest takes place on Saturday, March 2, 2013 from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. at Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles, from Grand Avenue to Hill Street (Blocks One and Two of the park). Park visitors will enjoy a wide variety of activities inspired by the simple pleasures of reading a good book under the blue sky in an urban green setting.

Designed for families and book lovers of all ages, Grand Park’s Downtown BookFest features readings from independent book stores, children’s story circles, crafts for children, musical performers, food trucks and other activities based on the power of the written word. In addition, Grand Park will inaugurate four little free lending libraries, which are miniature libraries that operate on the honor system, allowing visitors to “take a book, leave a book.” The concept, spearheaded by the nonprofit organization, Little Free Library, is a grass roots movement to encourage reading and provide easy access to books.

“With Grand Park’s Downtown BookFest, we bring together some of Los Angeles’ best independent publishers, book sellers, community groups and performers to remind us all how enjoyable and valuable it is to read,” said Julia Diamond, director of programming for Grand Park. “In many ways, reading a good book is a transformative experience, similar to visiting a beautiful park; when you put the two together, something magical happens.”

“This event evolved from our observations of how the community embraces Grand Park; so many people visit with a book in hand and choose their favorite spot to enjoy a relaxing moment in the park – on one of the pink chairs, under a tree, at the base of the fountain, or with their coffee at a table,” said Lucas Rivera, director, Grand Park. “This is just the beginning of many more special Grand Park experiences inspired by our visitors.”

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Activities at Grand Park's Downtown BookFest include:

- Readings and a pop-up book store presented by The Last Bookstore and Writ Large Press, representing the authors and publications of 25 Los Angeles-based independent publishers;
- Book sales and literacy information provided by non-profit writing and tutoring center, 826 LA;
- Book swaps and giveaways by Libros Schmibros;
- Children's crafts presented by the Central Library and Ryman Arts, which provides teens with free access to visual arts education;
- Performances by DJs Phyz Ed and Danny Holloway;
- Performance by bilingual children's author, educator and recording artist, José Luis-Orozco; and
- Presentation by the first poet laureate of Los Angeles, Eloise Healey, who was named to this newly created position by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in December 2013. Healey will open the event and read from some of her poetry.

Visitors will also enjoy food provided by three popular food trucks, including The Lobos Truck (American), Mandoline Grill (Vietnamese) and Cool Cow (ice cream).

According to Rivera, Grand Park's Downtown BookFest is part of a series of programs designed to engage the community and give them the opportunity to do the things they like to do in a green setting right in the midst of downtown. Current park programs include Lunchtime Yoga retreat (Wednesdays and Fridays) as well as Lunchtime Concerts in Grand Park (Tuesdays). More information and an event calendar can be found at <http://grandparkla.org/>

About Grand Park

A vibrant outdoor community gathering place for all Angelenos, Grand Park adds a new spirit and vitality to downtown and is a beautiful public park for the entire community in Los Angeles County. With expansive green space for gatherings large and small, Grand Park celebrates the cultural vitality of Los Angeles County and is host to community events, cultural experiences, holiday celebrations and many other activities that engage and attract visitors from all communities throughout the County. One of the biggest parks in all of Los Angeles, the 12-acre Grand Park stretches from The Music Center on the west to City Hall on the east. Under the direction of the County, Grand Park was developed through Grand Avenue Park Development, LLC (The Related Companies, L.P.) with an award-winning creative team, including landscape architect, Rios Clementi Hale Studios; general contractor, Charles Pankow Builders; environmental graphic design firm, Sussman/Prejza; and fountain design consultants, Fluidity. Under the direction of the county, The Music Center is responsible for all operations and programming for the park. For more information, including how to rent space for public and private events at the park, visit <http://grandparkla.org/>