

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2015

Contact: Gene Voiland, Chairman of the Board (661) 616.2601

### **Kern Community Foundation Announces Kristen Barnes as New President and CEO**

Bakersfield, Calif., March 25, 2015 – The Board of Directors of Kern Community Foundation (“Community Foundation”) announced today that Kristen Barnes has been named President and CEO. Barnes, who will begin her tenure on April 6, succeeds Jeff Pickering who is leaving to become CEO of the Indian River Community Foundation in Vero Beach, Florida.

Barnes was selected from a pool of more than 50 local candidates recommended by Kern Community Foundation’s Board of Directors, past directors and key donors. Barnes, a Bakersfield resident for 30 years, has worked in the fields of public and private accounting, education and philanthropy. Barnes joins the Community Foundation after serving as director of Paramount Agricultural Career Academy and chief financial officer of Paramount Academy, both of which are located in Delano, Calif.

“I am thrilled that Kristen has agreed to join Kern Community Foundation as President and CEO,” said Gene Voiland, board chair. “She is going to do a great job in this role, building on our solid financial position and our excellent reputation for providing services to donors and to local nonprofits.”

Barnes’ introduction to Kern Community Foundation was as a founding donor and vision committee member of its leadership initiative, The Women’s and Girls’ Fund. As a volunteer, she helped lead efforts to raise more than \$1 million for a permanent endowment which distributes annual grants to charitable organizations and programs that improve the lives of women and girls in Kern County. “This work,” according to Barnes, “has been incredibly rewarding and served as a capstone on a lifetime of community service for me.”

Barnes has significant experience in Kern County philanthropy, serving as president of the Lori Brock Children’s Museum, treasurer of the Junior League of Bakersfield, board member for the Girl Scouts Joshua Tree Council and steering committee member for the Bakersfield Women’s Business Conference, along with other community events. Currently, she serves as advisor to students in the Jim Burke Education Foundation “Dreambuilder” program, and is a trustee of California Health Science University.

As Kern Community Foundation celebrates its 15th year in operation, one of its two strategic priorities is college access, which aligns well with Barnes’ professional experience in educational leadership. “Championing philanthropy and the needs of underserved student populations is, far and away, the right thing for me to do at this time in my life,” said Barnes. “I am eager to meet with the Community Foundation’s stakeholders to learn how we can better meet their needs. I see a future of increased community outreach and philanthropic innovation for Kern Community Foundation.”

“Kristen’s business acumen, her experience in education and philanthropy, and her knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing students and families in California’s Central Valley make her the perfect person to lead our organization in its next stage of growth,” added Voiland. “Under her leadership, we will continue striving to be the center of excellence that enables local philanthropists to be more strategic and effective in their charitable giving.”

Barnes holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, a master's degree in education from Point Loma Nazarene University, and a clear California teaching credential. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership at the University of California, Los Angeles.

*About Kern Community Foundation*

Kern Community Foundation is a vibrant nonprofit enterprise with the powerfully simple mission of growing community and growing philanthropy. The foundation is in business to serve as a charitable resource for local donors and corporations, and to generate capital that provides philanthropic solutions to help make Kern County a better place to live, to work and to visit. Since its establishment in 1999, the foundation has grown to hold more than 100 charitable funds with assets of approximately \$19 million, and has awarded more than \$13.1 million to improve Kern County's quality of life. For more information about Kern Community Foundation visit [www.kernfoundation.org](http://www.kernfoundation.org).

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