JetBlue Adds Detroit as the Next Destination for Its 'Soar with Reading' Free Book Vending Machine Initiative

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Free Book Vending Machine Also Returns to Washington, D.C. Area In Partnership With Random House Children's Books

Soar with Reading Welcomes Celebrity Ambassadors Actress Victoria Justice and Athlete Justin Upton

Public Can Choose the Next City to Receive Books in Online #BookBattle

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- JetBlue's (Nasdaq:JBLU) award-winning *Soar with Reading* program launched today with the addition of Detroit to its innovative free book vending machine program. In order to help halt students' "summer slide" – the knowledge base lost during the summer months – JetBlue installed five vending machines in neighborhoods across Detroit. Following its successful pilot vending machine program last summer, JetBlue will also return one machine to the Anacostia area of Washington, D.C. to continue to encourage children's imaginations to take flight through reading.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here: http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160628006498/en/



JetBlue's Soar with Reading program launched today with the addition of Detroit to its innovative free book vending machine program. (Photo: Business Wire)

The custom-designed book vending machines by Innovative Vending Solutions are stocked with books for children ages 0-14. In partnership with Random House Children's Books and its *Magic Tree House®* series by Mary Pope Osborne, JetBlue will donate 120,000 free books to children living in Detroit, Washington, D.C. and other book deserts.

Book deserts, areas where children and their families have little or no access to purchase age-appropriate books, are often found in low-income areas. According to research commissioned by JetBlue, select areas of Detroit had only one age-appropriate book for every 42 children, while Anacostia had just one book for every 830 children. Children living in book deserts are at risk of falling behind with language, vocabulary and comprehension, leaving them in jeopardy of academically lagging behind their peers who have access to books.

"As Soar with Reading continues to grow, we developed an advisory board of educators and community leaders and engaged our partners to determine specific needs and make a real impact," said Icema Gibbs, JetBlue's director of corporate social responsibility. "The resounding response was access to books. This year, we're bringing free books to locations where children are already visiting to help kids build their own libraries and take pride in owning books."

To help celebrate the expansion of the Soar with Reading program, JetBlue enlisted the help of celebrity ambassadors – singer/actress Victoria Justice and Detroit outfielder Justin Upton to reveal the machines in Detroit. Justice returns for the third consecutive year to generate awareness through social media engagement, videos and an appearance at the Detroit launch event. As a first-time ambassador, Upton looks forward to spreading the word and supporting the local Detroit community while showcasing the importance of reading.

Last summer, JetBlue hosted an online #BookBattle voting competition, where customers could cast their votes for one of five cities - Detroit, Houston, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles, and New York - to receive new children's books. Nearly 1.3 million online votes were cast and Detroit beat out the other cities receiving 48 percent of the votes to bring books to children in its city who need them most.

This year, JetBlue is again asking the public for help choosing the next city to receive a donation of books in its interactive, online #BookBattle voting competition. Four cities – Boston, Fort Lauderdale, Long Beach and New York – will go head-to-head for the chance to win. Online voting is open at SoarwithReading.comthrough August 31, 2016. Books will be donated in 2017.

Last year's vending machine pilot program in D.C., distributed more than 27,000 books via vending machines and more than 70,000 books through a variety community partners. Research conducted in areas where vending machines were placed found that parents had greater knowledge of their child's reading habits and the titles of the books that their children had in the home. Additional research will be conducted this year to focus on the educational effects on children who regularly visit the machines.

Since launching in 2011, Soar with Reading has donated over $1,750,000 worth of books to children across the country. Anchored by bestselling *Magic Tree House®* author Mary Pope Osborne, an ardent advocate and supporter of child literacy, and the award-winning author of more than 100 books, Soar with

Reading continues to promote the importance of reading for children. Visit SoarwithReading.com to vote in the #BookBattle, to learn more about the book vending machine program and to enjoy fun literacy based activities.

ABOUT JETBLUE

JetBlue is New York's Hometown Airline™, and a leading carrier in Boston, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood, Los Angeles (Long Beach), Orlando, and San Juan. JetBlue carries more than 35 million customers a year to 96 cities in the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America with an average of 925 daily flights. For more information please visit jetblue.com.

ABOUT RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Random House Children's Books is the world's largest English-language children's trade book publisher. Creating books for toddlers through young adult readers, in all formats from board books to activity books to picture books, novels, ebooks, and apps, the imprints of Random House Children's Books bring together award-winning authors and illustrators, world-famous franchise characters, and multimillion-copy series. The company's website, Kids @ Random (www.randomhousekids.com), offers an array of activities, games, and resources for children, teens, parents, and educators. Random House Children's Books is a division of Random House LLC, a Penguin Random House Company.

ABOUT MAGIC TREE HOUSE®:

Widely regarded among parents, teachers, and librarians for its power to instill a passion for reading, Mary Pope Osborne's award-winning Magic Tree House series is an international phenomenon and has sold more than 130 million books worldwide since its debut in 1992, and has been translated into 33 different languages in over 30 international markets. There are currently 54 Magic Tree House books and 34 Fact Trackers, the nonfiction companions to the fiction titles. In support of her literacy efforts, Mary has donated hundreds of thousands of books to children in need through her "Gift of Books" program, which distributes books to Title 1 funded schools. Additionally, Osborne launched a program for teachers, Classroom Adventures Program, her gift to teachers who have supported her over the years. The program includes free online resources—including lesson plans, curriculum guides, and creative activities. Kids today can interact with the book series via the recently launched Magic Tree House Kids' Adventure Club, which provides members with exclusive items, and the opportunity to interact with the person who knows Jack and Annie's adventures best—Mary Pope Osborne! Visit www.MagicTreeHouse.com for more information.

The next installment in the series, *Night of the Ninth Dragon* (#55) releases on July 26, 2016 with the corresponding Fact Tracker, *Dragons and Mythical Creatures.*

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