JetBlue's Soar With Reading Initiative to Provide 100,000 Free Books to Children in San Francisco and Oakland Area Book Deserts

Jun 27, 2018

-- JetBlue Invites Customers, Crewmembers and the Local Community to #BookWithUs by Voting for an Additional JetBlue City to Win $25,000 Worth of Books and a Reading Room Makeover for a Local Community Organization --

--Soar with Reading Welcomes Celebrity Ambassadors, TV Personalities and Dancers/Choreographers Stephen "tWitch" Boss and Allison Holker,Along With 'Fun Jungle' Series Author Stu Gibbs --

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- JetBlue (Nasdaq: JBLU) today launched its eighth annual Soar with Reading initiative, which provides free books to children who need them most. This summer, Soar with Reading lands in San Francisco and Oakland, Calif. This award-winning literacy initiative tackles the issue of "book deserts," areas with limited access to age-appropriate books. Since 2011, JetBlue has donated nearly $3 million worth of books to children in areas of need.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180627006046/en/



JetBlue launched its eighth annual Soar with Reading initiative, which provides free books to children who need them most. This summer, Soar with Reading lands in San Francisco and Oakland, Calif. (Photo: Business Wire)

JetBlue and Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing are bringing books to children in the Bay Area through five custom vending machines which will distribute 100,000 books starting today through August 31, 2018, free of charge. To commemorate this year's initiative, San Francisco Mayor Mark Farrell and Supervisor Jane Kim recognized June 27, 2018 as "Soar with Reading Day."

The vending machines, powered by Innovative Vending Solutions, will be restocked every two weeks with new titles. Children and families are welcome to visit the book vending machines as often as they would like and can take as many books as they'd like. Local partner organizations include B Magic, Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, San Francisco Public Library, Mission Neighborhood Centers, Oakland Public Library and City of Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development, with vending machines located at:

San Francisco Public Library Main Branch| 100 Larkin St., San Francisco, CA 94102

Bayview/Linda Brooks-Burton Branch Library| 5075 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94124

Columbia Park Clubhouse| 450 Guerrero St., San Francisco, CA 94110

East Oakland Sports Center| 9161 Edes Ave., Oakland, CA 94603

Willie Keyes Recreation Center| 3131 Union St., Oakland, CA 94608

"I am pleased that JetBlue is bringing their innovative Soar with Reading program to San Francisco this summer to foster our children's love of reading and help their imaginations take flight," said San Francisco Mayor Mark Farrell. "Our residents spoke, as San Francisco beat out three other metropolises in a national online voting competition to receive this honor. Access to books is key to learning, and that is what Soar with Reading is helping to provide. The vending machines will provide free books all summer-long, and I encourage all San Francisco families to take advantage of this exciting program."

"Oakland is proud to partner with JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative to bring free books to all our residents and young readers. Children who once had limited access to age-appropriate books now have a free program designed to give them equitable access to books to read, learn, and expand their intellectual horizon," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf.

This is the fourth year JetBlue has funded this innovative book vending machine program as part of its Soar with Reading initiative. The vending machines will include books in English, Spanish and Chinese (at select locations, upon request) to provide parents from a range of backgrounds the opportunity to read aloud and along with their children. Research shows that greater adult support for reading enhances children's opportunities to learn.

"Soar with Reading encourages a life-long love of reading in children and allows families to build new traditions around reading," said Icema Gibbs, director of corporate social responsibility, JetBlue. "Children can start their personal libraries by visiting the vending machines and collecting new books throughout the summer. Providing access to books opens children's imaginations and empowers them to envision new places."

“We are excited to partner with JetBlue to bring 100,000 free books to children in the Bay Area this summer through the Soar with Reading program,” said Jon Anderson, president and publisher of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing. “The vending machines are filled with award-winning and bestselling titles by authors such as Jason Reynolds, Hena Khan, Stu Gibbs and Elena Delle Donne, and we hope these books will appeal to a diverse group of readers and serve as a foundation for building personal libraries in homes across San Francisco.”

#BookWithUs

This summer, JetBlue invites customers, crewmembers and the community to #BookWithUs and take their city’s reading adventures to new heights by voting for their favorite JetBlue city to win $25,000 in children’s books. This winning city will also receive a “reading room makeover” for a local community organization decorated by celebrity interior designer Tyler Wisler. Additionally, three runner-up cities will receive $5,000 worth of books. Voting is open at SoarwithReading.com.

Soar with Reading Ambassadors

To celebrate the this year’s Soar with Reading initiative, TV personalities and dancers/choreographers Stephen "tWitch" Boss and Allison Holker, along with author of the “Fun Jungle” series - Stu Gibbs, joined JetBlue, Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing, and officials from San Francisco and Oakland, Calif. on June 27, 2018 at an event at the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch to reveal the book vending machines. Onsite young residents were able to select their first free books. tWitch, Allison Holker, Stu Gibbs and other Simon & Schuster authors will support the program throughout the summer by encouraging customers and community members to #BookWithUs for another JetBlue city to win $25,000 in children’s books.

JetBlue For Good - Soar with Reading is a signature program of JetBlue For Good•, the airline’s platform for social impact and corporate responsibility. As the program continues to grow, JetBlue is working to ensure that the books in the vending machines represent the communities where the machines will be placed. The selection of books in the machines will be changed out every two weeks so kids can come back and grab new books all summer long.

The SoarwithReading.com experience includes an experiential website which offers free downloadable resources for families, interactive reading lists, games, advice for keeping kids engaged in reading all summer long and more. Passport booklets filled with activities will also be distributed at JetBlue terminals across the U.S. and throughout the Caribbean and Latin America in July and August to encourage summer reading.

Giving back is part of JetBlue’s DNA and is core to its mission of inspiring humanity. Centered around volunteerism and service, JetBlue For Good focuses on the areas that are most important to the airline’s customers and crewmembers - community, youth/education and the environment. Combining JetBlue’s corporate efforts with its customers’ and crewmembers’ passions, the common theme is Good – JetBlue For Good. Join the #JetBlueForGood conversation on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, check for regular updates and get involved.

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 40 million customers a year to 102 cities in the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America with an average of 1,000 daily flights. For more information please visit www.jetblue.com.

About Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing

Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing, one of the leading children’s book publishers in the world, comprises the following imprints: Aladdin, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, Beach Lane Books, Libros para niños, Little Simon®, Margaret K. McElderry Books, Paula Wiseman Books, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, Simon Pulse, and Simon Spotlight®. While maintaining an extensive award-winning backlist, the division continues to publish acclaimed and bestselling books for children of all ages. Simon & Schuster publishes numerous Caldecott, Newbery, and National Book Award winners. For more information about Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing, visit our website at www.simonandschuster.com.

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