JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative Lands in New York City Placing Free Book Vending Machines in Each of the Five Boroughs

Jul 11, 2019

-- JetBlue Invites Customers, Crewmembers and the Community to Share #BookDrop Moments and Inspire Book Donations to Communities in Need --

-- JetBlue Welcomes Marley Dias, Founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks, as the Latest Soar with Reading Partner and Ambassador --

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- JetBlue (Nasdaq: JBLU), New York's Hometown Airline•, today launched its ninth annual Soar with Reading initiative in its hometown, marking the first time its innovative free book vending machines have touched down in New York City. Soar with Reading, an award-winning literacy initiative, tackles the issue of book availability in underserved communities, where access to age-appropriate books for children is often limited. Since 2015, JetBlue has taken a creative approach to this issue through its free book vending machine program which previously visited Detroit; San Francisco and Oakland, Calif.; Washington, DC and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190711005667/en/



JetBlue's Soar with Reading Initiative lands in New York City, placing free book vending machines in each of the five boroughs in areas of need. (Photo: Business Wire)

This summer, JetBlue will place six free book vending machines throughout New York City's five boroughs, in areas where the need is greatest. The six vending machines will be placed in neighborhoods where the ability to purchase age appropriate books is limited, with one machine in each borough and two in Queens. To date, JetBlue, through its Soar with Reading initiative, has donated more than $3.5 million worth of books to kids in need.

"New York City is home to thousands of JetBlue crewmembers who work in the airline's New York Support Center and JFK International and LaGuardia Airports," said U.S. Congressman Gregory Meeks, who represents New York's Fifth Congressional District, mostly in Queens, where two vending machines will reside. "I encourage children and their families to take as many books as they want, as often as they want, throughout the summer – no strings attached – in the hopes that offering free access to books in a fun and convenient way will spark a lifelong love of reading."

"As New York City's hometown airline, we're excited to bring our Soar with Reading program home. Over the past five years, we've made a tremendous impact with our book vending machine program," said Icema Gibbs, director of corporate social responsibility, JetBlue. "We can't deny the need right in our own backyard. This year, it was important for us to focus our efforts on the city that welcomed us from day one and made us who are. Although we're located in Long Island City, there is so much more to New York City, from Brownsville to the South Bronx, Harlem and the Rockaways to Port Richmond. Our goal is to help improve book access for children in every borough and beyond."

The vending machines, powered by Innovative Vending Solutions, will be restocked every two weeks with new titles and will feature a diverse cast of characters as well as options in both English and Spanish. Publishing partners include HarperCollins Publishers, Little Bee Books, Lil' Libros, Scholastic, Candlewick Press, Penguin Random House, Hachette Book Group and Barefoot Books. Additionally, the vending machines will include select books for adults as research shows that parents displaying behaviors like reading can improve educational outcomes for children.

"It's so important to keep our kids entertained and engaged in learning while school is out during the summer. In Queens, we're thrilled to welcome two free book machines that will be dispensing titles that are appropriate for all ages and reflect the incredible diversity of our borough," said Queens Borough President Melinda Katz.

Vending machines will be located at:

- **Brooklyn:** Brownsville Recreation Center | 1555 Linden Blvd. | Brooklyn, NY 11212
- **Bronx:** PAL, Inc. New South Bronx Center | 991 Longwood Ave | Bronx, NY 10459

- **Manhattan:** Riverbank State Park | 679 Riverside Drive| New York, NY 10031
- **Queens:** Queens Public Library – Main Branch | 89-11 Merrick Blvd | Jamaica, NY 11432
- **Queens:** Ocean Bay Community Cornerstone | 57-10 Beach Channel Drive | Arverne, NY 11692
- **Staten Island:** Faber Park | Richmond Terrace | Staten Island, NY 10302

"For kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, summer often marks the beginning of the infamous summer slide," says Dr. Susan B. Neuman, professor of childhood and literacy education at NYU Steinhardt. "Studies have shown that owning 25 books or more has a sizable effect on achievement, with each additional increment of books, such as 10 or more, improving achievement. This program allows children to own books and combat the knowledge loss that so often accompanies summer."

#BookDrop:

JetBlue would like to spread the book love beyond New York. Every child deserves their own #BookDrop moment. What is a #BookDrop moment? That's up to you to decide, whether it's a book that changed your outlook forever, a package of literary aid, the sound a book makes falling from a vending machine distributing free books, or all of the above.

This summer, JetBlue invites customers, crewmembers and the community to inspire others by using the tag #BookDrop and tagging @jetblue with a personal message about their own #BookDrop moment. For every post shared, JetBlue will donate a book to communities with limited book access. *(a)*

Soar with Reading Ambassador:

To celebrate this year's Soar with Reading initiative, Marley Dias, the founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks, will serve as the latest partner and ambassador for JetBlue's Soar with Reading program. At just 14 years old, Marley has become a leading voice advocating for diversity in children's literature and improved book access for kids in underserved communities. Her book, Marley Dias Gets It Done: And So Can You!, will be featured in the book vending machines throughout the summer.

"I am thrilled to have my book included in JetBlue's Soar Reading program this year," says Marley Dias, founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks. "Being a part of this initiative offers a unique opportunity to address and promote diversity in literature. I believe all children deserve access to books and JetBlue's reading program offers a viable solution for children in need. "

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, for free.

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 42 million customers a year to 100+ cities in the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America with an average of more than 1,000 daily flights. For more information please visit jetblue.com.

(a) "The Soar with Reading Campaign on 8/31/2019. For every book drop moment shared publicly on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram including the hashtag #BookDrop, JetBlue will donate one (1) book. Books will be donated to children and non-profit organizations in areas of need up to a maximum of 100,000 books. This program is in no way sponsored, endorsed or administered by or associated with Facebook, Twitter or Instagram." See details at www.soarwithreading.com.

View source version on businesswire.com: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190711005667/en/

MEDIA

JetBlue Corporate Communications

Tel: +1 718 709 3089

corpcomm@jetblue.com

Source: JetBlue

Powered by SITECORE