NEWS RELEASE

Offering thanks to the citizens of Cold Bay

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Celebrating a week early, American Airlines employees returned to Cold Bay, Alaska, this week to share a meal of thanksgiving with the community. The gesture was in appreciation for the town's help during the diversion of Flight 288.

The flight, a Boeing 787-8 flying from Shanghai, China, to Chicago (ORD), diverted to the small hunting and fishing town after encountering an engine issue on Oct. 12, 2016. The 100 passengers and 16 crewmembers on board more than doubled Cold Bay's population. In response, the community came together to make sure American customers and crewmembers were comfortable and cared for while on the ground. Many residents left their day jobs to rush to the airport.

So, on Nov. 14, a group of eight American employees returned to Cold Bay to serve a Thanksgiving dinner to everyone in town. Included among the employees were one of the flight's pilots, ORD-based Capt. Mary Reedy, and a Line Maintenance manager, David Tharaldson, who led the Tech Ops team that flew in to fix the aircraft. Also joining the trip to offer thanks and serve meals were Lorne Cass, vice president of the Integrated Operations Center (IOC), and Scott Ramsay, managing director of Dispatch, among others.

"Not only did they open up their houses, they opened up their hearts to help us," said Raj Sidhu, a Customer Care manager from ORD, who was also on hand. "There can't be a better Thanksgiving than this to come out and say thanks to these folks."

With temperatures outside below freezing and sleet falling sideways, the warm Thanksgiving meal was a welcome sight and smell at the Community Center in Cold Bay. More than 60 residents, including the town mayor, enjoyed turkey, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables, fruit and more, all specially flown in from Anchorage.

During the meal, each American representative offered words of appreciation for the community members who came to their aid during the diversion. Then the Cold Bay community offered a few words of thanks as well.

“We as a community are overwhelmed with the thank you that American Airlines has provided,” said Cold Bay airport manager Harold “Happy” Kremer (“Hap” for short), who was presented with an executive model Boeing 787.

“It’s just amazing that we practice for this all the time,” said Hap. “To actually implement it and then have American take the time and have the kindness to come back and show appreciation means a lot to us,” he said.