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Southwest Airlines and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Announce Recipients of College Students' Travel Program

Southwest Airlines provides free travel to Hispanic students from all over the nation to pursue their college dreams

DALLAS, Aug. 14 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southwest Airlines, in conjunction with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), announced today the students of its annual "Lanzate/Take Off" education travel award program. The program, the theme of which is "Dandole Alas a Tu Exito/Giving Flight to Your Success," started on June 5. More than 500 students from across the nation completed the online entry with a submitted essay about why they are pursuing a college degree and how the travel award would help them achieve their goals.

The students were selected after intensive evaluation from a panel of judges comprised of college professors and professionals from throughout the country. "The "Lanzate/Take Off" Award is reflective of Southwest's pioneering spirit to look for new, innovative approaches that provide our families and communities the freedom to reach beyond their horizons and fulfill their fullest potential," said Selection Committee member Jose Calderon, and Senior Vice President of the Hispanic Federation in New York.

The award will provide the students with one to four tickets, which the student or an immediate family member can use in the fall to travel to/from a college or university to any of the 66 cities Southwest Airlines serves.

"Each year we receive many entries for this program," said HACU President and CEO Antonio Flores. "There are so many include compelling essays that point to the importance of maintaining family connections. The '*Dandole Alas a Tu Exito/Giving Flight to Your Success*' program is an important step in assuring that students are getting the support and encouragement they need."

With more than 1,500 applicants in the last five years, "Lanzate/Take Off" is a proven successful educational program that serves underprivileged Hispanic students, providing free travel for them and their families to maximize their potential and create opportunities for growth. To see the complete list of students, visit:

www.southwest.com/swamedia/hacu_winners_2009.pdf. To see the list of judges, visit: www.southwest.com/swamedia/hacu_selection_committee_2009.pdf.

"The "Lanzate/Take Off" travel award allows a student to visit the family during the holidays, or just brings the families together for special events like graduations," said Christine Ortega, Southwest Airlines Corporate Community Affairs Manager. "This permits the families to stay in touch, and promotes a better college experience. As a consequence, the student will have

more confidence to pursue his/her dreams of higher education without worrying about the family's economic hardships," says Ortega.

"For me, this program means not staying alone at the university on holidays, and going home for Thanksgiving," said Jennifer Angarita, "Lanzate" 2009 award recipient. "Holidays alone are tough, but this year I will have the opportunity to celebrate with my family, not only on special holidays but will have my parents sitting by me in my graduation, all because of this program."

HACU, which has its national headquarters in San Antonio, Texas, represents approximately 450 colleges and universities, including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), which collectively serve two-thirds of all Hispanic higher education students in the United States and Puerto Rico.

After 38 years of service, Southwest Airlines, the nation's leading low-fare carrier, continues to stand above other airlines--offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service, and no hidden fees. Southwest Airlines is the most productive airline in the sky and offers Customers a comfortable traveling experience with all premium leather seats and plenty of legroom. Southwest recently updated its gate areas and improved its boarding procedure to make flying Southwest Airlines even more convenient. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV), the nation's largest carrier in terms of domestic passengers enplaned, currently serves 66 cities (adding Boston Logan on August 16 and Milwaukee later this year) in 33 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,200 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide.

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