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Southwest Airlines Introduces Heart of the Community

Makes Multi-year Commitment to Support Public Spaces across the Country with Placemaking Pioneers, Project for Public Spaces

DALLAS, April 3, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- [Southwest Airlines](#) (NYSE: LUV) announced today a multi-year commitment to Placemaking – a movement that reimagines public spaces as the heart of every community. Through the Southwest Airlines Heart of the Community program, the airline will revitalize and activate public spaces in the hearts of American cities in partnership with the pioneering nonprofit organization behind Placemaking, [Project for Public Spaces \(PPS\)](#).

Building upon successful pilot projects in Detroit, Mich., and Providence, R.I., in 2013, Southwest and PPS will help transform multiple public spaces in 2014 with the intent to expand the Heart of the Community program and support dozens of public spaces through Placemaking projects in the years to come.

For more than 30 years, Placemaking has sparked social, economic, and environmental benefits in communities around the world. Rooted in community-based participation, Placemaking involves the planning, design, management and programming of public spaces and capitalizes on a community's assets and potential to create vibrant destinations—such as neighborhood parks, community markets and downtown squares.

"At Southwest, our purpose is to help connect people to what's most important in their lives, and often, the important moments that happen during those connections include a special place—somewhere that has meaning, that brings people together, that creates a sense of belonging and a sense of community," said Gary Kelly, Chairman, President, and CEO of Southwest Airlines. "We recognize the power public spaces have to strengthen communities, so we are proud to support these Placemaking efforts."

In late 2013, Southwest provided a gift to support the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning's research white paper, [Places in the Making](#), which demonstrated the power of Placemaking to create connected, sustainable, healthy, and economically viable communities. The research emphasized Placemaking's positive impact on community building and empowerment and cited the need for public/private partnerships to advance the practice of Placemaking.

"Having Southwest Airlines make a commitment to supporting this movement nationwide is a breakout moment for Placemaking," said Fred Kent, Founder and President, Project for Public Spaces. "Placemaking is about strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, and it's a movement that needs the energy of a company like Southwest to help support and empower local communities to reimagine their own public spaces."

Through the Heart of the Community program, Southwest and PPS will collaborate with local community partners in cities across the country to bring new life to their public spaces.

Earlier this week, Southwest and PPS unveiled their most recent project in San Antonio, Texas, where they partnered with the Center City Development Office to activate historic Travis Park through new physical amenities, including games, umbrellas, tables and chairs and ongoing programming, such as fitness classes and live music. In 2013, Southwest and PPS worked with the Downtown Detroit Partnership to transform an underutilized lawn in downtown's Campus Martius Park into a seasonal beach with a deck and seating that serves as a fun and relaxing community gathering place for workers, families and children. Additionally, they worked with the Downtown Providence Parks Conservancy to create the Imagination Center, a new place for family activities in Burnside Park, located in the heart of downtown Providence, R.I.

Heart of the Community is part of Southwest's broader efforts to connect people and strengthen local communities through its core business, charitable giving, community outreach, and environmental initiatives. To read more, go to [Nuts About Southwest](#). For more information on Heart of the Community, visit <http://www.pps.org/heart-of-the-community/>.

About Southwest Airlines Co.

In its 43rd year of service, Dallas-based Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV) continues to differentiate itself from other carriers with exemplary Customer Service delivered by nearly 45,000 Employees to more than 100 million Customers annually. Southwest is the nation's largest carrier in terms of originating domestic passengers boarded and operates the largest fleet of Boeing aircraft in the world to serve 96 destinations in 41 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and five near-international countries via wholly owned subsidiary, AirTran Airways. Southwest is one of the most honored airlines in the world, known for its triple bottom line approach that takes into account the carrier's performance and productivity, the importance of its People and the communities it serves, and its commitment to efficiency and the planet. The 2012 Southwest Airlines One Report™ can be found at southwest.com/citizenship.

About Project for Public Spaces

Project for Public Spaces is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Its pioneering Placemaking approach helps citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs. PPS was founded in 1975 to apply and expand on the work of William (Holly) Whyte, the author of *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Since then, the organization has completed projects in over 3000 communities in 43 countries and all 50 US states and are the premier center for best practices, information and resources on Placemaking.

SOURCE Southwest Airlines