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MEDIA RELEASE

October 19, 2017

St. Pete-Clearwater Int'l Airport (PIE) and Allegiant Support Hurricane Refugees with Food/Supply Drive for Hispanic Outreach Centers in Pinellas County

With thousands of Puerto Rican families evacuating from the devastation of Hurricane Maria, St. Pete-Clearwater International and Allegiant are hosting a food and supply drive on **Tuesday, October 24th from 5 PM – 8 PM**, inviting the community to drive to the airport (14700 Terminal Blvd, Clearwater) and drop off specific requested items.

We will also be hosting the Honor Flight of West Central Florida's Welcome Home Reception of 77 War Era Veterans at 8 PM that evening and invite the public to thank our Veterans for their service. Airport Director Tom Jewsbury states, "We know how fortunate we are in Tampa Bay to escape the devastation that Hurricane Maria brought to Puerto Rican families. We want to welcome these citizens to Pinellas and provide basic needs to help. We thank Allegiant for their partnership and support, and encourage members of the community to join in and supporting evacuees with donated supplies, and staying to thank our veterans."

"In its path of destruction through Puerto Rico, Hurricane Maria had a profound and devastating impact on people's lives," said Hilarie Grey, director of corporate communications, Allegiant. "Our team is proud to partner with St. Pete-Clearwater International and the entire community in helping those in need with necessities as they arrive in Florida seeking to rebuild their lives. By addressing even small personal needs, together we can make their paths to normalcy just a little easier."

The Hispanic Outreach Center (HON) will be distributing the supplies at centers throughout Pinellas and partnering with numerous organizations to aid Hurricane victims. Executive Director Sandra Lyth states, "It is heartbreaking for Puerto Rican people arriving here. They are grieving and exhausted. They need help to get back on their feet. They need more than a list of places to go. They need individual assistance. They have lost everything. It is so hard to start from zero when you have children and need housing and there is so little available." Puerto Rican Evacuees receiving assistance offered these comments to HON staff "Last month, I was a professional with a good job. Starting over is new to me. I find it very hard to ask for help" and "Thank you! I now have my children enrolled in school."

DONATIONS NEEDED –NEW ITEMS ONLY

- Non-perishable food
- Toiletries/Hygiene (Soap, Shampoo/Conditioner, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Deodorant, Lotion, Toilet Paper, Adult Wipes, Adult Diapers, Feminine Products)
- Infants – Diapers, Wipes, Formula, Toys
- Children – School Supplies & Backpacks, Toys
- Sheets, Blankets, Towels/wash clothes, Pillows, Air Mattresses



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