



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### PUNTA GORDA AIRPORT ANNOUNCES THERAPY DOG PROGRAM KICKOFF

**PUNTA GORDA, FL** (February 6, 2017) – The Punta Gorda Airport is proud to announce the kickoff of a new Therapy Dog Program on February 13<sup>th</sup> from 12:00pm – 2:00pm. Therapy K9's of Southwest Florida will have 8 Registered Therapy Dogs and 6 will be “working” during the event to be held at the Punta Gorda Airport, 28000 Airport Road in Punta Gorda, Florida in both the departure and baggage claim areas.

A therapy dog is a dog trained to provide affection and comfort to people in a variety of locations and situations from hospitals, nursing homes, schools, hospices, disaster areas, people with autism, children advocacy centers, and in airports.

Flight delays, cancellations, long security lines and checked-bag scenarios are the most common aggravations among airline travelers. Additionally, air travelers have stress regarding the purpose of their travel whether for business, vacation, family gathering, etc. Currently, over 20 airports across the United States have therapy dog programs.

Therapy K9's of Southwest Florida – Charlotte County Coordinator, Kim Corby is thrilled to be able to share one of her Therapy Dogs, Fansee, with airport passengers. Fansee is a calm, patient, English Cream Golden Retriever who occasionally wears costumes to help when she is working with small children. The costumes help younger children open up and feel more at ease when they are placed in stressful situations such as testifying in court or being interviewed by law enforcement officers. Some of the other Therapy Dogs include breeds such as German Shepherd, Pug, Pitbull and Chocolate Lab/Greyhound mix.

Director of Aviation, Ron Mallard, stated, “This Therapy Dog Program is a way to ease that anxiety and stress associated with the air travel experience and we are glad the Therapy K9's of Southwest Florida can offer their services to our Punta Gorda Airport passengers.”

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#### About the Punta Gorda Airport

The Charlotte County Airport Authority owns and operates the Punta Gorda Airport located at 28000 Airport Road in Punta Gorda, Florida 33982. The Charlotte County Airport Authority Board: Pam Seay (District 1); Robert Hancik (District 2); Paul Andrews (District 3); Kathleen Coppola (District 4); and James Herston (District 5). The Punta Gorda Airport President is James W. Parish, PE. The Punta Gorda Airport is located 3 miles southeast of Punta Gorda, Florida at Exit 161 on I-75. The airport provides quick and easy access to Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Sarasota, Naples, Punta Gorda, Englewood and all Southwest Florida.

#### About Therapy K9's of Southwest Florida – Charlotte County

Founded in 2016 by Lisa Talcott and Nancy Wattles, Therapy K9's of Southwest Florida brings registered therapy dog teams together to provide affection and comfort to enhance the lives of others throughout Charlotte, Lee and Collier counties. The group is comprised of a core group of leaders, Lisa Talcott (founder), Nancy Wattles (founder), Toddy Kean (co-founder and dog

trainer), Cheryl Moses (co-founder), Miriam Carson (co-founder) and Kim Corby (Charlotte County Coordinator), as well as over 35 volunteer teams certified through Alliance of Therapy Dogs and/or Pet Partners. Alliance of Therapy Dogs is a national therapy dog registry with 14,000+ members in the US, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories and Canada. ATD provides registration, support, and insurance for members who are involved in volunteer animal assisted activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, visits to hospitals, special needs centers, schools, and nursing homes.

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