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Press Release

2013 Family Friendly Airline Award Encourages Better Flights for Toddlers and Global Travelers

*Third annual award organized by Kids First Fund
will honor the world's best airline for family travel.*

Shorewood, Wisconsin (14 March 2013) – Full flights and decreased passenger civility comprise a combination that can create a toxic environment for family travel. The tilting point can occur on any flight by the addition of a stressed crew member or a traveler frustrated by a delayed flight. The result can be as dramatic as a stranger slapping a crying baby – as occurred last month – or as invisible as travelers taking their business to another airline.

Some airlines seemingly leave this outcome to chance, while better carriers create child-focused programs to prevent it. Savvy airline executives know they serve their highest-paying passengers best when the littlest passengers are happy, entertained, and quiet.

The Kids First Fund introduced the **Family Friendly Airline Award** in 2011 to identify carriers providing helpful services and extra comfort for children and parents. Last year's winner was Bahrain-based Gulf Air and its Sky Nannies program. The airline was first selected as a finalist by a panel of five airline-industry judges and became the award winner after receiving the most votes from Facebook fans all over the world.

The selection process for 2013 begins today by inviting airline executives to nominate their carriers for the award. A panel of travel industry leaders will choose five airline finalists from among the nominees. The list of airline finalists will be announced 11 April 2013 and travelers will then be invited to vote at the **Kids First Fund page on Facebook**. Polling will close 01 May 2013, which is also the first day of the 9th annual International Online Travel Auction for Kids.

“One crying child can generate grief for an entire plane load of passengers. And yes, travelers paying a hefty premium for the seclusion of business class can be equally affected,” said Jay Sorensen, president of the Kids First Fund. “This award recognizes the airlines that go the extra distance to meet the needs of their youngest travelers. It’s a smart business decision that keeps parents happy and ensures a quieter cabin for all – including the guy in seat 1C who is napping before his big meeting.”

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Airline executives are asked to submit nominations using the instructions provided at the Facebook page for the Kids First Fund. Nomination requirements are simple: 1) the airline must describe why it deserves the distinction, and 2) there is a limit of one nomination per airline to be received by **06 April 2013**.

The Kids First Fund is privileged to have a roster of travel industry experts return as judges to select the five airline finalists for 2013:

- Ms. Flo Lugli, executive vice president of marketing, Wyndham Hotel Group.
- Dr. John O'Connell, Department of Air Transport, Cranfield University (UK).
- Ms. Aileen O'Mahony, corporate sales manager, CarTrawler.
- Mr. Howard Putnam, motivational speaker and former CEO of Braniff Airlines and Southwest Airlines.
- Mr. Michael Smith, managing partner, Airline Information.

Here are key dates associated with the Family Friendly Airline Award for 2013:

Date	Kids First Fund Events
14 March 2013	Call for nominations from airline executives.
06 April 2013	Nomination period closes.
11 April 2013	List of 5 airline finalists announced. Public voting begins at the Kids First Fund Facebook page.
01 May 2013	Voting closes at the Kids First Fund Facebook page. International Online Travel Auction for Kids begins at Winners announced; www.KidsFirstAuction.com

About the Kids First Fund: The Kids First Fund helps abused and abandoned children. We protect children from abuse. We empower young adults to achieve a positive future. We strengthen families. We build awareness of child abuse. We operate in countries where resources are limited. The Kids First Fund does not incur any expenses, since all staffing and services are donated. The organization has been granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Learn more at KidsFirstFund.org.

A Note Regarding Nominations: Airline finalists from prior years are welcome to submit nominations for this year. However, the 2012 award recipient (Gulf Air) is excluded from participating for 2013 but may participate next year.