



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Photos available upon request*

**Tourism Cares and U.S. Travel Association Partner to Give Back to Host Destination of San Antonio, Texas at 2023 IPW Travel Trade Show**

*Conference attendees participated in sustainability education, volunteer experience along San Antonio River*

May 22, 2023, San Antonio, TX | For the sixth consecutive year, Tourism Cares has joined forces with the U.S. Travel Association's IPW, the travel industry's premier international inbound travel trade show, to give back to its host community of San Antonio, Texas through an education and volunteer-based program on its opening day, Sunday, May 21.

"The opportunity to serve and give back to our host communities is an important feature at IPW, and we're pleased to be a partner with Tourism Cares on this project," said Malcolm Smith, U.S. Travel SVP of Business Development and IPW General Manager. "The strong interest in this year's activity on the San Antonio River also aligns with our attendees' support for the protection of natural resources and interest in sustainability in travel."

The sold-out event brought more than 50 attendees representing different major travel and tourism brands down the San Antonio River via kayak with IPW 2023 partners the San Antonio River Authority and Visit San Antonio as an interactive way to address the impact communities and visitors can have on natural assets, as well as highlight ways the travel industry can work to preserve these vital resources.

“The San Antonio River Authority is excited to partner with Tourism Cares and IPW’s Explore Meaningful Travel Along the San Antonio River event by hosting a kayaking trip down Mission Reach, the nation’s largest example of urban ecosystem restoration, to conduct a planting activity and litter clean-up at Confluence Park,” said Katy Brought, San Antonio River Authority Public Affairs Manager. “We are grateful to everyone who donated their time to give back and help us keep the San Antonio River beautiful and clean.”

Following the session, attendees participated in a native species planting activity surrounding the North American Friendship Pollinator Garden in San Antonio. The garden is home to native grasses, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs and is located within Confluence Park, an award-winning environmental education park along the banks of the San Antonio River. Attendees also participated in the removal of debris along the watershed due to sudden storms that bring large amounts of trash and other nonpoint source pollutants into the river along with stormwater from urban impervious surfaces like roads and parking lots via storm drains. This debris is a hazard to the health of the river as well as the wildlife and plants that depend on the river for survival.

“Tourism Cares has a long 20-year history of organizing travel professionals in communities to immerse, connect, and give back,” said Greg Takehara, CEO, Tourism Cares. “What’s unique to these programs is its ability to create a sense of place and deepen the understanding of how local changemakers are tackling global issues through their everyday work. Through this program, we are creating a growing network of travel professionals invested in destination stewardship and sustainability.”

As part of the IPW event, Tourism Cares launched four new organizations on its Meaningful Travel Map - a program developed to connect small, local businesses and impact organizations to the global tourism industry. The San Antonio River Authority along with San Antonio organizations Pharm Table, Compost Queens and the San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum, are now featured on the Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Map, which is utilized by tour operators, travel advisors and sustainably minded travelers around the world.

Featured businesses on the Meaningful Travel Map have been vetted through Tourism Cares criteria to ensure they are hosted and managed by local communities, value people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, protect environmental resources, and impact guests in a way that is experiential and immersive, and engages them in a deeper understanding of people and place.

“The Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Map was developed as a way to widen the impact of tourism in destinations around the world to include businesses and non-profits not often marketed or packaged to the travel trade,” said John Sutherland, Director of Community Impact for Tourism Cares. “By building a platform that supports small businesses to scale their work through tourism, we anticipate measurable economic gains for these small

businesses and exposure to thousands of travelers that will experience their product, hear their stories, taste their food, step foot in their shoes and have a deeply authentic experience when they visit.”

Destinations interested in joining the Meaningful Travel Map can learn more at [www.tourismcares.org/meaningful-map](http://www.tourismcares.org/meaningful-map).

Special thanks to those sponsors that helped to make the 2023 Tourism Cares program at IPW possible, including: IPW, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, Onward, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism, Visit Dallas, and Visit Lauderdale, and partners Visit San Antonio and the San Antonio River Authority. To date, Tourism Cares’ IPW event has generated more than 630 donated hours of in-kind labor for six communities across the United States.

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#### **About Tourism Cares:**

Tourism Cares, Inc., a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit that advances the travel industry’s positive impact to help people and places thrive. We believe it’s in all our best interest to support the destinations our industry depends on so that communities, travelers, and businesses can prosper. We mobilize the entire industry to use its business as a force for good by uniting, activating, and inspiring all sectors to make a positive impact through travel. Learn more at [TourismCares.org](http://TourismCares.org) and [@TourismCares](https://www.instagram.com/TourismCares).