



# **Puerto Rico Convention Center Celebrates Earth Week Employees Plant Trees With Local Children**

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Miramar, P.R. (April 21, 2010) - - As part of the of their Earth Week activities, employees of the Convention Center District Authority (CCDA) along with their colleagues at the Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC) planted tropical trees in the grounds of the facilities in Miramar. Children representing local community organizations San Jorge Children's Foundation, Createe, San Juan Children's Hospital, and the local chapter of Make a Wish Foundation joined the staffers for the planting of trees.

"The Convention Center District Authority of Puerto Rico joins central government initiatives to promote conservation of the environment. We have a responsibility with our fellow Puerto Ricans and with our visitors to preserve our natural resources which are one of our most valued assets," said Jaime Lopez Diaz, Executive Director of the CCDA. "We must also continue teaching our youth the importance of showing sensitivity towards the environment... Through these initiatives we protect our land for future generations."

"It is truly a privilege to have the help of these extraordinary children, who not only helped us to plant the trees but who inspire and motivate us each day to be better human beings," said Blarys Segarra, Acting General Manager of the Puerto Rico Convention Center. "Respecting the environment and the communities where we operate is the cornerstone of our corporate policy at the Convention Center and in SMG, our operational arm. Events like this one strengthen our spirit and impart meaning to our work."

López said that since its inception, the Convention Center was designed with the environment in mind, as an eco-friendly structure that followed sustainable development guidelines to maximize the natural resources of the area with minimum environmental impact.

"As Puerto Ricans we want to keep our Island with all its resources and beauty for future generations and for our visitors," Segarra said. "We are proud to protect the green areas, promote indoor vegetation and look after our outdoor open spaces. It is our responsibility and our legacy. "

During the activity, Segarra and Lopez Díaz praised the participation of local kids and gave them a young tree to plant at home as well as a certificate that named each one "Puerto Rico Convention Center's Honorary Ambassadors of Planet Earth."

"Our mission is to deliver a clean and healthy planet," López Díaz said, "but we must also educate our kids at an early age to create awareness and teach them to protect the environment in the same way and with the same commitment."

Segarra welcomed the growing number of international eco-friendly initiatives.

"This movement began with 20 million people in the United States in 1970," she said. "In 2000, 184 countries and nearly a billion people participated in similar events ... This year, when Earth Day celebrates its 40th anniversary, more than a billion people in nearly 200 countries are expected to host green activities to further the cause... We are honored to join in and be part of this great global mandate. "

The trees planted today around the water fountain in front of the Puerto Rico Convention Center's main building are shrubs of sea grapes. These shrubs were chosen for their adaptability to the arid terrain of the land around the PRCC and their high tolerance to salt and wind, said Ramon Serbia, President of the landscaping company, Natural Gardens.

"The sea grape is a tropical Caribbean shrub that can manage the sea wind and the pounding of constant sunshine," said Serbia. "It grows long clusters of purple grape-like fruit that add color to the landscaping and complement nicely the design of the surroundings."

PRCC staffers also planted butter bush trees on Park Boulevard, the avenue leading to the main building. Serbia said that the diversity of plants and trees in the Convention Center is quite broad. Among the existing vegetation, there are willows, ficus trees, silver mangroves, schefflera and ferns. There are several species of palms: Benjamin, royal palm, *Cat palm*, Silver palm, areca palm, and bismarckia.

#### **About SMG**

The Convention Center of Puerto Rico is owned by the District Authority Convention Center, a public corporation part of the Ministry of Economic Development. The PRCC is managed since its inauguration by SMG, the world's leading management, marketing and operation company of convention centers in the U.S. and various countries throughout the world.

