Philipsburg July 19, 2013

SMN NEWS

Attention

Ms. Bibi Shaw

Present

Reference: article on 8 year old on LIAT flight

Dear Ms. Shaw,

Juliana Airport Handlers - hereinafter to be referred to as JAH - has retained the services of our firm regarding the above-mentioned matter. On behalf of JAH I herewith reply as follows to your article of Friday July 19, 2013 placed on your website - SMN NEWS - with the title: '8 year old left stranded at PJIAE, Juliana Handlers and LIAT Running from Responsibilities - Family want full refund on ticket'.

Your article consists of a few crucial inaccuracies which are herewith clarified on behalf of JAH.

The 8 year unaccompanied minor (UM) which is the center of this article left SXM on July 10, 2013 on LI-561 at 12:08 to Antigua to connect to Barbados and then onwards to Georgetown and was to be in Georgetown by 22:00. The flight out of SXM to Antigua was handled by JAH.

Important to note is that staff and/or management of JAH never received an e-mail, phone call or any other message from LIAT about the cancellation of the flight out of Antigua and the return of the UM from Antigua to St. Maarten. Therefore JAH could have never been aware of what transpired in Antigua with the UM.

LI512 landed with the UM on Wednesday July 10, 2013 at 21:51 and not 6:00 p.m. as incorrectly stated in your article. An Agent of JAH that met the flight received the UM from the flight attendant on the LIAT flight. It was at that point that a staff member of JAH first became aware that a UM arrived on/returned to St. Maarten.

The agent of JAH immediately went up to immigration and asked immigration to call and contact the grandmother of the UM, which the immigration officer did. The officer - in the presence of the agent - advised the grandmother that the child is at its office for pick up. Immigration kept the UM with them until the grandmother came to clear the UM.
The UM was therefore not left in room for an extended period of over four (4) hours, as incorrectly stated in your article. JAH clearly acted in accordance with the existing procedures and policies.

This is an unfortunate incident for the minor and her family. However JAH bears no responsibility and/or fault for what transpired during the period the UM left St. Maarten until her return to St. Maarten at almost 22:00. It therefore goes without saying that JAH cannot be held liable and/or responsible for any damages the mother of the UM and the UM may have suffered as result of the cancelled flight out of Antigua. For further information on this matter the family of the UM shall have to contact LIAT or the company’s PR officer.

On behalf of JAH you are herewith requested to rectify your article by placing an article containing a rectification on your website no later than Saturday July 20, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. regarding this incident of July 10, 2013 as clearly and specifically outlined in this letter. Failure to comply with the aforementioned JAH will immediately take legal actions against SMN news in which event the costs and risks shall be solely for your account. However JAH hopes and expects that this will not be necessary.

Sincerely,

Melinda Hoeve