



Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Metropolitan Ministries Announces Expansion of Inside the Box**

### *Grab 'n Gourmet now in Tampa International Airport Airside A*

**(November 1, 2016 Tampa, FL)** - Inside the Box Cafe and Catering, a Metropolitan Ministries' social enterprise, in partnership with Stellar Partners, Inc., is expanding to the Airside A terminal of Tampa International Airport (TPA) which serves Jet Blue, Spirit Airlines, Alaska Airlines, United, Silver Airways, and Sun County Airlines. This addition comes after a successful launch in the Airside C terminal which serves Southwest Airlines. This is part of the airport's \$1 billion expansion project and concessions redevelopment featuring more local restaurants, brands and concepts.

Inside the Box's presence at the airport joins its catering division and two stand-alone cafes located in downtown Tampa and in the Westshore business district. The partnership with Stellar Partners pairs Inside the Box with a Tampa-based business that has retail locations in 10 airports across the United States, including Florida's three largest airports; Miami, Orlando and Tampa. TPA serves more than 19 million travelers each year and is consistently ranked among the best airports in the world by national travel publications.

"Tampa International Airport is experiencing a historic growth period and bringing in more local partners to be a part of that growth has been a high priority," TPA CEO Joe Lopano said. "By selling Inside the Box grab-and-go foods at TPA, we're providing a high quality product to our customers while also benefitting a wonderful Tampa organization that helps so many men, women and families in our community. I had the pleasure of visiting the Inside the Box kitchen at Metropolitan Ministries this past summer and was highly impressed with the skill and care that went into making these sandwiches, salads and other snacks for our traveling public."

"We are delighted that we can now bring Inside the Box products to even more TPA travelers. The brand has proven to be a great success with our Stellar News customers," said Stellar Partners CEO Susan Stackhouse.

The Inside the Box Culinary Arts Program (CAP) was recently featured in Florida Trend Magazine. The gourmet food and social impact scored high marks. Proceeds from the social enterprise directly support Metropolitan Ministries' hunger programs. Additionally, CAP students gain the skills they need to overcome homelessness and achieve self-sufficiency. Recent graduate Josh Keene is currently employed at Ulele on Tampa's Riverwalk.

Keene said the Culinary Arts Program has offered "extraordinary life skills." He dreams of owning his own restaurant one day. "I've always loved to cook," he said, "I just wanted to try it on as a career and I've grown to really love it."

"Through our partnership with Susan Stackhouse and her team at Stellar, we have had the opportunity to share great food and our mission at Metropolitan Ministries with those in our community and the millions of people who visit us from other parts of the country and the world," said Metropolitan Ministries CEO and President Tim Marks. "With the additional presence in Airside A, our message of hope and self-sufficiency will have an even greater reach to local and global travelers. It has been a tremendous honor for us."

Inside the Box is known for "Good Food Doing Good". Catering orders are coming in from travelers as far as Orlando, and as large as 3200 people at conventions. The social enterprise is forming new alliances with partners who recognize the community benefits. The Laser Spine Institute has Inside the Box Grab 'n Gourmet available onsite for its employees and patients.

To order catering for your holiday parties call [813.902.1272](tel:813.902.1272) or visit the website at [www.itbcafe.org](http://www.itbcafe.org)

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**About Metropolitan Ministries:**

As a local, independent nonprofit, we have provided services that alleviate suffering, promote dignity and instill self-sufficiency for poor and homeless families in Tampa Bay since 1972. The Ministries' vision is to be America's most effective and innovative caregiver for those in need. Metropolitan Ministries' main campus is located at 2002 N. Florida Ave., Tampa, FL 33602 and the Pasco campus is located at 3214 US HWY 19, Holiday, FL 34691. For more information visit [www.metromin.org](http://www.metromin.org)

**About Inside the Box:**

Inside the Box is a Metropolitan Ministries Social Enterprise—all proceeds benefit the Ministries' hunger programs. In addition to serving contemporary Americana and inventive original dishes, we also provide social impact by offering vocational training opportunities for men and women transitioning out of homelessness and poverty. The Culinary Arts Program produces qualified employees who are prepared for work in the hospitality industry. Inside the Box Cafés are located at 505 N. Tampa St. in downtown Tampa, and 1715 N. Westshore Blvd. in Tampa. Inside the Box offers catering for your event, business meeting or conference. For more information visit [www.itbcafe.org](http://www.itbcafe.org)

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