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## DRAGON CON 2017 SETS NEW ATTENDANCE RECORD

ATLANTA – September 4, 2017 – Dragon Con, Atlanta’s internationally known pop culture, fantasy, and sci-fi convention, announced a record attendance of more than 80,000 people for the four-day celebration.

Some 77,000 fans attended Dragon Con’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary convention in 2016.

Fans came from around the world and all 50 states, with this year’s convention attracting people from as far away as Japan, New Zealand, and other Pacific Rim countries.

“Every year, Dragon Con seems to get bigger and better and 2017 was no different,” convention co-chair Rachel Reeves said. “Pop culture fans came from every corner of planet to join in the fun. This year, we gave them a show worth travelling for.”

Iconic comic creator Stan Lee, who previously announced his retirement from the convention circuit, made his third and perhaps final Dragon Con appearance. In addition to leading a panel discussion and meeting with fans, Stan served as the Grand Marshal for the annual Dragon Con parade.

Food Network star Alton Brown announced the return of his colorful Good Eats program, called *Return of the Eats*, that will air on Food Network beginning in 2018. “We’re restarting it. We’re bringing it back. We’re getting the band back together,” Brown told a standing-room-only Dragon Con audience.

The convention added cash-prize eSports – also known as professional gaming – live streamed over Twitch to the convention’s game-specific programming.

“Our eSports tournaments were well-attended by professional gamers and the Twitch audience was strong,” said convention co-chair David Cody said. “Most importantly, it was very popular with fans on site, which guarantees that it will be back in 2018.”

LifeSouth, which has organized the convention’s annual Robert A. Heinlein “Pay It Forward” blood drive since 2002, recognized Dragon Con for its 25,000<sup>th</sup> donor. This year, some 3,000 donors contributed nearly 6,000 units of blood and blood products, with the milestone donor arriving on Thursday night.

Since 2014, which marked the start of the organization’s Superheroes program, Dragon Con and its fans have contributed more than 2,600 hours of community service. During 2017, Dragon Con Superheroes manned a crafts ‘n’ cosplay booth at the Special Olympics Georgia Summer Games, maintained portions of Piedmont Park, participated in the annual Walk to End Lupus Now, and collected toys and games for patients at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta.

Dragon Con's annual Robert A. Heinlein "Pay It Forward" blood drive attracted a huge turnout, with about 3,000 attendees donating some 6,000 units of blood and blood products this year. The annual drive – consistently ranked as the largest convention-based blood drive – benefits LifeSouth, which serves more than 40 hospitals in the Atlanta area and 110 hospitals in the Southeast.

**About Dragon Con**

Dragon Con is the internationally known pop culture convention held each Labor Day in Atlanta. Organized for fans, Dragon Con features more than about 3,500 hours of comics, film, television, costuming, art, music, and gaming over four days. For more information, please visit [www.dragoncon.org](http://www.dragoncon.org) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.