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Wings for Autism® lands at Louisville International Airport

Louisville, KY - On Saturday, September 22, The Arc of Kentucky, FEAT of Louisville, the Louisville Regional Airport Authority, Delta Air Lines and [The Arc of the United States](#) will co-host a [Wings for Autism®](#) event at Louisville International Airport. This event is being held in partnership with the [Transportation Security Administration](#) (TSA). Originated by the Charles River Center, a local chapter of The Arc in Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Port Authority, the Wings for Autism®/Wings for All® program is an airport “rehearsal” created to alleviate some of the stress that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families experience when traveling by air.

During the event, participants will check-in to receive their boarding passes, pass through the TSA security checkpoint, wait in the boarding area and board the aircraft. The program will feature a presentation on the aircraft’s features, in-flight safety protocols and take-off procedures. Wings for Autism also gives airport, airline, TSA professionals and other personnel the opportunity to observe, interact and deliver their services in a structured, learning environment.

This event is open to all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Louisville area and beyond who seek a safe, but realistic experience of traveling through a busy airport. More than 140 participants from the greater Louisville area are expected to attend the event.

MEDIA RSVP REQUIRED: Provide full name and media outlet to Airport Authority Public Relations Manager Sara Brown at (502) 363-8506 or by email at Sara.Brown@FlyLouisville.com no later than **2 p.m. on Friday, September 21**. Media is required to bring government issued I.D. and to follow [TSA guidelines](#) for other items, as they will be clearing security to cover this event. Media will be escorted by an Airport Authority representative for the duration of the event. Media must check-in from 10:15-11:00 a.m. on the ticketing level at Louisville

International Airport, directly across from the American Airlines ticket counters. Please park in the Under Four Hours section of the parking garage to have your parking validated.

Media Notes: Participant check-in begins at 10:15 a.m. and welcome remarks are scheduled for 11:30 a.m. post-security at the gate area. Interview opportunities will be available with participants and representatives of the Airport Authority and The Arc.

"The Airport Authority is pleased to welcome this collaborative program to Louisville International Airport," said Dan Mann, Executive Director of the Louisville Regional Airport Authority. "As part of our SDF Cares initiative, it's important that we offer folks an opportunity to gain a better understanding of air travel and hopefully, help them be more at ease when flying. The Wings for Autism program and its partnerships are a strong benefit to these individuals and their families within our community. And after months of co-planning, we're excited to see the inaugural event finally take flight."

"Our passenger support specialists understand that there is a lot for these young travelers to experience and absorb while traveling through an airport," said Ray Williams, TSA Federal Security Director for Kentucky. "It is really satisfying to be able to assist these families through the process, and TSA is proud to partner with this program at airports nationwide."

"The Arc of Kentucky is committed to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and is enthusiastic about the collaboration with FEAT of Louisville, the Louisville International Airport and Delta Air Lines. We are excited to bring a new program, Wings for Autism, to Kentucky. Traveling can be difficult for individuals and their families with disabilities. Wings for Autism helps make our children and adults more comfortable during the air travel experience. We are thankful to all our volunteers who help to make this event possible," said Sherri Brothers, Executive Director of The Arc of Kentucky.

"FEAT of Louisville is so excited for this beautiful collaboration with The Arc and the Louisville International Airport for our families. The more our community understands about autism, the more welcoming it can be to our families who are trying to access the very infrastructures that make our city so great."

"We are excited to bring another Wings for Autism® program to Louisville International Airport. For parents of children with autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual and developmental disabilities, everyday tasks can sometimes prove to be far more difficult for their child. Air travel can prove particularly challenging between clearing security, the overwhelming noises, and harsh lights. This program will not only continue alleviate the stress children and their parents may feel, but further help educate airport and airline professionals about how best to serve children with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities in the future," said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

The Arc - The Arc advocates for and serves people with I/DD, including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc has a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.

Editor's Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.

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