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MKE MAKES TRAVEL EASIER FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
First airport in Wisconsin to launch Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

MILWAUKEE (December 3, 2021) – In recognition of today’s International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport has launched a new program aimed at making air travel easier for passengers who have non-visible “hidden” disabilities. Through the **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program**, the Airport will provide green lanyards featuring bright sunflowers to discreetly identify passengers who may need additional support, help, or a little more time. Here is a [video that describes the program](#).

Sunflower lanyards are available upon request for individuals who have a hidden disability. The lanyards are available free of charge at the Airport Information desk, which is located pre-security in the Airport’s Concession Mall. Anyone who requests a lanyard will receive one with no questions asked.

“Here at MKE, we strive to offer the best and most accessible travel experience for ALL passengers. Some travelers have a hidden disability and need extra assistance or patience from employees along the way,” Airport Director Brian Dranzik said. “This is an outstanding amenity for travelers as we approach the holiday travel season and beyond. I’m proud that MKE is the first Airport in Wisconsin to offer this inclusive amenity.”

The Airport has worked with its tenants and stakeholders to ensure that anyone wearing the Sunflower lanyard will get the dignified treatment that they deserve. The Airport is also working with the Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities to get the word out to a wide range of groups that support people with special needs.



“Individuals who choose to wear the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard can discreetly identify that they may need some extra support or help at the Airport. Maybe they need a little more time at the TSA checkpoint or while visiting MKE’s great shops and restaurants,” Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley said. “This program is consistent with Milwaukee County’s strategic initiatives to achieve racial equity and make Milwaukee County the healthiest county in Wisconsin.”

Hidden disabilities include autism, chronic pain, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, mobility issues, speech impairments, vision loss, or hearing loss. These also include respiratory conditions like diabetes, chronic pain, or sleep disorders that significantly impact day-to-day life.

Because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to air travel, the Airport also announced a newly-branded MKE Cares public relations initiative. Moving forward, additional passenger-friendly enhancements, like the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, will be included under the MKE Cares umbrella.

In addition to the Sunflower Program, MKE already offers the following accessibility features:

- Indoor and outdoor Service Animal Relief Areas
- Adult changing tables
- Free Aira access which provides assistance for blind and low vision passengers
- Fully accessible parking shuttles
- Accessible parking spots throughout all airport-owned parking facilities
- Complimentary wheelchair service and special assistance, courtesy of MKE's airlines

Here is the [list of airports](#) participating in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. Individuals in attendance at today's announcement received a commemorative sunflower to help spread the word about MKE's participation in the program.

Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport (MKE) currently offers nonstop flights to 40+ destinations coast-to-coast, and more than 200 international destinations are available with just one connection. MKE is served by Air Canada, Alaska, American, Contour, Delta, Frontier, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, Sun Country, and United. The complete list of nonstop cities can be found at mitchellairport.com.

MKE is owned by Milwaukee County and operated by the Department of Transportation, Airport Division, under the policy direction of the Milwaukee County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. The Airport is entirely funded by user fees; no property tax dollars are used for the Airport's capital improvements or for its day-to-day operation.

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