



### **Media Release**

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## **Wings for All® Lands at Evansville Regional Airport**

*The Arc's national program presented in partnership with American Airlines, EVV and area nonprofits provides families a simulated full airport travel experience*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 20, 2017

Evansville, Ind. – Evansville Regional Airport announced today that they, along with American Airlines, The Arc of the United States, The Arc of Evansville and Sycamore Services will host a Wings for All ® event for the first time in EVV's history. Concurrently, Wings for All® at EVV will be a first-time event in Indiana for American Airlines and only the fourth Wings for All® event in the state of Indiana. The event, scheduled for July 15, will provide an airport "rehearsal" for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and aviation professionals.

Originated by the Charles River Center, a local chapter of The Arc in Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Port Authority, Wings for Autism® was created to help children with autism to become more comfortable with air travel.

EVV's Wings for All® will be equally useful for families who have members with other intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and are concerned about the ability of their family members to travel. The realistic event will provide families the opportunity to practice entering the airport, obtaining boarding passes, going through security and boarding the plane.

As part of their "It's Cool to Fly American" program, American Airlines will play a key role in providing an aircraft and trained flight crew to greet and support families during a "flight" experience.

"Our goal is to create an environment with all of the sounds and sensations an individual could experience in flight – without ever leaving the ground," said Bruce Sickler, American Airlines President of Abilities Employee Business Resource Group.

Sickler said Wings for All® also gives American Airlines team members, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) professionals and other personnel the opportunity to observe, interact and deliver their services in a structured learning environment.

Nearly 80 participants from the tristate area are expected to attend the nationally recognized event at EVV. In addition to the airport simulation program, the evening will also include a private reception and giveaways for attendees starting at 5:30 p.m.

"We are excited to bring the Wings for All® program to Evansville," said Peter Berns, The Arc Chief Executive Officer. "For parents of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other disabilities, everyday tasks can sometimes prove to be far more difficult for their loved one. This program allows families and individuals to become more acclimated with the airport travel experience, while also helping to educate airport and airline professionals about how best to

serve children with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities in the future.”

**Registration is required for attending families and media.**

*Family & attendee registration:* <http://www.thearc.org/wingsforautism>

*Media RSVP:* available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EVV-WINGS2017>

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**About Evansville-Vanderburgh Airport Authority District (EVVAD)**

*Evansville Regional Airport is served by American Airlines, Delta and United, which connect passengers to hundreds of competitive-priced domestic and international destinations daily via direct flights to five top-rated hub cities – Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas and Detroit, and by Allegiant, which offers low-cost, nonstop flights to Orlando/Sanford. Evansville Regional Airport generates more than \$900 million in economic benefits annually, per the Economic Survey completed by the Aviation Association of Indiana in 2012. For more information, visit [www.flyevv.com](http://www.flyevv.com) [www.facebook.com/EVVairport](http://www.facebook.com/EVVairport) [www.twitter.com/FlyEVV](http://www.twitter.com/FlyEVV).*

**About The Arc of the United States**

*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. For more information, visit [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org) --- 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.*

**About The Arc of Evansville**

*The Arc of Evansville is a not-for-profit organization with the mission to empower individuals with disabilities to build relationships, gain independence and achieve their full potential. Founded in 1954 by a group of parents frustrated with the lack of services for their children with disabilities, the organization has become a leading advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Innovative services range from training and supports for employment, transition services from high school to adult life, volunteer opportunities in the community, and the development of life skills, in addition to an inclusive childcare center for children with and without disabilities. For more information, visit [www.arcofevansville.org](http://www.arcofevansville.org).*

**About Sycamore Services**

*Sycamore Services, Inc. is a 501©3 agency that has been providing quality services to individuals with disabilities in central and southern Indiana since 1961. Sycamore strives to make a difference by promoting and fostering talents, celebrating accomplishments and empowering individuals to feel valued and support them in achieving necessary skills to be independent in their own communities. To help individuals obtain goals, Sycamore Services provide a variety of programs that include, but are not limited to, Respite, Residential, Community and Employment Services, along with Interpreting Services for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. For more information, visit [www.sycamoreservices.com](http://www.sycamoreservices.com).*