



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YLW AND CANUCKS AUTISM NETWORK TEAM UP TO INCREASE AIRPORT ACCESSIBILITY



Kelowna, BC – On Sunday, November 18, Canucks Autism Network (CAN) and Kelowna International Airport (YLW) will be hosting their second annual YLW Accessibility Tour for families living with autism. Held from 2:00-4:30 pm in the YLW WestJet check-in area, over 70 individuals are expected at the event.

Due to anxiety or sensory sensitivities, air travel can present significant challenges for individuals with autism. The tour will take families through the entire pre-flight process, including check-in, security, finding their gate and boarding a plane.

Families will also receive Resource Kits with tools to better prepare for air travel, including an activity storybook, step-by-step checklist, tips for travel and an airport map. In addition to being given out at this month's tour, the kits are available at any time for individuals and families with autism departing from YLW.

The program also aims to educate airport employees and volunteers on how to accommodate individuals with autism and better anticipate challenging situations.



“We are thrilled to build off the success of last year’s inaugural Accessibility Tour at YLW,” said Katy Harandi, CAN’s President and Chief Executive Officer. “By making air travel more accessible, individuals and families living with autism can experience a new world of possibilities.”

Originally developed with Vancouver International Airport (YVR) in 2014, CAN successfully launched the program at YLW in 2017. In addition to be hosted by CAN and YLW, the YLW Accessibility Tour is offered in collaboration with the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA), WestJet and Autism Okanagan.

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Media wishing to attend must RSVP with name, outlet and title by Thursday, November 15 at 4 pm to jhewitt@kelowna.ca.

When: Sunday, November 18, 2018

1:30 – 2:00 pm	Media registration
2:00 – 3:15 pm	Families check-in
3:15 – 4:20 pm	Families board plane <i>*no media availability</i>
4:20 – 4:30 pm	Families return to check-in area
4:30 pm	Tour end

Note: Due to security restrictions, media will not be allowed to pass through security.

Who: Canucks Autism Network participating families
 Sam Samaddar, Airport Director, YLW
 Kayla Ungaro, Regional Coordinator, Canucks Autism Network

Where: Register at WestJet check-in area (see media registration table)

RSVP: Media wishing to attend must RSVP with name, outlet and title by Thursday, November 15 at 4 pm to jhewitt@kelowna.ca.

Parking: Media who attend are welcome to park in the short-term lot and bring in their vouchers to be validated.

For more information about YLW’s autism accessibility resources, please visit ylw.kelowna.ca/autism.



About Canucks Autism Network (CAN)

The Canucks Autism Network (CAN) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing year-round sports and recreation programs for individuals and families living with autism while raising autism awareness and providing training opportunities in communities across British Columbia. For more information, please visit canucksautism.ca.

For media interviews with Canucks Autism Network (CAN), please contact:

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About Kelowna International Airport (YLW)

As one of the top 11 busiest airports in Canada, YLW's total economic impact is 4,545 jobs and \$789 million in total economic output to the province of British Columbia. Serving 1.89 million passengers in 2017, YLW offers more than 70 daily non-stop commercial flights with nine airline partners. For more information, visit ylw.kelowna.ca.

For media interviews with Kelowna International Airport (YLW), please contact:

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