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News Release

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LOS ANGELES WORLD AIRPORTS, TSA, PARTNER AIRLINES JOIN FORCES TO HELP FAMILIES WITH AUTISM SELF-IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

(Los Angeles, California – March 27, 2015) Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) personnel, along with Transportation Security Administration (TSA), participating airlines and airport tenants will inaugurate an autism self-identification program at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on April 1, and at LA/Ontario International Airport on April 20.

The program is the result of a partnership between LAWA's Office of Disabilities, families with autistic children, and the LeRoy Haynes Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children with special needs.

"By self-identifying, potential incidents with police, airport, and airline personnel can be defused," Lawrence Rolon, LAWA's coordinator for disability services, said. "Stickers identify the person with autism. If a behavioral incident occurs, the responding personnel will immediately recognize the behavior is likely a result of autism."

"Airport employees have received training on how to recognize the stickers and their meaning," Rolon said. "They also received training on recognizing different types of behavior they may encounter and working with parents to defuse situations before they become problems," he added.

Rolon said the value of identifying quiet areas and less busy parts of terminals for families to use is also being reinforced as part of the self-identification program.

Participation in the program is voluntary. Families self-identify at the ticketing counter of the participating airlines and receive two stickers per child (one for the front and the other for the back). The stickers and program are recognized at LAWA only, however, LAWA is making an effort to expand the self-identification program nationwide.

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Thus far, the airlines participating in the voluntary self-identification program are American, United, Copa, Air New Zealand, Southwest and Virgin America.

In addition to LAWA and TSA, other program participants include the Haynes Family of Services; parents of the LeRoy Haynes Center, Aero Port Services, Reliant Immediate Care Medical Center and the Los Angeles Fire Department.

Rolon added that LAWA and its partners view service to persons with disabilities as an important mission which they take very seriously. "Families with autism are encouraged to provide input to help alleviate their concerns about flying and their previous experiences," he said. "The knowledge gained will help the airport community make the flight experience for families much less stressful."

Only airlines that indicate they want to participate are part of the self-identification program. As new airlines join in, they will be added to LAWA's Americans with Disability Act website. Periodically check the airport's website at for additional updates on participating airlines and partners at <http://www.lawa.aero/ADA.aspx?id=1766>

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PHOTO CAPTION:



SELF-IDENTIFY—Mother helps her son deal with the stresses of an airport environment. The child is wearing a self-identification sticker which alerts the airport personnel to the fact that the child has autism and the mother may need a helping hand. Airport Police such as [Officer Luis Alejandreas](#) (pictured above), airline, and airport personnel are trained to assist families who self-identify, cope with the stresses an airport environment may have on their family members with autism.