



News Release

Detroit Metropolitan Airport launches two new programs to delight and assist customers

DETROIT (September 28, 2022) – Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) is striving to enhance the customer experience at DTW by introducing two new initiatives, the DTW Dogs Pet Therapy program and the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program.

“We are constantly looking for opportunities to address the needs and exceed the expectations of our customers,” said Wayne County Airport Authority CEO Chad Newton. “We hope the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program will help travelers across the disability community feel even more welcome at DTW. We want our customers to know they’re supported. Through our DTW Dogs initiative, we’re fairly confident every customer who crosses paths with our volunteers will leave smiling. After the last two years of the pandemic, our DTW team wants to lift everyone’s spirits; we believe these new programs will accomplish that goal.”

DTW Dogs Pet Therapy Program – The DTW Dogs program is designed to eliminate some of the stress traveling can cause through interaction with certified therapy dogs. The owners and their four-legged companions are members of The Fur Angels Pet Therapy Group, based in Rochester, Michigan. Each team volunteering at DTW has been trained to assist customers, similar to the Airport Ambassador Volunteer Program. The first Fur Angels members to join the DTW Dogs program are a Great Dane, two golden retrievers, a toy fox terrier, and their owners. The teams volunteer in the gate areas of both terminals. More information is available at <https://www.metroairport.com/dtw/services-amenities/dtw-dogs-pet-therapy-program>.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program – Passengers with a hidden disability, who are traveling through Detroit Metropolitan Airport, will now have the opportunity to discreetly identify themselves by displaying a Sunflower lanyard or wristband. A hidden disability is not visible and may be physical, mental or neurological. The Sunflower symbol alerts airport workers that special attention or additional assistance may be needed. The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program is recognized in more than 160 airports worldwide, including over 50 in the United States.

DTW customers interested in obtaining a sunflower lanyard or wristband may contact the Airport Authority by emailing Community Outreach Programs Manager Matt Virost at matthew.virost@wcaa.us to arrange for delivery by mail or pick-up during business hours. The Sunflower program is not intended to replace existing procedures or programs. Customers must still notify their airline if they need a wheelchair or other accommodations while traveling. Also, travelers may always request assistance through screening checkpoints by speaking with a TSA officer upon arrival at the airport or by calling the TSA Cares helpline (855-787-2227) prior to their trip. To learn more about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program, visit <https://www.metroairport.com/dtw/getting-around/accessibility-additional-assistance/hidden-disabilities-sunflower-program>.

*Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) serviced more than 23 million passengers in 2021, amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, DTW welcomed more than 36 million passengers. As one of the world's leading air transportation hubs, DTW offers service from 12 scheduled passenger airlines. Michigan's largest airport offers approximately 800 flights per day to and from more than 125 nonstop destinations on three continents. With two award-winning passenger terminals, six jet runways, and an onsite AAA Four-Diamond Westin Hotel, DTW is among the world's most efficient, customer friendly and operationally capable airports in North America. Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport earned Airports Council International's 2020 Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport by Size and Region (25 to 40 million passengers per year in North America). DTW also received the highest score among mega airports in the J.D. Power 2019 North America Airport Satisfaction Study of customers' satisfaction with the airport they traveled through and scored the highest in the security check and terminal facilities factors. Visit jdpower.com/awards for details. DTW is operated by the **Wayne County Airport Authority**, which also operates nearby **Willow Run Airport** – an important corporate, cargo and general aviation facility. The Airport Authority is entirely self-sustaining and does not receive tax dollars to support airport operations. Visit www.metroairport.com for more information.*

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