

SOUTH CAROLINA TOWN BECOMES FIRST AUTISM-FRIENDLY TRAVEL DESTINATION--

Surfside Beach, South Carolina, January 2016-- Surfside Beach SC, known as “The Family Beach,” just South of Myrtle Beach, declared itself an [Autism friendly travel destination](#) on January 12th, 2016.

Already known for its beach, fishing pier and the nearby Marsh Walk, Sky Wheel, Myrtle Beach boardwalk, Waccatee Zoo, zip lining, Broadway at the Beach, museums, aquarium, mini-golf, golf, and dozens of other attractions, Surfside Beach is telling families with children with Autism to come over and play. As Sammy Truett, Chairman of the Surfside Beach Business Committee and a major supporter, said, “I felt it was a good idea from a perspective of showing off our town, how friendly we are, opening our arms and offering our town to those who aren't able to get out due to constraints of having a child with Autism.”

To kick-off the initiative, three long weekends are being planned in April in recognition of Autism Awareness Month. Starting with local property management agency [Surfside Realty](#), and area hotels, [Holiday Inn](#), [Surfside Beach Resort](#), and [Comfort Inn](#) preparing beach houses, condos and hotel rooms for the arrival of kids who might have meltdowns or seizures.

Since autism can bring with it a variety of behavioral issues, parents of autistic kids are weary of nasty looks and glares. Surfside Beach has committed to transforming itself into a judgment-free zone, both at the beach and the surrounding area with businesses, restaurants and venues being trained in the needs of children on the Autism Spectrum.

The outreach to families with children on The Spectrum was spearheaded by Becky Large of Champion Autism Network, or CAN. She started the Sensory Friendly Movies in 2014 at the Grand 14 in Myrtle Beach. The response was overwhelming and the parents kept asking, “What else is there?!!” In response to them, in 2015, she wrote a grant and received start-up funds through the United Way of Horry County to start the ACE (Autism Community Education) Program with Autism services provider [SOS Healthcare, Inc.](#), which trains businesses, venues and restaurants in the needs of those with Autism. Being in Surfside Beach, creating an Autism-Friendly Travel Destination was the next logical extension.

About Surfside Beach, S.C.

Surfside Beach is located just south of Myrtle Beach and 6 miles from the Myrtle Beach International Airport. Known as a smaller, quieter vacation alternative to its busier neighbor to the north, the town offers its own thriving businesses, activities, and a fishing pier, and is only a brief drive away from the many more attractions, activities, restaurants, boardwalks, and state parks of greater Myrtle Beach and the Grand Strand.

MORE

About Champion Autism Network:

CAN is a movement that aims to increase Autism Awareness and provide support to families effected by Autism. The mission is to reduce challenges and barriers to allow families with a child with Autism to have a “normal” family outing or experience, reducing sensory input and creating inviting environments for children with Autism, their parents and siblings.

About Autism

Autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders – Autism Spectrum Disorders. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by communication difficulties, social and behavioral challenges, and repetitive behaviors. An estimated 1 in 68 children in the U.S. is on the Autism Spectrum and that number is increasing.

For more information, go to www.championautismnetwork.com or
Champion Autism Network on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ChampionAutismNetwork

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