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### **Wings for Autism® comes to Ted Steven International Airport on Sunday, November 16, 2014 from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

The Arc of Anchorage, in collaboration with Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Alaska Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Alaska Autism Resource Center (AARC), will be hosting its second Wings for Autism® at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport on November 16, 2014 from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Wings for Autism® event is an airport “rehearsal” specially designed for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families and aviation professionals. Originated by the Charles River Center, a local chapter of The Arc, Wings for Autism® is designed to alleviate some of the stress that families who have a child with autism experience when traveling by air. The program provides families with the opportunity to practice entering the airport, obtain boarding passes, go through security and board a plane. Wings for Autism® also gives airport, airline, Transportation Security Administration professionals and other personnel the opportunity to observe, interact and deliver their services in a structured, learning environment. This experience is equally useful for families that have a member with other intellectual or developmental disabilities that are concerned about the ability of their family member to travel. National expansion of Wings for Autism® is being administered by The Arc of the United States.

“For many people with Autism and who experience intellectual/developmental disabilities the experience of air travel can be challenging and difficult. The purpose of this event is to be proactive by developing, implementing, and replicating effective air travel training for both people who experience intellectual/developmental disabilities and the national air travel industry,” said Dr. Mary Van Haneghan, Executive Director for The Arc of Anchorage. “Air travel is a vital part of being an Alaskan, so we are thrilled to have the opportunity to sponsor this event and assist people with an avenue to experience the wonderful world of air travel.”

To register for this event please see <http://www.thearc.org/wingsforautism/ANC/November-2014>. Space is limited and only registered participants will be able to attend. A reception will be held for the participants upon deplaning. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Caryn Brunello, Marketing Director at 907.777.0101.

The mission of the AARC is to increase understanding and support for Alaskans of all ages with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) through collaboration with families, schools, communities, and other service providers throughout the state. The Alaska Autism Resource Center is thrilled to partner with The Arc of Anchorage, Alaska Airlines, TSA, and the Ted Stevens International Airport to bring the Wings for Autism® program to Anchorage. Tara Maltby of the AARC said, “Traveling by airplane is a necessity in Alaska. Often families do not have the luxury of driving to visit relatives, or to a favorite vacation spot due to the remote nature of the Alaskan landscape. This event will give participants and their families a much needed opportunity to familiarize themselves with the airport, and the entire process of checking in, moving through security, and boarding a plane. Like last year, the AARC will be providing visual supports to each of the participants. Please contact the AARC if you are interested in picking up visual supports prior to the event.”

“For parents of children with autism spectrum disorders, everyday tasks can sometimes prove to be far more difficult for their child. Air travel can be particularly challenging between clearing security, the overwhelming noises, and harsh lights. As we have learned from previous events, this program is opening the sky up to families who previously thought air travel would be too much for their loved one. We hope this is the first of many successful events in Alaska and we look forward to hearing from families about their experiences. We extend our gratitude to our partners on the ground in Anchorage – The Alaska Autism Resource Center, Alaska Airlines, the Transportation Security Administration, the Ted Stevens International Airport, and of course The Arc of Anchorage – which are committed to making air travel possible for families with children with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

Founded in 1957 by a group of parents, The Arc of Anchorage's goal is to ensure people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities have the opportunity to lead full, satisfying lives as valued members of our community. The Arc of Anchorage has a full array of services including behavioral health services, care coordination, community living services, support for the deaf and hard of hearing, nursing, recreation, short term assistance and referral and supported employment.

*Editor's 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.

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