

Written by Tyler Hollis
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Visit Mesa Launches Customer Service Program Aimed at Supporting Accessible Travel Market

Mesa, Ariz. is the first U.S. travel destination to adopt the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, a program lauded for supporting travelers with various needs as a way for them to secure additional support they may require while traveling. Developed and launched in the United Kingdom, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is now a recognized icon that accessible travelers can utilize to discreetly be identified as having a disability. Through identification by service representatives in the hospitality industry, accessible travelers can be assured they will be given attention and support during their journey.

Visit Mesa, the City of Mesa's destination marketing organization, is the first Arizona Visitor Center to offer the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower complimentary lanyards and bracelets. When worn, the sunflower serves as a visual cue to trained visitor industry staff throughout Mesa who will then be able to recognize if that traveler, or traveler's companion, would like additional support during their visit.

In addition to the Mesa Visitors Center (120 N. Center, Mesa), guests can pick up their complimentary Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyards and bracelets at these participating Mesa, Ariz. locations:

- Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport
- Sheraton Mesa Hotel at Wrigleyville West
- Holiday Inn & Suites Phoenix-Mesa/Chandler
- Delta Hotels by Marriott Phoenix-Mesa
- DoubleTree by Hilton Phoenix Mesa
- i.d.e.a. Museum
- Arizona Museum of Natural History
- COPA Health

"When we had learned about this program and how widely accepted it was overseas, we knew we could deploy this in Mesa as a logical extension of our citywide Autism certification," said Alison Brooks, Director of Special Projects for Visit Mesa. "We've already proven Mesa's hospitality community is compassionate and this level of awareness in our destination will offer another layer of support for a special group of travelers. We hope to see the use of Visit Mesa's Hidden Disabilities Sunflower extend into other areas of our community, to support visitors and residents alike."

With Visit Mesa leading the initiative, the City of Mesa earned the [first-ever Autism Certified City](#)

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distinction in late 2019. Visit Mesa's Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program is endorsed by COPA Health, one of Mesa's longest-standing private non-profit organizations dedicated to changing the lives of those with developmental, intellectual, or behavioral challenges. Visit Mesa is also launching an online resource for accessible travelers planning trips to Mesa, www.AccessibleAz.com. The site is full of travel-related links to information and resources helpful prior to visiting the area.

To learn more about the Sunflower Campaign, watch an informative video on the use and application of the sunflower lanyards and bracelets at:

<https://www.visitmesa.com/travel-accessibility/hidden-disabilities-sunflower-program/>