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Make-A-Wish® Michigan Names GFIA Community Partner Honoree of the Year



(Above): GFIA Staff accept the Community Honoree of the Year Award.

Grand Rapids, Mich. – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) was recognized as the Community Partner Honoree of the Year by Make-A-Wish® Michigan at this past Friday night's annual Wish Ball.

As a part of Wish Ball – West Michigan, Make-A-Wish® Michigan recognizes three honorees: an Individual Honoree, a Corporate Partner Honoree, and a Community Partner Honoree. Each honoree is selected based on the impact they have on the organization's ability to grant wishes to Michigan children with life-threatening medical conditions.

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport was selected as the 2017 Community Partner Honoree because of its game-changing impact on the Make-A-Wish® Michigan mission, and the Airport's commitment to creating special experiences for wish kids and families as they leave for their wish journeys. GFIA also played a vital role in the enhancement of Anthony's wish to become a pilot, the 9,000th wish granted by Make-A-Wish® Michigan. Anthony was also surprised at the ball as Grand



Rapids Station Manager for Southwest Nate Tenbrink told Anthony that Southwest would be flying him to Dallas to experience the Flight Operations Center, and he will get to ride in a 737 simulator.

“What a tremendous honor to be recognized by Make-A-Wish® Michigan among all of the wonderful partners in the community,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill. “We are proud to work with Make-A-Wish to make wishes come true, and to send the families off with a stress-free experience and a break from their times at medical appointments and hospital visits. Kudos to Tara Hernandez, our Marketing Director, and our entire staff who take time to make each wish experience special for the kids traveling through our airport.”

Make-A-Wish® Michigan has sent hundreds of kids and their families through the Gerald R. Ford International Airport, and 75-percent of wishes involve travel.

“The Gerald R. Ford International Airport has been a wonderful partner for many years,” said Karen Davis, president & CEO of Make-A-Wish® Michigan. “They go out of their way to provide special send offs and enhancements to our wish kids. We are so grateful for their support and the special care they extend to our wish kids and families. Make-A-Wish Michigan is delighted to recognize them as our 2017 Community Partner Honoree. This year’s Wish Ball theme was Let Your Dreams Take Flight, which is exactly what special friends like the Gerald R. Ford International Airport allow our wish children to do.”

With the help of generous donors and 40,000 volunteers worldwide, Make-A-Wish has collectively granted more than 415,000 wishes worldwide, making it the world’s largest wish-granting organization. For more information on Make-A-Wish Michigan, visit www.michigan.wish.org

For interviews, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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About GFIA

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The airport served over 2.6 million passengers in 2016 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 24 major market destinations with more than 120 daily nonstop flights. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. GFIA generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan, and employs over 1,500 people. For more information on GFIA visit: www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Twitter: @FlyGRFord