

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Santa to Visit GFIA During 21st Annual Holiday Music Festival



Grand Rapids, MI – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is getting into the holiday spirit with a music festival, Irish dancers, and a visit from Santa Claus.

Kris Kringle will be listening to children's requests, and passing out candy in the Airport's Grand Hall **from 1 - 4 p.m. on Friday, December 11th**. Visitors are encouraged to bring a camera to snap a photo with Santa Claus. Photos with Santa are free of charge, but the airport is asking guests to bring in two non-perishable food items per person or make a monetary donation to Mel Trotter Ministries.

In addition to Santa's appearance, GFIA's traditional Holiday Music Festival is running the week of December 7-11th. The 21st Annual Holiday Music Festival brings in elementary, middle, and high school choirs from around West Michigan singing a variety of Christmas carols. Daily performances run from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. A total of 11 local choirs representing public, charter and private schools



sing 20 minute song sets throughout the day, putting passengers and guests at GFIA in the holiday spirit.

“Our airport is extremely busy around the holidays, but it is important for us to reflect upon what this season is all about,” said GFIA Executive Director Brian Ryks. “We are hoping we can put some smiles on children’s faces as they sit on Santa’s lap and listen to carols, and at the same time we are asking West Michigan to give back to the community by donating non-perishable food items to those in need.”

The donated non-perishable food items will go to Mel Trotter Ministries of West Michigan.

“The holiday season is an important time for the Mel Trotter Ministries Food Pantry,” said Abbey Sladick, Director of Community Relations at Mel Trotter Ministries. “The food donated will help sustain us throughout the year, and we are blessed to be able to partner with the airport to ensure many families in Grand Rapids will not go hungry.”

In addition to the music festival & Santa’s visit, piano players and Irish dancers will also be making an appearance at the airport during the holiday season. The Ardan Academy of Irish Dance will be performing on **Sunday, December 20th at the airport from 2-4 p.m.**

All events are free and open to the public.

For interview or photo requests, please contact Tara Hernandez.

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