

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Sensory Guide for Santa's Village

Boston, MA (April 26, 2021) — Santa's Village in Jefferson, New Hampshire offers pure joy in a fun, open air, family setting. This year they are extending their holiday cheer to be even more family friendly with the launch of their Sensory Guide. Santa's Village is family owned and operated since its founding in 1953, and the park in partnership with Sensory City will have the Sensory Guide available for the 2021 season, which is scheduled to begin late-May and continue into December.

Sensory Guides are a vital tool for families to prepare before a major outing. They help to avoid areas that might be over stimulating and while inside the amusement park, they are a reference point to find rides or experiences that are tolerable. United Nations-sanctioned World Autism Awareness Day, April 2, began a month-long campaign to raise awareness for Autism. One in every 270 persons worldwide has Autism Spectrum Disorder.

"So many families have a child with unique and invisible sensory needs. Some children are sensitive to loud sounds, bright lights and various textures. This guide will serve as a park preview so that families will understand ahead of time which attractions will be suitable for their children or which ones they will want to avoid. The ability to have this information in advance and locate "quiet areas", makes the day more enjoyable for all," explains Tanya Acosta, the Executive Director of Sensory City.

"Santa's Village is pleased to be New Hampshire's first theme park to team with Sensory City and The Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism to create a Sensory Guide to ensure all families can enjoy 'Pure Joy. Family Style.' while visiting the children's theme park in Jefferson, NH", says Jim Miller, Santa's Helper. "This is a wonderful example of an establishment welcoming those with all abilities. We are delighted with this decision and hope that other parks in the Northeast will follow suit", says Miller. Sensory City, with funding provided by the Flutie Foundation, shared their skills and knowledge to help make it possible for Santa's Village to ensure all families can make well-informed decisions about their ability to safely and comfortably visit the park," Jim Miller, Santa's Helper.

The managers at the park will be receiving Sensory Awareness training from [www.sensoryawarenesstraining.com](http://www.sensoryawarenesstraining.com), a two-hour virtual training which helps individuals understand more about those with invisible disabilities like autism, dementia, ADHD and others. Additional training objectives include best practices when speaking to those who have communication disorders, understanding what communication devices are, and strategies for de-escalation of a sensory meltdown. The sensory awareness training was created by a certified Speech and Language Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist. The sensory guide will be available to families when the 2021 season opens in late May. They will be able to download it from the Santa'sVillage website prior to their arrival and there will also be onsite versions available.

For information on becoming 'Sensory Friendly Certified' please visit [www.sensorycity.org](http://www.sensorycity.org). To learn more about Santa's Village visit <https://www.santasvillage.com/> and The Flutie Foundation visit <https://www.flutiefoundation.org/>

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## About Sensory City

Sensory City is an organization that is dedicated to helping children with disabilities. The Boston based non-profit is striving to make family outings more enjoyable and accessible for families and persons with disabilities.

Founded in 2018 by Tanya Acosta, an accredited Speech Pathologist, who is also the Director of Boston Speech Therapy. She is a bilingual speech and language pathologist with more than 15 years of experience working with children who have sensory needs. Tanya's inspiration for creating this organization is her son Colin, who was born with Down Syndrome and has sensory issues. Sensory City is rapidly growing within the hotel, travel and amusement industry.

### **About Santa's Village**

Santa's Village is a children's theme park in Jefferson, in New Hampshire's White Mountains. The park features twenty amusements rides, a waterpark, live and animated shows, visits with Santa and real reindeer, and other attractions, set among gardens, streams, ponds and evergreens. Santa's Village has been owned and operated by one family since its founding in 1953, and is now in its third generation of delivering pure joy, family style, to guests of multiple generations. In addition to the attractions and entertainment, the park is known for signature treats made daily at the park, including fresh-baked gingerbread cookies ready for decorating, homemade ice cream and fudge, fresh-made mini-doughnuts, and meals and snacks both warm and cold. Santa's Village is annually recognized as one of the country's top amusement parks by national consumer review websites, and regularly places first among those located within New England. More information can be found at [santasvillage.com](http://santasvillage.com).

### **About Doug Flutie Jr., Foundation for Autism**

Former NFL Quarterback, Doug Flutie, and his wife Laurie started the Doug Flutie, Jr. Flutie Foundation for Autism in 1998 after their son, Dougie, was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. Their personal experience of raising a son on the autism spectrum inspired them to help others on an equally long and challenging journey. Over its 20-year history, the Flutie Foundation has distributed over \$15 million to schools and organizations who provide clinical therapies, respite services, recreational programs, social skills training, job supports and more for people affected by autism. The Flutie Foundation also provides education technology tools, adaptive camp scholarships, safety equipment, and direct family support through its partnerships and special initiatives.

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