



## **Sesame Place Philadelphia Partners with Blue Bridge, LLC. to Expand Training Tools to Support the Needs of Autistic Guests**

**PHILADELPHIA, Pa. (January 26, 2023)** – Sesame Place® Philadelphia, the first theme park in the U.S. based entirely on the award-winning show *Sesame Street*®, completed Blue Bridge Autism Training for First Responders for all full-time and security staff. Blue Bridge’s training offers a comprehensive presentation on how autistic behaviors are directly affected by sensory and communication challenges, giving Ambassadors further insight and tools for emotional de-escalation and improved communication.

“Here at Sesame Place we’re proud to work with organizations like Blue Bridge to continue to expand the ways in which we can better support the needs of park guests and provide the best experiences possible for everyone,” said Cathy Valeriano, Park President of Sesame Place Philadelphia.

Blue Bridge, LLC, was created by retired police Captain Gerald Turning, Jr., who spent 25 years in law enforcement, upon his retirement in 2020. He has since trained personnel from over 150 law enforcement, EMS, fire, paramedic, and search-and-rescue agencies in 34 states, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Turning also has a teenage son, Eric, who was diagnosed with autism as a child in 2007 and frequents the park as a Season Pass Member.

“Sesame Place is one of the world’s warmest, safest, and most accommodating theme parks – and we are making it better,” said Captain Turning. “Sesame Place staff is receiving training on par with the most progressive, forward-thinking law enforcement and emergency response organizations in the world. I don’t have the words to express how much this means to special needs families. I couldn’t be prouder to work with Sesame Place.”

Sesame Place provides numerous resources for autistic guests and guests with sensory processing issues. Guests in need of quiet time and relief from sensory stimulation can utilize the park’s code-activated quiet room, which features comfortable seating and lowered lighting, and noise-canceling headphones provided for single-day use. The park also added a family restroom with an adult changing table, a designated space for low-sensory parade viewing, and limited character interactions at its character dining experience, Dine with Elmo & Friends.

In 2018, Sesame Place Philadelphia became the first theme park in the world to become a Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) as designated by the International Board of Credentialing and Continued Education Standards (IBCCES). In 2022, the park completed its first staff-wide recertification. As a CAC, Sesame Place offers services and facilities for autistic and sensory-

sensitive guests and ongoing training for Ambassadors is required to ensure they have the requisite knowledge, skills, temperament, and expertise to cater to guests of all abilities.

Sesame Place offers an IBCCES Accessibility Card, which is intended to help individuals requesting special accommodations participate in the park's Ride Accessibility Program, and the Special Access Pass, an accommodation that gives priority boarding on select attractions to guests who are unable to stand in line because of their physical or cognitive need.

In its partnership with IBCCES, Sesame Place's attractions, shows, parades, and restaurants were audited on a sensory scale to create a branded Sensory Guide, which is available online and at Guest Relations and the Welcome Center at the park.

Guests can find resources for their visit at <https://sesameplace.com/philadelphia/help/autism-resources/>.

### **The Best Way to Play**

The best way to play at Sesame Place is with a 2023 Season Pass. Season Pass Members can enjoy unlimited visits and unbelievable benefits, including exclusive preview days and events, Early Ride Times and VIP Meet & Greets. Season Passes also include perks such as free parking, free friend tickets, discounted food and merchandise, and more bonuses throughout 2023. Perks vary based on the type of Season Pass purchased. For more information and to purchase Season Passes, guests can visit Guest Relations or <http://sesameplace.com/philadelphia/season-pass>.

### **About Sesame Place**

Sesame Place Philadelphia, the only theme park on the East Coast based entirely on the award-winning show, *Sesame Street*<sup>®</sup>, was the first theme park in the world to become a Certified Autism Center. The park has more than 25 Sesame Street-themed attractions, entertaining character shows and parades, an interactive Sesame Street Neighborhood, and everyone's favorite furry friends. Celebrate family-friendly events all year long at Sesame Place including Elmo's Eggstravaganza, Elmo's Springtacular, Summer Fun Fest, The Count's Halloween Spooktacular, and A Very Furry Christmas. Conveniently located 30 minutes from Philadelphia and 90 minutes from NYC, Sesame Place is ideal for families with kids of all ages. For more information, visit [www.sesameplace.com/philadelphia](http://www.sesameplace.com/philadelphia) and follow the park on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

###

### **Media Contact:**

SPPR@SesamePlace.com