

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum Reaffirms Commitment to the Autism Community through IBCCES Autism Recertification

Oklahoma City, Okla. [February 27, 2024] — The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, a beacon of Western culture and heritage, proudly announces its continued dedication to inclusivity and accessibility with its recertification as a Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES).

“The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum serves guests from various communities and abilities. Training staff to be adaptable to and aware of guests' needs and offering available resources helps create the welcoming environment the museum strives to create. As a Certified Autism Center™, the museum demonstrates its commitment to its core values by creating avenues for all guests to ‘Find their West’,” shares Diana Fields, VP of Grant and Education Advancement.

Since initially receiving the CAC designation, the museum has been proactive in its approach to accommodate autistic and sensory-sensitive guests. In partnership with the Autism Foundation of Oklahoma, the museum has equipped its facility with 23 sensory kits, available at no cost to guests. These kits, featuring weighted blankets, noise-canceling headphones, communication devices and various fidget tools, are designed to ensure a comfortable museum experience for all.

Building upon its inclusive initiatives, the museum has fostered a collaborative relationship in 2023 with Aspiring Attitudes, a nonprofit dedicated to making dance accessible to individuals of all abilities. This alliance has brought the joy of Western dance to select museum events and family programs, celebrating the universal language of dance.

Aiming for a sensory-friendly environment, the museum has also enhanced sensory guides—provided by IBCCES—to be on a color-coordinated scale and available in all museum spaces. Additionally, social narratives have been crafted for three distinct scenarios: a general museum visit, an educational tour and the museum's renowned annual festivals.

Diana Davis, guest services manager, shares, "To see the impact we have on families' lives when they walk in knowing that their kids are in a safe place is priceless. It is a gift that these families do not take for granted. There are several examples I could give, but the one I think is the most important is about a father and a son. The son is in his twenties, and he is on the autism spectrum. He had a sensory overload at the museum, and his father was impressed with how we handled the situation. They became members after that."

"IBCCES is proud to support the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in its mission to be an inclusive destination for all visitors. Our comprehensive training and certification process ensures that institutions like the museum are equipped with the latest information and best strategies to serve the needs of all guests, including those who are autistic or have sensory needs," shares Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. "This commitment to continuous improvement is what makes the museum a true leader in the cultural community."

For more information about National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum's accessibility resources and programs, please visit nationalcowboymuseum.org/plan-your-visit/museum-accessibility or to find more certified locations visit AutismTravel.com.

About National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.

About IBCCES

Delivering The Global Standard for Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

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