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NATURE REALM EARNS FIRST “AUTISM FRIENDLY” DESIGNATION FROM AUTISM SOCIETY OF GREATER AKRON

Kick-off Family Event to be Held June 2

The visitors center at F.A. Seiberling Nature Realm in Sand Run Metro Park is the first facility to earn the Autism Society of Greater Akron’s (ASGA’s) “Autism Friendly” designation. To mark the occasion, Summit Metro Parks and ASGA will host a family event at the Nature Realm (1828 Smith Rd., Akron) on June 2 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

“Summit Metro Parks is proud to promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone who wishes to connect with nature,” said Executive Director Lisa King. “We look forward to continuing to build on our strong partnership with the Autism Society of Greater Akron.”

To earn the Autism Friendly distinction, Summit Metro Parks completed ASGA’s Autism Friendly Communities program. Staff were trained to recognize and understand the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families, and to accommodate potential adaptations. The Nature Realm will also publicly display signage indicating that it is a supportive and inclusive place to visit. At the June 2 event, families are invited to take a hike, feed the birds, go on a scavenger hunt, observe live animals and make a craft.

The Autism Friendly Communities program was launched in 2017 when County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Summit County Council passed a resolution declaring the county the first in Ohio committed to being Autism Friendly.

The Autism Society of Greater Akron (ASGA) is one of more than 100 affiliates nationwide that are part of the Autism Society of America, the nation's largest and oldest grassroots autism organization. ASGA serves Summit, Stark, Wayne, Portage and Medina counties. ASGA works locally to achieve its mission to improve the lives of all affected by autism.

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Summit Metro Parks manages 14,300 acres, including 16 parks, several conservation areas and more than 125 miles of trails, with 22.4 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 5 million visits. Visit us online at summitmetroparks.org.



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