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Over 1,000 Participate in Airport Runway 5K



GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Over 1,000 runners and walkers braved the rain and laced up their sneakers for a behind-the-scenes 5K on one of the runways at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA).

The Runway 5K, in its second year at GFIA, is unique as it gives runners and walkers a chance to run with planes in the background and along the route. The race began near the cargo facilities, continuing under the Airport’s tunnel, looping around by the airport fire station, and wrapped around on Runway 8L/26R – GFIA’s general aviation runway. The Airport’s two other commercial aviation runways were operational, giving participants a chance to soak in an up-close-and-personal sight.

“This was a tremendous opportunity for runners, walkers, and families who wanted to experience a fun event on one of our runways that is normally only being used for aircraft,” said GFIA Marketing & Communications Director Tara Hernandez. “It was exciting to see West Michigan come out and



brave the elements to experience our facility like never before, plus support a wonderful charity at the same time.”

GFIA selected Make-A-Wish Michigan as its charity of choice to donate the race proceeds. Last year, the Runway 5K raised \$10,000 for Make-A-Wish Michigan. This year, event organizers expect to top that number.

“We’re delighted that the Gerald R. Ford International Airport is once again hosting the Runway 5K to benefit Make-A-Wish Michigan,” said Karen Davis, president & CEO of Make-A-Wish Michigan. “We are so grateful for their support and the special care they extend to our wish kids and families. It’s through the generous support of our Michigan community, like our friends at GFIA, that we are able to grant transformational wishes to Michigan children battling critical illnesses.

“Make-A-Wish Michigan does tremendous work in our community, and we are thrilled to be able to donate proceeds from our Runway 5K to this organization,” said GFIA President & CEO Jim Gill. “We see Make-A-Wish kids in our airport on a regular basis, and although we wish that was less frequent; we are happy to help grant more wishes in West Michigan through this donation.”

For more information or interviews, please contact Tara Hernandez.



The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The airport served over 2.7 million passengers in 2017 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 26 major market destinations with more than 120 daily nonstop flights, and the Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford



International Airport Authority. GFIA generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan, and employs over 2,000 people. For more information on GFIA visit: www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter: @FlyGRFord

Make-A-Wish® Michigan grants the wishes of children with critical illness. Since 1984, Make-A-Wish Michigan has granted more than 9,500 wishes. This year, the organization expects to grant wishes to about 450 Michigan children. Based in Brighton, Mich., with an office in Grand Rapids, Make-A-Wish Michigan is funded through community support. 80 percent of each dollar spent benefits the Michigan wish-granting program. Visit www.michigan.wish.org to learn more.