

2017 DAC Achievement Award Nomination Form

Nominee Information

Nominee Name: Director of Aviation Kevin Meikle & the Department of Airports

Nominee Address: _____

Nominee Phone: _____

Nominee Email: _____

Nominator Information

Nominator Name: Melissa Garza-Perry

Nominator Address: _____

Nominator Phone: _____

Nominator Email: _____

Nomination Category (please select one):

- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Organization
- ☒ City of Fresno Employee or Department

Nominated for:

- ☒ Improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Advocacy for issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities
- ☒ Volunteerism that has a positive impact on individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Development of new programs or services impacting individuals with disabilities
- ☒ Customer service to individuals with disabilities that is above and beyond the standard

2017 DAC Achievement Award Nomination Form

Nominee Information

Nominee Name: Melissa Garza-Perry and Vikkie Calderon

Nominee Address: [REDACTED]

Nominee Phone: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Nominee Email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Nominator Information

Nominator Name: City of Fresno Airports Department

Nominator Address: [REDACTED]

Nominator Phone: 559-884-1504 [REDACTED]

Nominator Email: [REDACTED]

Nomination Category (please select one):

- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Organization
 - ✓ City of Fresno Employee or Department

Nominated for:

- ☐ Improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities
 - ✓ Advocacy for issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Volunteerism that has a positive impact on individuals with disabilities
 - ✓ Development of new programs or services impacting individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Customer service to individuals with disabilities that is above and beyond the standard
- ☐ Innovation or Entrepreneurship by an individual with a disability or that has a positive impact on individuals with disabilities

Nomination Statement

Give a brief description (300-500 words) of why you feel your nominee should receive this award. Attach two to six letters from people able to provide supporting testimony (peers, parents, students, clients, etc.), additional supporting materials, and photo of nominee (optional). Attach additional pages if necessary.

The City of Fresno Airports Department is nominating Melissa Garza-Perry and Vikkie Calderon for the DAC Achievement Award for the City of Fresno Employee or Department in the area of advocacy for issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities and the development of new programs or services impacting individuals with disabilities.

Melissa Garza-Perry and Vikkie Calderon were instrumental in bringing California's inaugural "Wings for Autism®" program to the Fresno Yosemite International Airport. The first two events were held on May 13, 2017 at the Airport. Melissa and Vikkie invested many hours in the year long process of preparing for this day of fun and learning. The Arc's Wings for Autism®, launched in 2011, has been hosted at various airports across the country with Fresno Yosemite International Airport serving as the first airport to host The Arc's program in California. The opportunity was made possible with the support of the Fresno Yosemite International Airport in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services, HP, the media, and many volunteers to make the event a success. Fifty families from California's Central Valley benefitted from the opportunity.

The passion exhibited by these two individuals was apparent in the support received from the community and the turnout of volunteers, participants and media. The planning was a lengthy process which began with engaging the participation of the event's partners. Scheduling a time when all partners were available had to be done and once a date was chosen all of the real work began. There was media to schedule, volunteers and escorts to organize, banners to be made, photographers to be hired,

equipment to be provided, shirts to be ordered, gift bags to be assembled, terminal gates to be assigned, and most of all, scheduling the participants.

The Wings for Autism® program's purpose is to introduce people with autism spectrum disorders or intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families to the experience the process traveling by air, from ticketing and security all the way to boarding the aircraft and having it move away from the gate. Bringing this program to Fresno with the perseverance of Melissa and Vikkie is a huge benefit to the local community and surrounding area by offering the opportunity for people with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience what it would be like to travel by air and making the planning and execution less stressful on the entire family. By holding a "dry run" of an airport experience, the impact on the family and especially the person with autism is immense because now everyone is familiar with the process. The entire family, including the person with a developmental disability, can enjoy a trip across the country on an airplane to visit relatives they haven't seen in many years or travel to places they would not have had the opportunity to before. Prior to this event, the likelihood of having to leave part of the family at home because of the anxiety for the person with the disability is greatly diminished.

Thank you for your consideration,



Kevin Meikle
Director of Aviation



Media Advisory

March 13, 2017

CONTACT: Vikkie Calderon, Media & Public Relations Officer
(559) 621-4522

Fresno Yosemite International Airport to Host California's Inaugural Wings for Autism® Program

Registration Now [Open](#) for Wings for Autism® National Program of The Arc

FRESNO, CA – Fresno Yosemite International Airport in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Delta Global Services is honored to host the first California Wings for Autism® airport rehearsal on Saturday, May 13, 2017 at Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

Wings for Autism® is a program by The Arc of the United States launched in 2011 that provides individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families with a real-life simulation of the air travel experience. Wings for Autism® has been hosted at various airports across the country with Fresno Yosemite International Airport serving as the first airport to host the program in California. The program serves to help alleviate some of the stress families may experience when traveling by air. Airport, airline and TSA personnel will also receive a valuable training opportunity in assisting individuals with autism and working with families to ensure their safety and comfort for a positive travel experience.

Bringing Wings for Autism® to Fresno Yosemite International Airport is the result of a collaborative effort from all of the partners and their local representatives who have dedicated significant time and resources to support the May 13, 2017 airport rehearsal.

Registration is now open for one of two separate airport rehearsals on May 13, 2017. Check in for the first rehearsal is scheduled at 9:00 AM and the second will take place at 12:00 PM. Families are encouraged to sign up early, as the number of participants is limited.

WHAT: Full Airport Dress Rehearsal for Families with Autism

WHEN: Saturday, May 13, 2017
Morning Rehearsal: Check in at 9:00 AM for 10:30 AM boarding
Afternoon Rehearsal: Check in at 12:00 PM for 1:30 PM boarding
Registration for families is now open at www.thearc.org/wingsforautism

WHERE: Fresno Yosemite International Airport
5175 E. Clinton Way
Fresno, California 93727

NOTE: Wings for Autism® artwork attached.



Transportation
Security
Administration

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8/01/2017

The City of Fresno

Disability Advisory Commission
2017 Achievement Award

To: City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission (DAC),

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to nominate Melissa Garza-Perry and Vikkie Calderon for the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission's Achievement Awards in support of the inaugural Wings for Autism event at the Fresno Yosemite International Airport on May 13, 2017. Without the undying dedication, commitment and personal sacrifices from Melissa and Vikkie, this event would not have come to fruition.

Melissa and Vikkie were undoubtedly the glue that held the event together. There is no better term to describe their commitment than 'selflessness.' They spent hours of their personal time working across the various organizations to make the event come to life. Their dedication to the participants to personalize the event with name tags, custom boarding passes and gifts was truly above and beyond. How many people get custom Wings for Autism logo'd cookies and airplanes? They were a hit! Most important, they didn't touch one life that day, but hundreds. The event not only impacted the 45 participants and their sponsors who journeyed on the aircraft that day, but it also touched upon the lives of the extended families, volunteers, sponsors and congressman Paul Caprioglio who was also in attendance. The stories you heard that day were heart-wrenching. Families of 6 that have never been able to take a trip together now have the opportunity to do so. Or the family of 3 that wanted to go visit their 90+ year-old grandmother on the East Coast but never thought it was possible before May 13th.

I was introduced to flying before I had any interest in driving a car. The daughter of an airline pilot and the Vice-Wing Commander of the Fresno Air National Guard, flying has always been a way of life for me. Now, as an airline pilot for SkyWest, this event has profoundly changed Hello greater appreciation for the difficulties these families face and if I should see an individual or family traveling, I actively lend a hand to make sure that family feels most welcomed on my flight and experiences little disruption as possible. As an HP employee who works with thousands of individuals around the world, I have shared highlights of this event throughout our organization and I can assure you this experience has touched their lives as well. We have thousands of people who travel on business or pleasure and can now help share this story and bring awareness to our customers and partners as well.

Thank you, thank you for allowing me this opportunity. Go Vikkie, Go Melissa, Go Fresno! You hit it out of the park. I hope this is the first of many events to come at the Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

If you have not yet seen the photos of that day, I welcome you to visit the following:

<https://wingsforautismfresno.smugmug.com/Wings-For-Autism-Fresno-2017/>

Best regards,

Michelle Corey

Michelle Corey

Flight Operations Supervisor I FAT
SkyWest Airlines

Chief of Staff I Strategic Business Planner
HP Inc.



Achieve With Us

July 27, 2017

The City of Fresno
Disability Advisory Commission
2017 Achievement Award

To the DAC Award Committee:

I am gladly supporting the nomination of Melissa Garza-Perry and Vikkie Calderon for The City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission's Achievement Awards. Melissa is the Airports Properties Supervisor and Vikkie is Media & Public Relations Officer.

These two women were instrumental in the development and implementation of the first ever Wings for Autism event held in California. And right here in our own backyard, Fresno, California.

The Arc Ca state chapter and our local chapter, The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, were extremely excited to become active partners of the City of Fresno—Airports Administration to hold this wonderful event.

Over 45 individuals with autism and their families had a wonderful opportunity to experience all the facets of navigating the airport terminal, go through TSA security and then ultimately boarding the Skywest plane. From the beginning of the planning stages to the day of the event, Melissa and Vikkie were diligent in their drive to make this a smooth and efficient event for these families. They knew this opportunity could be life-changing for these individuals.

While there were many other individuals who helped to support this event, it was Melissa and Vikkie who were committed to every step of the process and were open and eager to hear our advice and input on how there could be some challenges for these individuals.

While I'm sure the Commission will have many qualified individuals or groups to choose from for this award, I hope you strongly consider Melissa and Vikkie and acknowledge their efforts .

Sincerely,

Lori Ramirez
Executive Director



Achieve With Us

July 31, 2017

The City of Fresno
Disability Advisory Commission
2017 Achievement Award

To the DAC Award Committee:

I am gladly supporting the nomination of City of Fresno Airports Administration group for The City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission's Achievement Awards. The entire team of people from the Fresno Yosemite International Airport were extremely helpful and supportive of holding the first ever Wings for Autism event in California.

We at The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties were extremely excited to work along with all the individuals from the airport to make this event a reality. It was only possible because everyone there worked hard to make it a great day for all who participated.

Over 45 individuals with autism and their families had a wonderful opportunity to experience all the facets of navigating the airport terminal, go through TSA security and then ultimately boarding the Skywest plane. From the beginning of the planning stages to the day of the event the airport personnel were dedicated to meeting the needs of the kids. They knew this opportunity could be life-changing.

While I'm sure the Commission will have many qualified individuals or groups to choose from for this award, I hope you strongly consider the Airport Administration group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lori Ramirez'.

Lori Ramirez
Executive Director



Nomination Statement

City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission 2017 Achievement Award

Nominee Name: Director of Aviation Kevin Meikle & the Department of Airports

Nominator Name: Melissa Garza-Perry

I am honored to submit this nomination for the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission 2017 Achievement Award in recognition of City of Fresno Director of Aviation Kevin Meikle and the City of Fresno - Department of Airports in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services and HP to host California's inaugural Wings for Autism® program sponsored by The Arc of the United States. On May 13, 2017, these partners and the numerous volunteers from their organizations came together with the goal to make air travel possible for all families in our community.

The nationally recognized Wings for Autism® program provides individuals with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families the opportunity to prepare for air travel in a real-life environment. Air travel can prove to be particularly challenging with all of the activity at a busy airport including the crowds, unfamiliar sounds and noises. The Wings for Autism program helps to alleviate the stress individuals and their families may experience when traveling by providing a real-life airport dress rehearsal.

Recognizing the need in the community to help families navigate air travel in an encouraging and learning environment, a local "Wings Team" was assembled to plan and implement Wings for Autism® at Fresno Yosemite International Airport. The team included representatives with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services and HP. Each partner's contribution and volunteer participation was instrumental in bringing Wings for Autism® to Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

Securing a commercial aircraft was vital to the success of the Wings for Autism® program. SkyWest Airlines graciously contributed a commercial aircraft and staff to support the rehearsal. The airline even added an extra special element to its role by taxiing the aircraft around the airfield. Local TSA coordinated a dedicated security screening lane and personnel to help prepare families for the screening process. Delta Global Services provided airline check in and boarding gate announcements. HP invited families to capture memories of the day in front of a giant backdrop featuring a SkyWest plane. HP designed and donated the backdrop and printed a social story book for families to personalize their airport experience.

As a result of this unique collaboration, nearly 50 families from California's Central Valley successfully boarded the SkyWest aircraft and completed the Wings for Autism® program hosted at Fresno Yosemite International Airport on May 13, 2017. The program received such tremendous interest and registration reached full capacity within three days of announcing registration. Bringing Wings for Autism® to Fresno Yosemite International Airport was the result of an amazing collaborative effort from all of the partners

and their local representatives who dedicated significant time and resources to support the airport rehearsal.

For airport and airline personnel, the Wings for Autism® program provided the opportunity to learn from people with disabilities and their families to acquire a deeper understanding of how to provide services to accommodate their needs.

In recognition of their significant commitment to serve and inspire the community to make air travel possible for families with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities through the Wings for Autism® program, it is my honor to recommend Director of Aviation Kevin Meikle and the Department of Airports in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services and HP for the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission 2017 Achievement Award.

Sincerely,

Melissa Garza-Perry, Airports Property Supervisor
City of Fresno - Department of Airports



FRESNO YOSEMITE
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

City of Fresno Airports Department

Via email Shannon.Mulhall@fresno.gov

July 28, 2017

Shannon M. Mulhall, America with Disabilities Act Coordinator
2600 Fresno Street, Room 4011
Fresno, CA 93721

RE: City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission 2017 Achievement Award

Dear members of the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission,

It is my honor to extend support for the nomination of City of Fresno Director of Aviation Kevin Meikle and the City of Fresno - Department of Airports in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services and HP for hosting California's inaugural Wings for Autism® program at Fresno Yosemite International Airport.

Having the privilege to be a part of the Wings for Autism® program impacting families with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities, I personally observed the genuine commitment and enthusiasm from all of the partners to bring the program to our community. Our airline and airport partners were exceptionally willing to donate their time to the six-month planning process and committing the resources required to host the Wings for Autism® program. Teaming up with our department members and all of the partners was truly a unique opportunity for each of us to personally be involved with such a positive and unique program benefiting families in our community.

In addition to the significant contribution of resources, personnel from the Department of Airports and participating partners graciously volunteered their time on Saturday, May 13, 2017 to welcome and support the nearly 50 families from our community and the region who participated in the Wings for Autism® program. In addition, several SkyWest and HP representatives traveled to Fresno to help with the two airport rehearsals.

After completing two airport rehearsals on May 13, we realized the program's significant impact on the families as they successfully navigated the air travel process.

The Wings for Autism® program also provided a learning opportunity for airline and airport personnel, including our department, on how to best serve individuals with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For their significant commitment to serve and inspire the community to make air travel possible for families with autism or other intellectual and developmental disabilities through the Wings for Autism® program, it is my honor to support the nomination of Director of Aviation Kevin Meikle and the Department of Airports in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services and HP for the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission 2017 Achievement Award.

Sincerely,



Vikkie Calderon, Media & Public Relations Officer
City of Fresno – Department of Airports





July 31, 2017

The City of Fresno
Disability Advisory Commission
2017 Achievement Award

To the DAC Award Committee:

As one of the partners for the first Wings for Autism® event held in California, I am proud to support the nomination of City of Fresno Airports Department employees Vikkie Calderon and Melissa Garza-Perry for the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission's Achievement Awards.

Melissa and Vikkie reached out to us in August 2016 in hopes of getting SkyWest involved with the Wings for Autism event. The passion that Melissa and Vikkie had for bringing this event to Fresno Yosemite International Airport, along with the time and effort put forth to line-up sponsors and coordinate the event, was truly remarkable. Their dedication resulted in a unique opportunity for 45 people diagnosed with autism or other intellectual/developmental disabilities, and their families, to "experience" air travel in a safe, non-threatening compassionate way. As a result of this event, the participants and their families can feel more comfortable considering a trip to see relatives or go on that special vacation that includes air travel because they had this opportunity to give it a try!

There were many other supporters and partners involved in the event, however, Melissa and Vikkie were the driving force in bringing Wings for Autism® to Fresno, keeping it on track and making it a wonderful experience for all involved.

Your consideration of Vikkie and Melissa for this award is recommended and greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dena C. Oliver-Petty".

Dena C. Oliver-Petty
SkyWest Airlines
InFlight/Flight Operations

8/01/2017

The City of Fresno
Disability Advisory Commission
2017 Achievement Award

To: City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission (DAC),

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Kevin Meikle, City of Fresno Director of Aviation and the City of Fresno - Department of Airports in partnership with The Arc Fresno/Madera Counties, SkyWest Airlines, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Delta Global Services and HP Inc. to host California's inaugural Wings for Autism® program sponsored by The Arc of the United States. On May 13, 2017, these partners and the numerous volunteers from their organizations came together with the goal to make air travel possible for all families in our community.

This team's commitment to plan the event and partner together was a huge sacrifice amongst all who participated, but the result was a truly successful event. More importantly, the team touched the lives of so families in Fresno County that day. The opportunity to bring air travel to local participants and families who due to Autism and Developmental Challenges have been unable to experience the gift of flight was life changing. Without Kevin's vision and the support of every volunteer who dedicated their time, this event would not have been possible. Personally, I can share that this day will go down as one of the most rewarding and fulfilling events in my life and I know I'm not alone when I say this.

Please give the utmost consideration to Kevin and this entire team for this award. As separate companies and organizations who had never worked together before, the team did an amazing job rallying around a cause that is so worthy for the commitment and dedication witnessed that day.

Sincerely,

Michelle Corey

Michelle Corey

Flight Operations Supervisor I FAT
SkyWest Airlines

Chief of Staff I Strategic Business Planner
HP Inc.