

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BCEC and Hynes Convention Center Become First Convention Facilities in the Northeast to be Certified as Sensory Friendly Establishments in Time for Autism Awareness Month**

**Boston, Mass.** The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) is pleased to announce that the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center (BCEC) and the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center (Hynes) have been certified as “Sensory Friendly Establishments” by Sensory City after completing a comprehensive training program for customer facing staff. The BCEC and Hynes are the first convention facilities in the Northeast to attain this certification, just in time for National Autism Awareness month in April.

Sensory City is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to creating more inclusive and accessible spaces and events for all. The MCCA has worked with Sensory City for over a year to become a “Sensory Friendly Establishment”, which creates a more inclusive and accepting environment for persons with autism, sensory processing disorders and other disabilities.

“As a proud Bostonian, I applaud the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority for leading the way and setting an example by creating an inclusive space for those with invisible disabilities,” **said Tanya Acosta, Sensory City Founder.** “Boston should be at the forefront of creating inclusion for all of our citizens. My sincere hope is that other establishments will recognize the importance of training and awareness and follow suit to accommodate those who have invisible disabilities such as autism, dementia, PTSD, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, and others.”

“The MCCA strives to create a welcoming environment for each and every guest visiting our facilities,” **said David Gibbons, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority.** “This training provides our staff with the skills and resources to accommodate those with invisible disabilities, and I’m incredibly proud that the BCEC and Hynes are now certified as Sensory Friendly Establishments. I would like to thank Sensory City and the MCCA’s Human Resources department for facilitating this training to our customer facing teams.”

In addition to staff training and certification, Sensory City also provides resources such as sensory kits and communication booklets available at the BCEC and Hynes upon request. Signage at both the BCEC and Hynes informs guests they are visiting a “Sensory Friendly Establishment”.

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***About Sensory City***

Sensory City is an organization that is dedicated to helping children with disabilities. The Boston-based nonprofit is striving to make family outings more enjoyable and accessible for families and persons with disabilities. Founded in 2018 by Tanya Acosta, an accredited bilingual Speech Language Pathologist who has more than 20 years of experience working with children who have disabilities and sensory needs. Tanya's inspiration for creating this organization is her son Colin, who was born with Down Syndrome and has sensory issues.

***About the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA)***

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority owns and oversees the operations of the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center in Springfield, MA, the Boston Common Parking Garage, The Lawn On D Powered by Citizens, and The Lot On D. The MCCA's mission is to generate significant regional economic activity by attracting conventions, tradeshow, and other events to its world-class facilities while maximizing the investment return for the residents and businesses in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

