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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland A's Become First MLB Team to Earn Certified Autism Center™ Designation ***A's Spring Training staff at Hohokam Stadium in Mesa has completed the training process ahead of first home Spring Training game on Sunday, Feb. 23***

OAKLAND, Calif. — Hohokam Stadium, the Oakland A's spring home in Mesa, Arizona, is now a Certified Autism Center™ (CAC). The A's front office team in Mesa completed necessary training to become the first team in Major League Baseball to earn the designation ahead of the Club's first Spring Training home game set for this Sunday, Feb. 23. The CAC designation is granted by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education (IBCCES).

Through the IBCCES program, the staff were trained to better understand what autism is and isn't, how to empathize and understand how individuals with autism experience the world, communicate more effectively, and be aware of common sensitivities and concerns in a recreational environment — like that of a ballpark.

The Oakland A's Mesa staff join a growing number of organizations in Mesa to become certified, in support of the 2019 movement initiated by Visit Mesa to become the first-ever Autism Certified City. The Hohokam Stadium staff will implement the IBCCES program in order to better accommodate visitors to the ballpark.

"We are committed to creating an inclusive, fun, and memorable experience for all of our fans when they come to the ballpark — whether it be in Oakland or our Spring Training home in Mesa," said Oakland A's President Dave Kaval. "We are proud that our staff members at Hohokam Stadium have completed their autism certification training, allowing us to broaden awareness, acceptance, and accessibility for fans on the spectrum."

"We're excited to be working with the A's in their Spring Training home in Mesa. With baseball having a strong connection for many individuals on the spectrum, this was the perfect fit," said Myron Pincomb, IBCCES Board Chairman. "Having more options for families looking for a fun and welcoming atmosphere is central to our mission."

In addition to the certification, the Oakland A's introduced a Sensory Room to the Oakland Coliseum in 2019. The quiet space transformed a suite on the East Plaza Level in centerfield to an area that caters to fans of all ages with autism, Down syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, dementia, and similar conditions who can find comfort in a soothing atmosphere. The space includes "sensory bags," filled with noise-canceling headphones, fidget toys, and other tools as calming mechanisms. The space, created in partnership with the nonprofit Micah's Voice, is free and open during every home game for fans. Additionally, as part of Autism Awareness Month, the A's will also host Autism Awareness Day at the Coliseum on April 18.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF CREDENTIALING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (IBCCES): For almost 20 years, IBCCES has been the industry leader in autism certification for healthcare, education and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES recognized that many families with children who have special needs have limited travel options. In response to this need, IBCCES created training and certification programs specifically for the hospitality and travel industry. IBCCES is the only credentialing organization providing this type of certification, which includes evidence-based best practices as well as the perspectives of individuals with autism, alongside other tools and resources to ensure the program is a long-term commitment and has a lasting impact. IBCCES also created AutismTravel.com, a free online resource for parents that lists certified destinations and connects families to other resources and each other. Each destination listed on the site has met Certified Autism Center (CAC) requirements.

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