



News Release

OFFICE OF THE DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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THINKING DIFFERENTLY

Dutchess County Fair to Host Special Needs Day

Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro congratulates the Dutchess County Fair for its efforts to “Think Differently” about individuals and families with special needs. On Thursday, August 25th, the Dutchess County Fairgrounds will make it easier for special needs families to enjoy New York State’s second largest county fair with an early gate opening and a special sensory sensitivity hour of carnival rides, when the lights and music for the rides will be turned off.

Each year, the Dutchess County Fair hosts nearly half a million patrons, and offers visitors a chance to enjoy live entertainment, carnival rides, agricultural exhibits, and horticultural displays and so much more. However, for some individuals and families with special needs; the lights, sounds, and crowds can make it difficult to enjoy all the Dutchess County Fair has to offer, particularly those with sensory processing issues. The flashing lights and loud music, in addition to waiting lines for rides, can cause stress and anxiety.

The Fair is offering special needs families early entry to the fairgrounds on Thursday, August 25th starting at 9am, an hour before the official 10am start time. Families will have the opportunity enjoy the fairgrounds, including Livestock Hill, the Horticultural Building, Century Museum Antique Village and much more, ahead of the hustle and bustle of the crowds. Additionally, the carnival midway area will open at 9:30am and will feature a special hour of “sensory sensitivity.”



The flashing lights, music

and other sounds and noises will be turned off until 10:30am to give individuals who are impacted by sensory processing disorders a chance to enjoy the rides without the drawbacks that wait time, lights and sounds can cause.

Dutchess County Fairgrounds General Manager Andy Imperati said, "The Dutchess County Fair is proud to 'ThinkDifferently' and offer this opportunity for families with special needs to visit the Fair and our many attractions with some minor adjustments that can make the day easier for them. We want the Fair to be an experience every family can enjoy!"

County Executive Molinaro said, "So many families look forward to the annual Dutchess County Fair all year long and it is one of the many events that make us 'Distinctly Dutchess.'" But for families who have special needs, some of the aspects of the fair including the crowds, the lights and the sounds, can cause sensory chaos and mar their experience. Making some small changes can have a big impact for a special needs families and I am grateful to Andy Imperati and his Dutchess County Fairgrounds team for thinking differently."

County Executive Molinaro's "Think Differently" initiative, launched in 2015, is a call to action to help make Dutchess County a community that is supportive and inclusive for individuals of all abilities.

The Dutchess County Fair runs Tuesday, August 23rd through Sunday, August 28th, opening at 10am each day. Admission and ride tickets can be purchased online, at an advance sale discount rate, or on-site. Children under 12 are free. For more information and a full schedule of the Dutchess County Fair's events, see: <http://dutchessfair.com/>.