

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **"Storytime at the Airport" Celebrates One-Year Milestone with Aviation-themed Birthday Bash**



Winchester, VA -- December 21, 2023 — The Winchester Regional Airport Authority and Handley Regional Library System are thrilled to commemorate the first anniversary of their groundbreaking collaboration, aptly named "Storytime at the Airport." The unique partnership has been a soaring success, capturing the imaginations of young minds and fostering a love for aviation through the enchantment of storytelling. The event has been made possible also by assistance from the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber of Commerce, Literacy Volunteers, Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1031, Civil Air Patrol Winchester Composite Squadron, and Summit Events.

The monthly event has become a cherished tradition since the first session on January 12, 2023, at the airport's main terminal located at 491 Airport Road in Frederick County. The landing strip serves as the backdrop as Bowman Library's youth services assistant, Ben Garrand, leads the sessions, bringing the magic of flight to eager listeners. The

airport's Executive Director, Nicholas Sabo, expressed the intention behind the collaboration, stating, "Airports and aircraft are fun and interesting, but most people only experience them in the heavily regulated environment of a commercial airport. We try to create ways for the community to have a meaningful experience at the airport and learn about the important role it plays in the process."

Throughout the year, children have been treated to tales of flight, planes, and travel. The initiative has entertained and provided participants with the unique opportunity to encounter aircraft up close. The Handley Regional Library System, comprising Handley Library in Winchester, Bowman Library near Stephens City, and the Clarke County Library in Berryville, has been a proud partner in this venture.

As the program celebrates its one-year birthday, the Winchester Regional Airport and the Handley Regional Library System are inviting the public to join in the festivities. On January 12, 2024, at 11:00 a.m., a special birthday celebration will take place at Winchester Airport, featuring cake, local officials, and a celebration with storyteller Ben Garrand. The event promises to be a delightful experience for children and families alike.

"It has been a team effort to build this unique event, and we hope to collaborate on more engaging programming for 2024 and beyond," Sabo said.

Director John Huddy expressed his enthusiasm for the program's success, stating, "The Storytime at the Airport program has been a resounding success, captivating audiences and fostering a love for stories and aviation in our community. We are delighted to be a pilot program in every sense of the word, taking flight and inspiring young minds to reach new heights."

Ben Garrand, the storyteller himself, shared his thoughts on the program's inaugural year, stating, "It's been an incredible honor and privilege to be a part of this program and to bond with aviation fans of all ages through the art of storytelling in such a special, joy-filled way. It's been an extraordinary first year, and I can't wait to see what adventures we get into together as we turn the page on a new year!"

The airport and library actively seek a corporate sponsor to offset equipment costs to support the program.

For more information about the airport, please visit [www.flyokv.com](http://www.flyokv.com). For details about the Handley Regional Library System, visit [www.handleyregional.org](http://www.handleyregional.org).

### **About Winchester Regional Airport Authority**

The Winchester Regional Airport Authority is committed to connecting with the community and providing unique opportunities for engagement, such as the "Story Time at the Airport" program.

### **About Handley Regional Library System**

The Handley Regional Library System, with its flagship Handley Library and two other branches, is dedicated to fostering literacy, learning, and a love for reading in the community.