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Fire-Rescue

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PRESS RELEASE

Firefighters host superheroes in new Superpower Tour, a sensory-friendly fire station experience

WINTER PARK, FL, an internationally recognized, award-winning city with multiple accredited agencies (April 14, 2022) The [Winter Park Fire-Rescue Department](#) held its first



“Superpower Tour,” a unique fire station experience designed specifically for those individuals living on the autism spectrum. The tour, which is a traditional fire station tour, was modified to make it more sensory-friendly to those living with autism or related disorder.

The idea behind the “Superpower Tour” was partially inspired by Division Chief of Training Jeff Spinelli, whose son lives with autism. Spinelli helped bring additional training to firefighters in recent years which focused on communication and interaction with patients living with autism.

“Visiting your local fire station is an experience all kids should have, but we realized there might be families not coming in because touring a station could be overwhelming with the lights, sirens, dispatch tones and loud air brakes. The reality is, visiting the station is more than just fun, it’s educational with tours that include fire safety and prevention tips. Every families should have the opportunity to gain this knowledge,” explains Fire Chief Dan Hagedorn. “Our hope is that it inspires other fire departments.”

In consultation with UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UCF CARD), firefighters prepared a short video tour so families could preview it in advance. Details such as air curtains (which produce a loud burst of air when walking through door jams) were disengaged and quiet rooms made available.

The name “Superpower Tour” was adopted as a compliment to what are often described as the “superpowers” that individuals with autism may hold. These superpowers are the same powers which could make a traditional sensory experience overwhelming.

The “Superpower Tour” was launched in April in recognition of Autism Awareness Month but is available throughout the year. For more information or to schedule a tour in advance (required), please email WPFDPubEd@cityofwinterpark.org.

B-roll and photos of the “Superpower Tour” are available to media upon request.

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