

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From Sunrise to Sunflower: Nurturing Inclusivity for Hidden Disabilities in the Cayman Islands

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands – 14 April 2025: In an empowering move to promote inclusivity and support for individuals with non-visible disabilities, the Sunrise Adult Training Centre (SATC) and the Sunrise Caring Association (SCA) have joined the international membership of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower also known as **the Sunflower**. This global initiative discreetly signals that individuals wearing a Sunflower Lanyard may need extra assistance, fostering a more compassionate and inclusive society.

Kimberly Voaden, Director of SATC, highlighted the significance of this initiative for the Cayman Islands community. “SATC and SCA looks forward to providing Sunflower lanyards and products to clients and anyone who wishes to participate. Our vocational team will engage with employment partners to introduce the programme and invite them to become “Sunflower Supporters.” With training and guidance from the Caring Association and partners, these businesses can publicly identify as inclusive and hidden disability-aware. This is a practical step toward making Cayman a more inclusive and neurodiversity-friendly place to live and visit.” said Mrs. Voaden.

Globally, 1 in 6 people live with a disability, and 80% of these are non-visible. Conditions such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, nonverbal learning disorders, diabetes, hearing impairment, chronic pain, and mental health challenges can significantly impact daily life but often go unnoticed. For individuals wearing the Sunflower, it serves as a subtle cue to colleagues, service providers, and the public that additional patience and understanding may be required.

Deputy Premier, Minister for Social Development & Innovation, the Hon. Kenneth Bryan, applauded the initiative, stating, “This is a monumental step forward for the Cayman Islands, ensuring that those with non-visible disabilities feel empowered and supported in all areas of their lives. I commend the Sunrise Adult Training Centre for their leadership and dedication to championing this important cause.”

The initiative aligns with the Cayman Islands Governments broader efforts to build awareness and eliminate barriers for individuals with disabilities. The Sunflower urges businesses and individuals to create inclusive spaces by displaying the Sunflower logo, and providing resources to support the initiative. Whether it’s navigating daily tasks or accessing services, the HD Sunflower ensures that people with non-visible disabilities can participate fully in their communities. By joining this initiative, the Centre is not only raising awareness but also setting a powerful example across the Cayman Islands

“The initial Sunflower training provided by Inclusion Cayman to Cayman Islands Airport Authority staff has already made a meaningful difference. While full implementation is currently underway, it’s encouraging to see early signs of recognition and support. It’s great to know that the Sunrise Adult Training Centre and the Sunrise Caring Association will now lead the way in launching the programme at a national level. For families like mine, seeing the Sunflower lanyard start to be recognised in Cayman —

Press Contact:
Hollie Whitelocke
Strategic Communications Manager
Ministry of Social Development and Innovation
E. hollie.whitelocke@gov.ky

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especially in busy environments like the airport — has led to shorter wait times, more compassionate communication, and greater understanding throughout the journey. It's already making a visible difference for those with invisible needs— **Caymanian Parent Testimonial**.

“SATC and SCA would like to sincerely thank all its supporters, including David Gordon, Ocorian and the Cayman Islands Stock Exchange. Their recent donations have allowed the SCA to enhance services provided, and to purchase Sunflower lanyards to give freely to persons with a hidden disability who wish to take part. The Association can now assist participating businesses and service providers with training, and the procurement of Sunflower lanyards and other merchandise.” - **Deirdre Billes, SCA Chair**

The initial donor **Mr. David Gordon** shared why he felt compelled to contribute and shared this about why: “Mrs. Voaden delivered a presentation about the initiative at our local Church, and I was immediately intrigued by how straightforward yet powerful it could be for us to get involved and help others through it. The introduction of the Sunflower lanyard will enhance the experience of both residents and visitors in the Cayman Islands.”

Paul White, CEO of Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, added: “The successful adoption of the Sunflower in the Cayman Islands demonstrates its beauty. Initiated by Mrs. Voaden’s presentation, the idea germinated and quickly grew into what we are delighted to announce today. Residents and visitors who have non-visible disabilities can feel confident that the Cayman Islands is committed to disability inclusion through the use of the HD Sunflower as a tool to offer support, understanding and kindness.”

For more information about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower or to request Hidden Disabilities Sunflower training for your organisation, visit www.sunrisecaringassociation.com or contact the Sunrise Adult Training Centre directly. P: (345) 949 3330 E: infoSATC@gov.ky.

What is the Sunflower? The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard is a way to let others across the globe know you have a disability, condition or chronic illness that isn't immediately apparent. By wearing it, you can signal that you might need extra help, understanding, or patience when you're out in public, at work, in shops, or using transportation. The Sunflower is a simple yet effective way to communicate your non-visible disability without explaining it whenever you need assistance.

About the Sunflower:

- Since the Sunflower was established in the UK in 2016, it has been adopted globally by organisations to support their colleagues and customers. The Sunflower is recognised at over 300 airports and 22 airlines, travel and tourism, education as well as healthcare, emergency service and entertainment.
- The Sunflower is available globally and has been launched locally in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Latin America, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Mauritius, the UAE, the UK, the USA and now the Cayman Islands.
- The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is part of HD Sunflower Scheme Limited, a private company based in the UK. For further information, please: visit hdsunflower.com

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