

TravelAbility Launches “Rethinking Accessibility” in Celebration of Global Accessibility Awareness Day

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TravelAbility, a renowned pioneer in promoting accessibility within the travel industry, is thrilled to announce the launch of an innovative project titled “Rethinking Accessibility”. This pilot project is designed to transform the way the world perceives travel for people with disabilities, shifting the focus to what CAN be achieved rather than what cannot.

The Rationale Behind the Project

TravelAbility has always been at the forefront of initiatives aiming to make travel more accessible and enjoyable for all. This groundbreaking project, aligned with the spirit of Global Accessibility Awareness Day, highlights the company's commitment to inclusivity and equality in travel.

Jake Steinman, the Founder of TravelAbility, explains the vision behind this project. "The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has provided a valuable foundation for physical accessibility, such as ramps and grab bars in bathrooms. However, the virtual world lacks such clear guidelines. That's why we say there's no ADA for information."

Partnerships and Collaborations

TravelAbility aims to fill this gap with “Rethinking Accessibility”. By collaborating with the



members of the Destination A11Y Club, who have enthusiastically joined the pilot program, TravelAbility is setting out to redefine the concept of accessibility. The members have been working relentlessly to uncover a variety of features that will make their destinations more inclusive for people with disabilities and seniors.

Survey Insights and Unique Features

Jason Holic, Sr. V.P. Operations, Experience Kissimmee, sheds light on the value of the campaign. "The campaign creates a unique platform for us to initiate discussions with partners under the aegis of a coordinated, third-party effort. It's not just about individual efforts; it's about a collective movement involving various Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and TravelAbility. The campaign brings a grassroots effectiveness that aligns passion and business opportunity in ways seldom seen. It's a conversation that partners want to be part of, even if they didn't know beforehand that they wanted to be part of it."

As part of the pilot project, 201 surveys were conducted to unearth unique accessibility features. The results have been nothing short of fascinating. The wealth of information and unique features discovered will be integrated into the websites of the participating destinations, each of which has a dedicated landing page for accessible content.

A few standout features include wheelchair-accessible zip lines over alligator habitats in Kissimmee, FL, emotional support goats at a yoga studio in an addiction rehab facility in Mesa, AZ, and full wheelchair entry with text scripts for deaf guests and audio guides for blind guests at the International Museum of the Horse in Lexington, KY.

Destinations with Accessibility Project

These distinctive features, along with over 100 others, will be added to TravelAbility's ["Destinations with Accessibility" project](#). This project currently encompasses comprehensive accessibility content for 143 destinations across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean islands.

Upcoming Events and Future Goals

The findings and success stories of the "Rethinking Accessibility" project will be among a collection of case studies. These will be featured at the upcoming TravelAbility's Emerging Markets Summit, scheduled for August 18-20, 2023, in Savannah. The summit will serve as a platform for a broader discussion on the importance of accessibility in travel and tourism.

In the words of Steinman, "Travel is the toy department of life, and everyone should be able to enjoy it." TravelAbility, through its innovative projects and extensive resources available on the [TravelAbility Insider page](#), is committed to making this vision a reality.

As an organization, TravelAbility understands the varied needs of travelers with disabilities and seniors. It endeavors to highlight the possibilities rather than the limitations, promoting a more inclusive and accessible travel industry. This new project, "Rethinking Accessibility," embodies

this spirit of inclusivity, encouraging destinations to showcase what CAN be done, rather than what cannot.

The company believes that the right information can empower travelers with disabilities. Through its micro-site, "Destinations with Accessibility," it already aggregates accessibility content for numerous destinations. The addition of over 100 new accessibility features will enhance the wealth of information already available, contributing significantly to a more inclusive travel experience.

Destinations participating in the "Rethinking" pilot program are now poised to engage with a broader audience, offering unique features and services that cater to their specific needs. For instance, the Mount Vernon home of George Washington in Fairfax County, VA, has found a unique solution to the inaccessible stairs leading to the second floor by providing iPads that connect to the tour guide leading the tour upstairs. In Lancaster, PA, the Dutch Wonders theme park offers 35 fully accessible rides.

The project will also highlight places like the children's museum in Tampa, FL, that holds monthly sensory-friendly events for families and caregivers of children on the autism spectrum. These initiatives not only offer a unique, tailored experience to travelers with disabilities but also encourage other destinations and businesses to rethink their approach towards accessibility.

TravelAbility's new project, "Rethinking Accessibility," is expected to bring about a paradigm shift in the way the travel industry caters to people with disabilities. The company's mission to make travel more accessible aligns with its broader goal of creating a world where everyone can enjoy the thrill of travel.

About TravelAbility

TravelAbility's mission is to enable the travel industry to become more accessible for people with disabilities. Our diverse projects and collaborations include the Emerging Markets Summit, TravelAbility Insider, Destinations with Accessibility, The Accessibility Playbook, the Destination A11Y Club, InnovateAble, our YouTube Channel archives, and the TravelAbility Foundation, among others. For more information, [visit TravelAbility's website](#).

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