

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 4, 2019

Federal Lawsuit Filed Against LEGOLAND Florida Resort For Denying Access to Local Nine-Year Old Amputee

Tampa, FL – Today, the Social Justice Law Collective (SJLC) announced the filing of a federal lawsuit against the LEGOLAND Florida Resort in Polk County, Florida (LEGOLAND), for repeated violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Florida Civil Rights Act. The lawsuit challenges LEGOLAND’s policy of denying access to significant portions of its resort to children and other guests who use prosthetic devices, even when such restrictions are not required by reasonable safety concerns. The lawsuit alleges that these discriminatory restrictions ignore the extraordinary capabilities of such individuals and result in the denial of access to more than half of LEGOLAND’s attractions for thousands of children and families from around the world.

Polk County residents Josias and Sarahy Suarez have brought this lawsuit on behalf of themselves as well as their nine-year old son, Isaias, who was forced to undergo through-knee amputations on both of his legs when he was only one-year old. A true inspiration, Isaias refuses to let his disability define him, using various-length prosthetics to play baseball, soccer and flag football with his friends and to enjoy camping and hiking with his family.

These abilities are ignored, however, whenever the Suarez Family visits LEGOLAND Florida Resort. Despite careful planning and communication with LEGOLAND, the Suarez Family has been repeatedly denied access to attraction after attraction at the resort, solely because of Isaias’s prosthetics, with LEGOLAND staff continually singling out and confronting Isaias and his family because of his disability, providing no explanation other than that LEGOLAND policy requires it.

LEGOLAND’s discriminatory treatment of Isaias seems particularly apparent when compared to his treatment at similar amusement parks, including SeaWorld and Walt Disney World Resort in nearby Orlando, Florida, at which Isaias was never asked about his prosthetics and was able to participate in every attraction for which he met the height and ability-based requirements. Meanwhile, LEGOLAND has repeatedly turned Isaias away from attractions that are designed for infants and toddlers. “I can’t ride the rides that my family, even my little brother, are riding, even though I’m able to ride them,” said Isaias when describing his treatment by LEGOLAND, “I used to love going to LEGOLAND, now it makes me sad just to think about it.”

“Individuals who use prosthetic devices climb mountains, compete in competitive sports, and otherwise excel at a broad array of physical activities,” said SJLC attorney Shawn Heller, “in 2019, there is simply no excuse for a large amusement park – one designed for children, no less – to enforce such discriminatory and exclusionary policies.”

For further information, please contact Social Justice Law Collective attorneys Shawn Heller or Josh Glickman at media@sjlawcollective.com or (202) 709-5744. A copy of the court-filed Complaint and pictures that may be used by the media are available at <http://sjlawcollective.blogspot.com>.

----- END -----