



NEW YOUTH AVIATION EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ASPEN WITH DIAMOND AIRCRAFT

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The Aspen Flight Academy in Aspen, Colorado is launching a youth aviation education program this fall that is the first of its kind in the nation. The “Every Student Flies” program will provide a free flight lesson to every student at the Aspen Public High School, with enrollment this fall being 550 students for this school year.

Four Roaring Fork Valley organizations joined together to build this unique program to introduce Aspen High School students to the many careers available in the aviation industry. The Aspen Flight Academy, Aspen Education Foundation, Aspen School District and The BettyFlies Foundation all joined forces to develop and fund this initiative.

Each student will be offered a free flight lesson with an FAA Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) in a Diamond DA40 aircraft. After the flight, students will be given a private tour of the Aspen/Pitkin County Airport’s Air Traffic Control tower, along with tours of local aviation companies on the airfield. An educational package will be offered to each student containing a wealth of information on higher education and career opportunities in all fields of aviation including piloting, air traffic control, aircraft maintenance, airport management, and more. In addition, free flights are being offered to the high school’s teachers and administrative staff, to enable them to share with their students the experience of flying in a small aircraft.

The Every Student Flies program was created by Captain Michael Pearce, a Boeing 777 international pilot for American Airlines and President of the Aspen Flight Academy's Board of Directors. "We are excited to launch this one-of-a-kind program to offer every Aspen High School student the chance to experience flight and learn about careers in aviation," said Pearce. "Our hope is that other public high schools across the country will be excited about our program and look into doing the same in their communities."

In order for the Academy to have the highest quality experience for the students, Pearce worked with Diamond Aircraft CEO Scott McFadzean to craft a long-term purchase agreement. Two DA40 NG model airplanes will be provided to the Academy every year for 10 years, ensuring the Aspen High School students are flying new aircraft and one of the industry's safest trainers, with the newest technology onboard. This ten-year agreement is valued at over \$11 million.

"Encouraging young talent in aviation is a cause we truly believe in at Diamond Aircraft," said McFadzean, "Every Student Flies is a powerful initiative which will positively impact many young lives and our industry for years to come. The Diamond DA40 NG is the ideal platform to provide a safe, efficient and exciting initiation to aviation for Aspen High School students."

The program will be managed by Kate Short, the Director of Aviation for the Aspen Public School District. Short is a K-12 educator and pilot holding ratings from CFI to multi-engine instrument. "This program is unique in that we are able to offer these experiences to public high school students at no cost to their families," said Short.

Suzanne Pfister, President of The BettyFlies Foundation, believes the Every Student Flies program could make a real difference in the life of a young person. Pfister is a partner of this new program through her non-profit foundation, which provides opportunities for youth while sustaining the legacy of Aspen's own aviation hero, her mother, Betty Haas Pfister. "Betty was a trailblazer in the true sense of the word," said Pfister. "She was a flight enthusiast who thought 'outside the box' in all her endeavors."

The Aspen Higher Learning Flight Academy (dba Aspen Flight Academy) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit flight training school that provides youth and adults with classroom and flight training to obtain Private, Instrument and Commercial flight ratings. More information can be found on the organization's website: www.aspenflightacademy.org

The BettyFlies Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the legacy of female aviation hero Betty Haas Pfister, while inspiring and empowering our next generations. The BettyFlies Foundation funds aviation-related programs that encourage personal development and create Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education opportunities for young people. More information can be found at bettyflies.org

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