

# LIFT

FALL/WINTER 2019 | VOL.5 | ISSUE 2

*Dear Wings of Hope Friends,*

As I was previewing this newsletter, I was struck by all the different people who have had a hand in carrying forward our mission during the last few months - from long-time volunteers, to major world figures. It really does take a village. We are a world community and our mission plays out every day on a global stage. From each turn of a wrench inside our hangar to every safe landing on a remote airstrip, heroes all around the world are saving and changing lives through aviation.

In this issue, you will read about some of those heroes. You will celebrate with Gene Pfausch as the recipient of the National Aeronautic Association's Public Benefit Flying Distinguished Volunteer Award for volunteer service ...

32 consecutive years and counting! You will meet new members of our Wings of Hope family both here and abroad. You will learn about our endowment campaign to pave the way for the long-term growth and success of our Medical Relief & Air Transport (MAT) program under the leadership of Kelli Fabick, Don Kukla and Senator Elizabeth Dole. You will read about how the U.S. Navy Blue Angels visited our headquarters and inspired more than 150 area school children.

You are also a hero. Through your support and involvement, you save and change lives through the power of aviation. Thank you for the important part you play on our global stage.



\$10,000 raised at Taste of Hope was donated to Dr. Goran Jovic of FlySpec Zambia to support surgeries for burn victims and cleft palate babies. L to R: Tiffany Nelson, Adam Kruger, Dr. Goran Jovic, Dr. Jess Watson, Bret Heinrich. See story on p. 2.



*Changing & Saving Lives  
Through the Power of Aviation*

**Bret Heinrich,  
President & CEO**

# Event RECAP

## TASTE OF HOPE BIGGEST AND BEST YET!



The third annual Taste of Hope hosted by the Young Ambassadors of Wings of Hope on Saturday, Oct. 5, was the biggest and best yet - with record-breaking attendance and proceeds raised. Tickets to the international food fest sold out the day before the event and some 350 guests packed the hangar to take in the sights, sounds and, most of all, the delicious food served up by a diverse range of participating restaurants. Patrons enjoyed freshly made paella from The Croquetterie, Zambian comfort food from Jenny's Diner, curry chicken sliders from Rhone Rum Bar, pad thai from Sunisa's Thai Restaurant, fajitas from El Burro Loco, craft beers and pub grub from Granite City Brewery, and sweet treats from The Donut Stop, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Smoothie King and Dierbergs. Vito's in the Valley, Viviano's Festa Italiano and Double G Ham also served up tasty fare. DJ Carlos Suarez kept the tunes spinning from 3:30-6:30 p.m. The highlight of the afternoon was a performance by Vitendo 4 Africa, a dance troupe of Zambian children. Best of all, Taste of Hope raised over \$20,000 - 32% more than last year! Proceeds will support Wings of Hope international programming, with \$10,000 directly supporting FlySpec, our partner flying surgical teams to perform orthopedic and reconstructive plastic surgery in Zambia. The dozens of volunteers included more than 20 from Boeing, which also donated \$1,000 to the event. Thank you to presenting sponsor Dierbergs, all sponsors - First Community Credit Union, National Cart, Stonecrest Senior Living of Wildwood, Joe-K Used Cars, Moshiri Orthodontics, MBM Wealth Consultants, First National Bank-Staunton, Aero Charter and Masterclock - patrons, volunteers and participating restaurants who made this Taste of Hope our most successful to date. See you next October!

# NEW LEADERSHIP

## 5 QUESTIONS WITH AMY COLE BUEHLER

Amy Cole Buehler joined Wings of Hope as our new director of development on Aug. 5, 2019, after 27 years working in nonprofit development helping raise millions of dollars for many St. Louis-area and statewide organizations. Amy is director of the Nonprofit Management Master's Program at Washington University in St. Louis, where she is also a faculty member. In addition to founding her own consulting firm serving nonprofit organizations, Amy was executive director for both the Animal Protective Association of Missouri, Therapeutic Horsemanship and, most recently, the Parkway Alumni Association.



**1 What attracted you to Wings of Hope?**  
The short answer is the mission. Not just the words, but how the mission in action is quite literally and purposefully the helping hand for so many. Wings of Hope is making a critical difference in the lives of many people all over the globe. The opportunity to play a part here, to reach out to people on behalf of the mission and help continue the legacy here - that is what moved me so much.

**2 In your first few months in your new role, what has surprised you most?**  
The level of volunteer support. Not just the impressive number of people volunteering, but the essential work that they do for the organization. In my almost 30 years of working in and around nonprofit organizations, I have never witnessed anything like it. I had heard that this was part of the Wings of Hope culture, but until

you get here and see it for yourself, you really don't have a sense of the scope of the work that it takes to successfully run this organization - and the volunteer support is absolutely critical to that success. It is an honor to work alongside so many who give so much.

**3 What excites you most about your new job?**  
There are a number of things - the opportunity to work with an outstanding and talented group of people, the growth potential for the organization, the opportunity to use the skills that I have for the greater good.

**4 What excites you most about the future of Wings of Hope?**  
I believe there are wonderful things on the horizon for Wings of Hope. Expanding our reach, partnering with like-minded people, funders and organizations, and thinking strategically about how to

achieve our common goals - all of these things make being here exciting and very fulfilling.

**5 When you're not working, where are we most likely to find you?**  
Near a football field! I am a huge football fan. My dad had Cardinals season tickets when I was a kid and I tagged along to lots of games; that's where my love of football was born. Both of my boys have played, my husband Bryan was a head coach for many years in the Chesterfield and Longhorn football programs and today, we run the Parkway West High School football booster club together. Our son Sam is in his senior season, so our close involvement will end this year, but my love for the game will live on through my beloved Missouri Tigers and a host of other college football teams I like to follow. I also enjoy baseball, golf, cooking, gardening and reading.



Laura with Harrison Ford, Wings of Hope Honorary Council member

## WINGS OF HOPE VP LAURA HELLING RETIRING IN 2020

Although Wings of Hope Vice President Laura Helling has been telling us of her plans to retire in early 2020 for quite some time, Wings of Hope staff and volunteers had been hoping the day would never come. Since joining Wings of Hope in July 2013, Laura has introduced an annual appeal that has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars, reinvigorated the airplane raffle program to the point that we now run two per year - with our last two raising in excess of \$600,000 to support our MAT program - and played a key role in growing our endowment from about \$1.9 million when she started to nearly \$8 million today.

"Laura will be greatly missed. She is a consummate professional and an exemplary nonprofit leader. Before I arrived at Wings of Hope, Laura wore two hats as development director and interim president. It would have been a realistic expectation that she maintained the status quo, but she did far more," said Wings of Hope President and CEO Bret Heinrich. "Her leadership helped move Wings of Hope in a positive new direction. From the very beginning, I have relied heavily on Laura's insight, her humor and her steadfast commitment to our donors - and I will continue to rely on those qualities until her very last day with us."

"Leaving will be bittersweet," Laura said. "Although I will miss my Wings of Hope family, I feel good leaving the organization on such solid footing. Wings of Hope has never been stronger financially, in terms of staffing and volunteer support, and in the quality of our programs and our partners. The organization is poised for growth, and I can't wait to see what the future holds - for both of us!"

## NEW PARTNERS!



### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

In late September, Samaritan Aviation co-founder and President Mark Palm and Wings of Hope President and CEO Bret Heinrich gathered with Wings of Hope staff and volunteers for the blessing and sendoff of a new floatplane Palm is flying cross country on his "Hope in Action" tour to raise money - and awareness - for Samaritan Aviation's mission.

Wings of Hope recently partnered with Samaritan Aviation to support its efforts flying medical missions in Papua New Guinea.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be working with Mark and Samaritan Aviation to reach people in Papua New Guinea," Bret said at the plane blessing event. "There is a great opportunity to reach so many people who are without health care. Papua New Guinea represents one of 47 countries we've worked with throughout our history, and we are particularly thrilled to embark on this new adventure with Mark and his team."

As with our other global partners, Wings of Hope will support Samaritan Aviation's operations through fundraising and maintenance assistance for its aircraft. This partnership is in its early stages, but plans are in the works for Wings of Hope staff to visit the Samaritan Aviation operation in Papua New Guinea in 2020 to determine the full extent of the partnership.



### ECUADOR

Wings of Hope recently partnered with Alas de Socorro, Ecuador (ADSE) after a long affiliation with the organization. ADSE began its activities in 1948 in Shell, Ecuador and serves a region of more than 245,000 people living in eight indigenous communities. The organization established radio communication between each community and its radio base, allowing it to connect communities to the Ministry of Health and other resources. ADSE uses its aircraft to provide emergency medevac services, medical brigades and humanitarian assistance to improve access to medical care for these communities. In 2018, Alas de Socorro transported 1,582 passengers via airplane for humanitarian assistance. So excited for this next chapter of changing and saving lives in the Amazonian basin!

## ELIZABETH DOLE IS HONORARY CHAIR OF SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Senator Elizabeth Dole, a longtime Wings of Hope Honorary Council member, has signed on as honorary chair of our Soaring to New Heights Endowment Campaign to secure the future of the Wings of Hope Medical Relief & Air Transport (MAT) program. She joins Wings of Hope Board Chairman Don Kukla and Board Director Kelli Fabick who are the campaign co-chairs.

Senator Dole expressed her passion for supporting the families who care for the people Wings of Hope flies.

"As a caregiver myself, I understand the immense pressures on caregivers. This is why I founded the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to honor, support and empower our nation's military caregivers. I call them our hidden heroes. The Wings of Hope Medical Relief & Air Transport program also supports these hidden heroes by taking away the burden of transportation

to medical care - a burden that is crashing down on more and more families as hospitals close at an unprecedented rate."

The goal of the endowment campaign is to ensure Wings of Hope has the capital to secure the planes needed, cultivate the next generation of volunteer pilots, and expand the MAT program - allowing us to serve 50% more people with free transportation to health care.

The campaign recently received a big boost with a \$1 million gift from the William R. Orthwein, Jr. and Laura Rand Orthwein Foundation, growing the endowment to nearly \$8 million and moving it closer to its \$10 million phase-one goal.

"My family has deep roots in the St. Louis community and we are committed to caring for it. The Foundation made a significant initial investment in Wings of Hope in 2007 and a more significant additional investment



Elizabeth Dole with Wings of Hope V.P. Laura Helling

in 2010, for the same reason we are investing in their endowment today," said Foundation President Nettie O. Dodge. "We believe in Wings of Hope and its mission. Our investment in Wings of Hope today will help to ensure that they will be able to provide their excellent services well into the future."

Interested in doing your part to ensure the future of the MAT program? Please contact Laura Helling at [laura.helling@wingsofhope.ngo](mailto:laura.helling@wingsofhope.ngo) or Amy Cole Buehler at [amy.buehler@wingsofhope.ngo](mailto:amy.buehler@wingsofhope.ngo) for more information or to set up a meeting to learn more about Wings of Hope.

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## GENE PFAUTSCH RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED VOLUNTEER AWARD

The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) has recognized Gene Pfautsch with its Public Benefit Flying Distinguished Volunteer Award. The Public Benefit Flying awards honor volunteer pilots, other volunteers and organizations engaged in flying to help others, as well as those supporting such work. Gene is Wings of Hope's longest-serving volunteer, having served the organization for 32 continuous years.

Gene's interest in aviation started when he was very young. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served four years as an aircraft engine mechanic supporting the Korean Conflict. Gene spent his civilian career working for McDonnell Douglas, first as an aircraft mechanic then in the personnel division training department. In 1987, Gene retired early. At 55, Gene had lots of energy and a passion to continue doing something meaningful with his time.

"I found that I really missed the contact with aviation," Gene recalls. "I visited two aviation volunteer organizations, and I immediately chose Wings of Hope. Now, I could work on small aircraft as a mechanic."



Gene was also drawn to Wings of Hope's mission: using aviation to change and save lives all over the world.

After a brief stint working in the Wings of Hope hangar, Don Malvern, then president of Wings of Hope, tapped Gene to use his people skills to head up the organization's human resources department. Gene has continued to volunteer in this department, now called Volunteer Fulfillment Services, in the years since. His responsibilities include recruiting, interviewing, onboarding and training volunteers. In the past year alone,

Gene has vetted 105 people and 24 of them are new volunteers.

Early on, Gene also served three years on the Wings of Hope Board of Directors where he got to know Wings of Hope's four founders. And he is often tapped as the nonprofit's resident historian - engaging volunteers and visitors with his treasure trove of Wings of Hope stories.

Gene's reasons for volunteering are simple: "I came to Wings of Hope for my desire to be associated with aviation and helping others. Now why have I stayed 30-plus years? In addition to a great mission, I have met so many fine volunteers from so many walks of life - all dedicated and willing givers. It has certainly been a major reason for my continuance with the organization. I can't think of a better way in my retirement to spend my life. It has been, and continues to be, very rewarding."

Gene will be presented his award at NAA's Fall Awards Dinner on Nov. 12, 2019, in Arlington, Virginia.

Congratulations, Gene!



## WINGS OF HOPE WELCOMES BLUE ANGELS

When the U.S. Navy Blue Angels come to town, it's always special. They last performed at the Spirit of St. Louis Air Show & STEM Expo in 2016. So when air show sponsor Boeing asked if we would host the "Blues" in our hangar for a reception during the 2019 show, we were honored, absolutely thrilled - and the timing could not have been better. This past spring we launched our Soar into STEM program teaching local youth about STEM and aviation principles using aircraft in our hangar. We invited these students and other area youth to meet the Blues, and 150 came that evening. The students were starstruck, but we hope they left the party with more than the autographs and photos they got with the elite flying team. Our hope is that, at least a few, left inspired to follow in their footsteps.



## ISLAND HOPPING KITCHEN TOUR BENEFITS WINGS

For the second consecutive year, *St. Louis Homes + Lifestyles* magazine chose Wings of Hope as the beneficiary of its Island Hopping Kitchen Tour of homes throughout the St. Louis metro area. The magazine donated all ticket sale proceeds directly to Wings of Hope and presented us a check for \$1,100 following the event. Thank you, *St. Louis Homes + Lifestyles*!

◀ Wings of Hope volunteer Marty Reiter greets kitchen tour guests at one of the featured homes.

## the ISTAT foundation

## GRANTS SUPPORT STEM & ECUADOR PROGRAMS

Our Soar into STEM program got a boost this summer when the ISTAT Foundation awarded us \$15,000 to support the hands-on aviation experience for youth. Soar into STEM was a perfect fit for the Foundation's mission, especially "encouraging the next generation to consider a future in the aviation industry." The Foundation is also supporting our partnership with Alas de Socorro in Ecuador with a \$5,000 grant to support medevac and humanitarian flights in the region. Thank you, ISTAT Foundation!

How many  
WAYS  
can  
YOU  
& your donation  
CHANGE  
the  
WORLD?

[Hint: It's a big number.  
Also ... it's printed on the  
inside flap of the envelope that  
came inside this newsletter.]

Support Wings of Hope at  
[wingsofhope.ngo/donate](http://wingsofhope.ngo/donate).  
Thank you!

## Calendar OF EVENTS

**NOVEMBER 28**

Thanksgiving Day Parade  
Downtown St. Louis

**DECEMBER 13**

Holiday Luncheon  
Wings of Hope Hangar

**FEBRUARY 8, 2020**

Wings of Hope Dinner Auction  
The Chase Park Plaza, St. Louis

**MARCH 14, 2020**

St. Patrick's Day Parade  
Downtown St. Louis

**APRIL 1, 2020**

Spring Airplane Raffle

## SUPPORT WINGS OF HOPE AS YOU SHOP!

As you are doing your holiday shopping, don't forget to choose Wings of Hope, Inc. on AmazonSmile. We raise hundreds of dollars every quarter simply because our supporters remember to make us their AmazonSmile charity. Thank you!





# Thank You

## FOR HONORING THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT WITH A WINGS OF HOPE TRIBUTE GIFT ...

Honorarium and memorial gifts are a wonderful way to celebrate and honor the people who are special in our lives. Wings of Hope is the humble recipient of hundreds of these tribute gifts annually.

Those individuals who have included us in their estate plans are recognized in our Legacy Society. If you are interested in finding out how you can include Wings of Hope in your legacy and estate planning, please email Amy Cole Buehler at amy.buehler@wingsofhope.ngo or call 636-537-1302.

## AUTUMN AIRPLANE RAFFLE RAISES RECORD FUNDS

Our September 16 airplane raffle not only sold out - it raised about \$330,000, making it our highest grossing raffle ever. The winner of the grand prize, a 1965 Cessna 172, will be announced at the ticket drawing on October 29. "Our raffles have become very popular in recent years," said Wings of Hope President and CEO Bret Heinrich. "Everyone gets excited about the chance to win a really nice plane for a small investment. But the most exciting thing is that, win or lose, each person who buys a ticket is helping ensure that we have the funds to continue flying people to lifesaving health care." Your next chance to win is April 1, 2020.

## WINGS OF HOPE BOARD ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

At its Sept. 26 meeting, the Wings of Hope Board of Directors elected new leadership. We are happy to announce that the following directors have taken on the following leadership positions:



**Don Kukla**  
Chairman



**Fred Meyland-Smith**  
Vice Chairman



**Patrick Wittenbrink**  
Secretary



**John Schmidt**  
Treasurer

### *In Honor Of...*

**Jim Ackerman**

Gail Kitsis

**A.C. "Butch" Giessman**

Richard and Suzie Bennett

Pamela Bray

**Bret Heinrich**

Deb Berryman

**Jay Rickmeyer**

Jeffrey Rickmeyer and

Teresa Hickam

John and Mary Ellen Hanrahan

Gary and Venita Jeffries

Katsutaro Kaneko

Frank and Carol Kerner

Kathy Kostyshock

Stephen and Caroline Kowalewicz

Belyn Ledbetter and Ranaye Marsh

Cliff and Diane McKiddy

Jo Ellen Meier

Jim and Susan Morrell

Janet Parker

Gene Pfautsch

Wentworth and Sue Potter

Jennifer Rutkowski

John Schmidt

Kazuhiro Takahashi

Patrick J. and Marie Walsh

James and Sandra Wilkins

### *In Memory Of...*

**Vincent Bailey**

Trudy Steiger

**Penelope Campbell**

Dave and Beverly Wrobel

**Marilyn Bernadette Duke**

AVMATS

**Mary Garvey**

Robert W. Garvey

**Mary Joanne Giessman**

Bret Heinrich

**Chuck Huffman**

William D. Meyer

**Bob Kerr**

Rob Kershner

**Virginia Kratzer**

Ray and Diane Jokerst

Russell and Diane Tietsort

Robert Trejbal

**William Maender**

Trudy Steiger

**Melvin McCollum**

David Alford

Kenneth and Sally Best

Elizabeth Campero

Phillip and Elizabeth Chastain

John and Paula Drake

Carol Furnas

**Marge McCormick**

Dave and Beverly Wrobel

**Landon Michael Moore**

Susan Harrison

**Geraldine Morris**

Dave and Beverly Wrobel

**Doris "Dee" Obermeyer**

Hamilton Exhibits, LLC

**Dennis R. Oloteo**

Bret Heinrich

John Schmidt

**Candace Ransom Long**

Joseph Long

**Helen B. Rohman**

Peter Dolan

Mark and Joan Feise

Grant Cooper & Associates

David and Susan Mayer

**Don Sommer**

Gernatt Asphalt Products, Inc.

**Dorothy White**

Christine Pykiet

**Mason Wienke**

Doris Thompson



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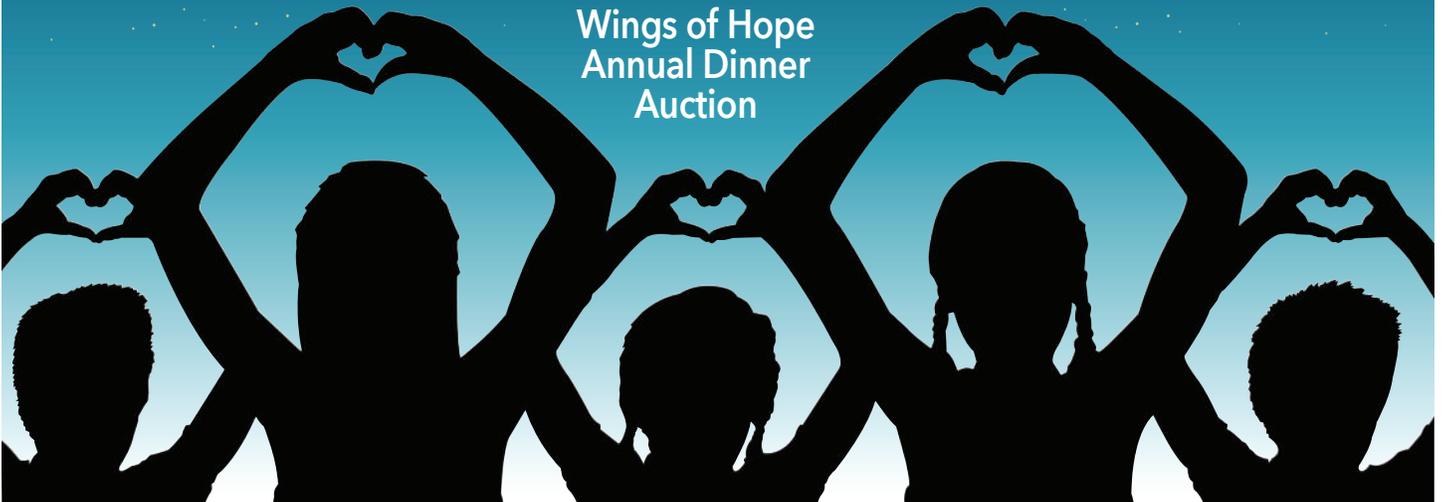
3-Star Rating on Charity Navigator,  
GuideStar Gold Rating, and  
Twice nominated for the  
Nobel Peace Prize

**SAVE THE DATE! FEBRUARY 8, 2020**

HOPE

*Is Where the Heart Is*

Wings of Hope  
Annual Dinner  
Auction



Wings of Hope is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to Wings of Hope are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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