





CHANGING AND SAVING LIVES THROUGH THE POWER OF AVIATION

## Founded in 1965

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When you peruse through the website for Wings of Hope (https://wingsofhope.ngo/), you see story after story of good people helping those in need, but as you scroll down to the bottom of the page you come across something interesting, listed almost as a footnote, which reads "Twice Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize." In a way, this summarizes the mission of Wings of Hope. The individuals who need help and those people who give of their time and talents to serve have been placed on center stage, while the accolades and distinctions are relegated to the periphery.

Wings of Hope was founded in 1965 by four businessmen (William Edwards, Joseph Fabick, Paul Rodgers, and George Haddaway) from St. Louis, Missouri, who heard about Sister Michael Therese Ryan delivering relief aid in a remote region of Kenya using a small fabric covered Piper PA-18 Super Cub. The founders raised the capital to purchase a new Cessna U206 and recruited the efforts of pilot Max Conrad to fly the plane from St. Louis to Nairobi, Kenya to help Sister Ryan with her work.

The story received a great deal of publicity and led to numerous other people offering their assistance. In the past 54 years, Wings of Hope has grown to 9 international field sites (Belize, Cambodia, Columbia, Ecuador, India, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Tanzania, and Zambia) while also having a presence in 29 States of the United States, as well as working currently or at some point in the past, in 47 different countries.

Wings of Hope is about so much more than just medical evacuations. In addition, they work throughout the world to help with immunizations, food and nutrition, education and income assistance, teacher training, dental assistance, and financial training. Within the United States they assist by flying patients living in rural areas to major hospitals to treat conditions like club foot.





There is no cost for their services. They rely on the kindness of a small army of kind-hearted people. In 2017, Wings of Hope directly served 45,656 people.

In order to be considered for assistance from Wings of Hope, individuals, groups, or nations apply to Wings of Hope for assistance. Unfortunately, one of the primary criteria that disqualifies a group from receiving assistance is if their nation is politically unstable or at war. After receiving requests, people at Wings of Hope determine what assistance they can provide, looking at flight operations and populations being served. Every request for help is considered on an individual basis, so even if you don't meet any of the criteria, you might still receive assistance.

President and CEO of Wings of Hope, Bret Heinrich wanted to mention that Wings of Hope, "works with all kinds of organizations, but we don't just limit ourselves to faith-based organizations. Our bottom line is that we want anyone in the world to receive the care and the support they need with no strings attached."







## BRET HEINRICH CEO WINGS OF HOPE





One special experience Heinrich talked about happened in 2017. The Pujols Foundation (founded by baseball star Albert Pujols) and the Tsunami Waves Foundation (founded by St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Carlos Martinez) were on a medical mission in Martinez's home town of Puerta Plata, Dominican Republic providing free medical and dental care. While there, Martinez became aware of a 17-year-old young woman named Camille Fernandez, suffering from acute myelogenous leukemia, and given only a few weeks to live unless she got care.

Martinez's foundation contacted Wings of Hope and the ball started rolling. What seemed like a Herculean labor became more of a reality as money and time and volunteers started to come out of the woodwork to help Camille. Finally, Camille was flown to St. Louis Children's Hospital and received a bone marrow transplant and a 70% chance at a full life, which is a miracle in and of itself.

As if the story wasn't good enough already, on April 10, 2018, Camille Fernandez threw out the ceremonial first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game.



## >>> Soar into STEM

With so much humanitarian work done throughout the world, Wings of Hope has shifted a portion of their focus to help another group of people often overlooked. According to the 2018 Boeing Pilot & Technician Outlook projections, 790,000 new civil aviation pilots, 754,000 new maintenance technicians, and 890,000 new cabin crew will be needed to fly and maintain the world fleet over the next 20 years. Wings of Hope sees this as an opportunity to address this shortage by getting young people excited about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning and aviation careers through a new project they call Soar into STEM.





According to their website, "Soar into STEM is an exciting, hands-on STEM learning experience designed to engage students in STEM learning by bringing them into our hangar to work on mission- bound aircraft. The mission of Soar into STEM is to use the resources of Wings of Hope — airplanes, pilots, mechanics, and aviation experts — to expose young people (especially girls and students of color) to STEM- related pathways and future aviation careers."

The work they do not only brightens the student's minds, but also prepares real aircraft to be used in future service missions. This shows students that learning in the classroom does have real life application and can make a difference in the world.



How is the program structured? Soar into STEM is a program held at the Wings of Hope world headquarters at Spirit of St. Louis Airport. Students meet on four Saturdays for hands-on repair and modification of an airplane, presentations by guest speakers sharing career path information and stories, and information about the Wings of Hope mission — including medical air transport flights that fly in and out of our St. Louis hangar. Topics covered include an introduction to how planes fly; pre- flight inspections; airplane engineering, manufacturing and maintenance; flight planning for a Wings of Hope mission; and navigation and navigation instruments. Students will also have an opportunity to spend time in a flight simulator and fly in a small-engine aircraft.

The work done by Wings of Hope blesses lives on many fronts, with close to 90% of all donations going straight to their missions and operations. It's wonderful to know that there are people out there working hard to make the world a kinder place. If you would like to donate materials, time, or money to Wings of Hope, go to https://wingsofhope.ngo/donate/

