



THROUGH THE
POWER OF



Aviation



2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

A Very Good Year

"It Was a Very Good Year."

This classic Frank Sinatra song could have been written about 2023.

We celebrated our 60th anniversary. Looking back on more than 60 years of changing and saving lives through the power of aviation, it's impossible to feel nothing but pride in our good work and gratitude for the countless individuals who have helped us do that good work across continents — and across the decades.

In 2023 alone, our Medical Relief & Air Transport Program completed 206 patient missions in the U.S. And our Global Humanitarian Network of partners impacted 62,293 lives worldwide.

Pausing to consider these numbers is humbling. In just one year, Wings of Hope impacted thousands of lives for the better — and all done from a modest hangar at a municipal airport in a suburb outside of St. Louis, Missouri.

From our very first mission in 1963 to the plane that left the Wings of Hope hangar on a mission this morning, aviation is the common thread running through everything we do. We use the power of aviation to connect people with vital health care resources, to educate a new generation in STEM and to provide humanitarian support in far reaches of the globe.

If aviation is our heart, our volunteers keep it beating. They are pilots and mechanics. They sit with patients and families between flights to medical care and serve as medics on those flights. We count on them to keep our facility and grounds beautifully maintained. Many serve in administrative roles, and plan and work at fundraisers. Others represent Wings of Hope at community events, proudly sharing our mission with the public. In 2023, 239 volunteers donated 28,895 hours — that's more than three years! — which equates to a monetary value of \$991,982.

The future of aviation is vital to our mission. And we are investing in that future by investing in the young people who participate in our SOAR into STEM education program, some of whom will be tomorrow's pilots and mechanics. In 2023, we served 2,110 students. We hosted fall and spring sessions in our hangar at Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield, Mo. And, through the generous support of our program sponsor, Boeing, we expanded SOAR into STEM to students in a more rural school district in Washington, Mo.

Our Global Humanitarian Network spans nine countries, stretching from the U.S. to Central and South America to Africa and as far as away as Papua New Guinea. Whether we're flying a child in St. Louis to the Mayo Clinic to find a diagnosis for a family desperate for answers or our partner in Papua New Guinea is using a floatplane to airlift a mother in distressed labor to the nearest hospital, aviation is the lifeline for the people we serve.

Our board of directors understand the mission and their responsibilities to be good stewards of our resources and establish and continually review the strategic direction that enables us to successfully fulfill our mission. And they are 100% aligned that a strong future for Wings of Hope is one that builds on our foundation in aviation.

2023 was a very good year. But every year is a good year when we can count on the individuals and organizations who generously support us with their financial contributions, their volunteerism and their advocacy.

In this we are blessed and extremely grateful.

Amy Cole Buehler, MA
President

David C. Agee
Board Chairman

62,293
served globally

Working in
9
countries

- United States
- Belize
- Colombia
- Paraguay
- Zambia
- Tanzania
- South Africa
- Papua New Guinea
- Cambodia

86 on the
cents dollar spent
on programs

2,110

students were engaged with
STEM education centered
on humanitarian aviation

EVERY 2 DAYS

we are flying a patient to
critically needed health care

300

Active volunteers
fulfilling our mission



MAT Program

When the best treatment option is far from home, our Medical Relief & Air Transport (MAT) Program offers free flights to some of the most renowned medical facilities in the United States. By taking care of the travel, we enable the people we fly and their families to focus on what's most important: getting the care they need to achieve the optimal medical outcome.

Desperate for Answers

Five-year-old Brock was a "beautiful, chubby baby," according to his mom, Emily. But once he transitioned off formula, he couldn't tolerate solid foods and wasn't gaining weight.

"He kept growing taller but getting thinner and thinner," said Emily.

Doctors in Brock's rural Illinois hometown were stumped, so the family started taking him to nearby St. Louis for treatment. While this helped, to a degree, Emily said, "we just reached a plateau where things kept getting worse and worse."

"We wanted to get a comprehensive second opinion just to see if there was something we could do to make his daily quality of life better," she said.

In 2023, Wings of Hope flew Brock and Emily seven times roundtrip to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Flying with Wings of Hope saved Brock and Emily a nine-hour one way drive to Mayo, which Emily would have had to make solo while her husband was at home with their other three children.

"It's mentally, emotionally and physically exhausting being the only caregiver for him while we were at Mayo," she said. "To be able to fly and then just drive an hour home, instead of a nine-hour drive, was so nice."

Besides alleviating the cost of flying commercially to the Mayo Clinic, flying with Wings of Hope allowed Emily to easily bring along all of Brock's medications and food supplies which can be difficult to take through airport security.



"I was able to pack whatever I needed and have it with me instead of in a checked bag," said Emily.

While Mayo didn't find a definitive reason for Brock's failure to thrive, they helped him gain weight by surgically implanting a gastrostomy tube and streamlined his medications through comprehensive testing.

"They were able to do so many tests so quickly," said Emily.

And when a child is not thriving, finding fast solutions is critical.

"By being able to go to Mayo, we were able to speed up the timeline for improving his daily quality of life," said Emily. "They really have increased his daily functionality and overall happiness."

As for Brock, he likes flying — especially when it gets a little choppy.

"He likes the turbulence," said Emily. "Not that we ran into much, but he was like 'ooh it's like a rollercoaster. Again!'"

MAT

2023 IMPACT

306

training flights

206

MAT patients flown

35

commercial patients flown

119,995

nautical miles flown

27,402

gallons of fuel

241

total patients served

JIM & RUTHIE *Martin*

Jim Martin says he and his wife, Ruthie, are “big believers in karma.”

“We’ve got four kids. None of them ever had a serious medical problem beyond a few broken arms. So as we got to the point where we could do some volunteering, we both latched onto things that would give back to folks who weren’t so lucky.”

The Martins began volunteering at Wings of Hope in 2016. Ruthie is a patient host, making sure the people we fly through our Medical Relief & Air Transport (MAT) Program are comfortable between flights. Jim provides maintenance support in the hangar. While not a licensed mechanic, he “works on pretty much everything” and one of Wings of Hope’s A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) mechanics signs off on his work.

“All his years at Boeing, he knows his way around aircraft,” says Ruthie.

A self-proclaimed “airplane guy,” Jim was a flight test engineer at Boeing before retiring in 2008. He especially enjoys the hands-on nature of his work at Wings of Hope.

“I didn’t get to do very much of that during my career as an engineer — so that’s a lot of fun.”

Ruthie, a retired nurse, says the best part of volunteering at Wings of Hope is “being with the people.”

“I just like meeting people and talking to them,” she says. “And then meeting them again and again and again as they come through.”

Many of the children Wings of Hope flies, for example, are frequent fliers to St. Louis for ongoing treatment at Shriners Children’s St. Louis.

“We see the same kids a lot,” says Ruthie. “You get to know the parents and watch their progress.”

One of those kids is 12-year-old Elizabeth, who we’ve been flying to Shriners Children’s St. Louis since she was five.

“We’ve seen so much change in her,” says Ruthie. “I heard when she first came in, she army crawled because she couldn’t use her legs. Now she’s pretty much walking, and she can actually run a little bit. That’s amazing.”

Because she works directly with patients, Ruthie says, “I feel their appreciation.”

Although Jim doesn’t often meet the people we fly, he feels his time volunteering at Wings of Hope is time well spent.

“I really find the work interesting,” he says. “It’s a pretty good bunch of people that you get to work with, and you never know what you’re going to do. You come in on a Tuesday, you might be cutting up rags or you might be taking an engine apart. It’s all over the map. It’s kind of fun going in and not knowing what you’re going to work on that day.”

He stopped volunteering at another organization because he would often show up and have to “go find something to keep busy.”

“I don’t have that problem at Wings of Hope,” he says. “They’re really good at getting the most out of what the volunteers have to offer and making it a worthwhile shift.”

And Jim says the hangar staff is “always very appreciative of the help that you give them.”



“When I work with the patients, I feel their appreciation.”
– Ruthie Martin, Patient Host



“We’re both big believers in karma.”
– Jim Martin, Maintenance Support

The People Keeping Our Wings in the Air

AMANDA Hill

As an A&P/IA (Airframe and Powerplant/Inspection Authorization) mechanic who loves working on electrical systems, Amanda Hill calls herself “an odd duck.”

“You’ve got electrical people who don’t want to work on the mechanical side and mechanics who don’t want to work on the electrical systems. I’ve found that there are very few mechanics who know both.”



“What I love is fixing problems, fixing broken things.”
– Amanda Hill, Avionics Technician

Amanda graduated with her A&P/IA certification 13 years ago, but her journey to becoming Wings of Hope’s avionics technician began as a teenager checking out her all-time favorite airplane at an air show.

“I walked up to the B-2 and there was a pilot, so I asked him questions: How do you work without a rudder system? How’s this work? And he said, ‘I don’t know. I just push a button.’”

Up until that point, Amanda had always thought she wanted to be a pilot. Now she knew: “What I love is fixing problems, fixing broken things.”

She had a similar experience in A&P school. The class was checking out the interior of an airplane that had been completely pulled apart.

“There were thousands of white wires everywhere,” Amanda recalls.

While her classmates wanted nothing to do with the mess of tangled wires, Amanda thought, “That looks like a fun puzzle.”

Amanda’s understanding of both the electrical and mechanical sides of aviation help her diagnose aircraft issues that other avionics technicians might miss.

“When somebody calls and they say they have an issue — ‘when I run up my engine, I’ve got this noise in my headset that won’t go away’ — I’m able to ask: Did it happen during a mag drop? OK, you’re introducing noise in the engine which is back feeding its way into the aircraft so look in this direction.”

She says avionic technicians who don’t understand how an engine works wouldn’t know to ask those types of questions: “They can wire it, but once it interfaces with the aircraft, they’re lost.”

Amanda says working at Wings of Hope is a perfect fit.

“I always wanted to be involved in aviation and missions, but it’s never worked out in my favor. Working at Wings of Hope is a way for me to do what I want to do with aviation and missions — I love what we do here.”



DEAN Pace

“The whole mission really resonates with me.”
– Dean Pace, Volunteer Pilot

After a decade as a charter pilot, more than three years as a flight instructor and traveling the world as a field service engineer working in the semiconductor industry, Dean Pace retired about three years ago. When one of his twin sons became a father, Dean moved to St. Louis to spend time with his now 3-year-old grandson — and started looking for a place to continue flying recreationally.

“Wings of Hope popped up on a Google search, and I thought this might be a pretty good deal because it keeps me flying and I’m also doing something that’s valuable to the community,” he says.

Dean flies for Wings of Hope about twice a month. He is also a flight instructor at the St. Louis Downtown Airport and watches his grandson two days a week.

“He’s my little buddy,” Dean says.

Although he had always flown solo, Dean says it was easy transitioning to Wings of Hope’s two-man crew: “It reduces the workload, it’s a lot safer — and the people that I’m flying with are just awesome.”

Dean believes a pilot should always be learning and appreciates the “wealth of experience in the pilots at Wings of Hope.”

“I pick these guys’ brains whenever I’m flying with them,” he says. “It’s fun flying with those guys and listening to their experiences that they’ve had throughout their lives and their aviation careers.”

Beyond the camaraderie he shares with his fellow pilots, Dean says “the whole mission really resonates with me.”

“The fact that these people are able to take their children to a hospital to get the care that they need — and it not be a financial burden on them — I think that’s just awesome.”



In 2023, the Wings of Hope Global Humanitarian Network (GHN) impacted 62,293 lives through partner bases in 9 countries:

- Belize**
- Cambodia**
- Colombia**
- Papua New Guinea**
- Paraguay**
- South Africa**
- Tanzania**
- United States**
- Zambia**

GHN Partner Spotlight:
Samaritan Aviation, Papua New Guinea

Samaritan Aviation is the only organization in Papua New Guinea's East Sepik River region using floatplanes as air ambulances serving approximately 116 villages — flying people in medical distress to the nearest hospital, delivering medical supplies, and providing aid to remote areas during natural disasters and disease outbreaks.

Story of Impact

Shared by Samaritan Aviation CEO and Co-Founder Mark Palm

"Our floatplanes can turn a three-day trip to the hospital into a one-hour flight. On a recent trip to Papua New Guinea, Jim Mott (Samaritan Aviation pilot) and I experienced a flight like this. We were on our way to deliver medicine to a remote village when an urgent message came: "Snake Bite - Chambri Lakes - 10 years old." Chambri Lakes was just minutes away! When we arrived, we loaded a young boy named Junior. He was foaming at the mouth and delirious, unable to talk and violently thrashing. He was secured within seconds, and we were airborne for a 30-minute flight to the Wewak Hospital. His only chance to live was the snake antivenom he so desperately needed. Whenever one of our patients is in the hospital, we spend time with them, providing food, clothing or any other needs while they recover. But when our team arrived to visit Junior the next day, we found out he had already been discharged. A week later, I was back in Chambri Lakes and asked a village leader if Junior had returned. He looked at me and said, 'Junior is standing right next to you!' I hardly recognized him as he stood in the canoe with a big smile. I met Junior's mom and learned more about their family and life in the village. It was a highlight to be able to pray with the family and the village as we thanked God for saving Junior's life."



Junior being transported to Wewak Hospital



Junior and his mother with Mark and Kirsten Palm one year later.

2023 IMPACT

363
 patients transported
 (35% pregnancy complications)

23,000
 pounds of medical supplies delivered to 40 medical posts serving thousands

520
 total flights

772
 hours flown

Wings of Hope Direct Support

Fuel stipends
 Airplane parts (93 supplied in 2023)
 Maintenance support



2023 **IMPACT**

2023 Highlights

FROM OUR GHN PARTNERS

South Africa

Mercy Air South Africa, in partnership with Wings of Hope, provides indispensable aviation services, facilitating essential medical and humanitarian assistance to over 40,000 people annually in Southern Africa. Mercy Air uses both fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft (e.g., helicopters), multiplying the efforts of partner organizations in supporting disaster relief, medical, dental, agricultural and educational services for remote villages in several countries.

In June 2023, Wings of Hope intern, Carolina Ball, MSW, worked with Mercy Air in White River, South Africa, for six weeks. Her work included logistical preparations for Civil Aviation Authority visits, updating the Mercy Air website and operational manuals, enhancing aviation safety standards and streamlining the volunteer onboarding process. She also participated in a cataract surgical brigade, offering comfort and support to 16 patients receiving life-changing surgeries.

226 missions flown 1,000s of vaccines delivered 6 patients transported 3 airstrips reopened 90% of regional farmers served through partner-led programs*
 12 health care workers trained 2 teachers supported via transport services for educational outreach

*Received aid to boost their incomes via activities such as vegetable gardening.

Paraguay

Our GHN partner, Centro Cristiano Siloh, provides free dental care to five departments (or states) in Paraguay, alleviating the suffering of people with serious infections and dental conditions and restoring deteriorated teeth. They also transport medical professionals into communities to vaccinate children, prescribe and administer medications, and provide health care and advice to pregnant women — all free of charge.

2023 **IMPACT**

34 flights 9,000 kilometers flown 6,239 people served 2,000 dental procedures
 1,000 vaccinations 1,000 medical supply packets delivered 300 people fed



Belize

The Belize Emergency Response Team (BERT) is an essential organization which provides medical air evacuation coverage for the entire country of Belize, which has a population of 380,000 people. Wings of Hope helped establish BERT more than 40 years ago and supports BERT in complying with regular maintenance and inspection schedules necessary to ensure the safety, reliability and compliance of its aircraft with regulatory standards; supplies, sources and ships aircraft parts; and sends relief pilots to assist BERT during times of high demand or emergencies.

2023 **IMPACT** 89 patients transported via air ambulance service
 19 health care workers 139 EMTs (emergency medical technicians) trained 109.2 hours flown
 7,500 people served (19% maternal health care) 2 pilots



SOAR *into* STEM

Educating the Next Generation of Aviators



Our SOAR into STEM program welcomes students into the Wings of Hope hangar for a five-week, hands-on learning experience that explores principles of flight, aircraft maintenance, aerodynamics engineering, uncrewed aerial vehicles – and culminates in Young Eagles flights in a general aviation airplane with a certified flight instructor sponsored by our local EAA Chapter 1675. In 2023, Wings of Hope served 2,110 students through our SOAR into STEM program. We hosted fall and spring sessions in our hangar at Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield, Mo. And, through the generous support of our program sponsor, Boeing, we expanded SOAR into STEM to students in a more rural school district in Washington, Mo.



2023 **IMPACT**

2,110

students were engaged with STEM education centered on humanitarian aviation

Story of Impact

SOAR into STEM Mentor Loves Helping Students Discover if Aviation is for Them

Marie Curia isn't much older than the students she mentors in Wings of Hope's SOAR into STEM program.

A system safety engineer at Boeing, Curia graduated with her bachelor's in aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Ariz., in December 2023. She joined Wings of Hope's SOAR into STEM program as a mentor for the spring 2024 session for a couple of reasons.

First, she missed volunteering. In college, she was fundraising chair for both Women in Aviation and the Granite Mountain Ninety-Nines. As a graduating senior, she won the Ed King Community Service Award — a prestigious award recognizing community service and academic achievement.

"I've always loved volunteering," said Curia.

When she moved home after graduating to start her new job at Boeing in St. Louis, she missed that part of her life.

"So, I Googled 'aviation volunteering events near me.' The first name that popped up was Wings of Hope."

Curia remembered Wings of Hope from her high school days.

"I did an aviation summer camp with St. Louis University and Parks College — and we actually toured Wings of Hope," she said.

When she saw that Wings of Hope was looking for SOAR into STEM mentors for 14-to-18-year-olds, she was excited to "show kids all the different realms of aviation and give them guidance."

"There's nothing I love doing more than helping kids along their aviation journey, because I knew nothing about aviation," she said. "I didn't really have much guidance until I went to college — so helping them before they get into the actual field is right up my alley."

As a mentor, Curia was involved in all aspects of the program from taking students on a "tour" of an airplane — explaining everything from a static wick to aircraft navigation — to teaching students about drones, the weight and balance on a glider, how to use a flight calculator and helping set up and clean up before and after sessions.

Her favorite part of being a mentor was providing students the guidance about aviation careers that she never had.

"It was awesome to make these connections with these kids and help them out



and answer their questions," she said. "It was rewarding to know that I'm helping these students go a step farther in their career and helping them distinguish what they like and don't like."

Curia shared the story of twin siblings in her mentor group — and their responses when she asked them about their SOAR into STEM experience.

"One sister said, 'I want to go to the Air Force Academy, and I want to fly these bombers.' She was so gung-ho. This program confirmed that she wants to be in aviation, no matter what."

Then she asked the other sister, "How was the program for you?"

"She said, 'I loved the drone stuff; it was really cool. But I don't think aviation's for me.' And I started cheering — just as excited as I was for her sister. She asked me, 'Why are you so excited?' And I said, you found something that you know you don't want to do. Now you have something to take off your checklist that you know you don't want to do. Thank God you didn't go to college for that and end up hating it."

Another highlight for Curia was watching students form friendships as the program progressed.

"It was really neat to see how on day one the kids wouldn't really talk to each other to now where they're exchanging phone numbers and planning on going to the air show together this summer," she said. "Just seeing those connections and those friendships grow — those are the big moments that tug on my heart a little bit."

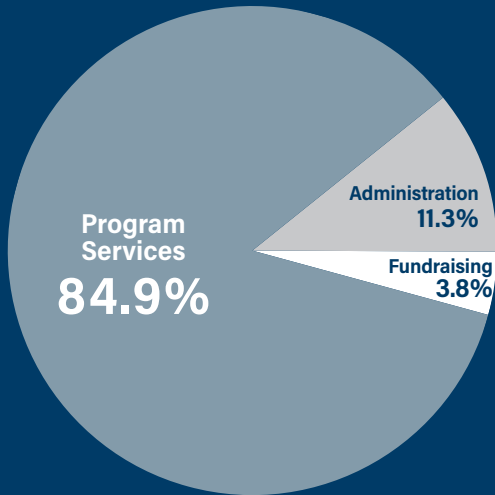
Although Curia found her way to a career in aviation, she said participating in a program like SOAR into STEM would have helped her narrow her focus before heading off to college.

Curia, who has a minor in unmanned aircraft systems, completed an internship last summer with Insitu, a Boeing Company that designs and produces uncrewed aircraft systems. While interning, she "figured out that drones aren't really my thing"

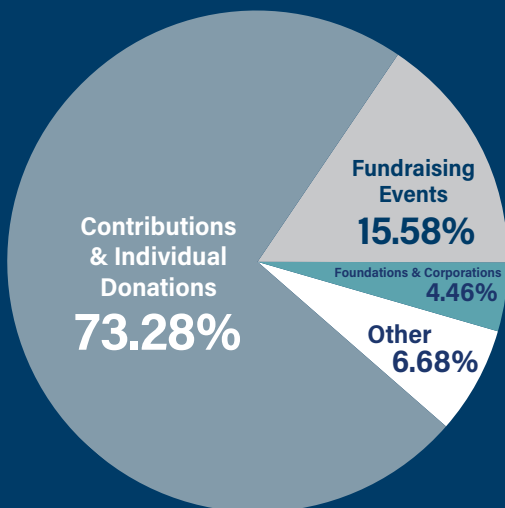
"I think if I had had this program and I had learned about drones before then, I probably wouldn't have done the internship and I would have focused on a different internship," Curia said. "I think this program really helps students to realize what they're actually getting into."

2023 Financials

Expenses



Income



Our 2023 990 and audited financials can be found on our website, www.wingsofhope.ngo.



Byron Corbett, the winner of our spring 2023 airplane raffle, with his grand prize 1963 Cessna 182 Skylane

Aircraft Donations Fuel Flight Operations

Aircraft donations are an important source of funds supporting our operations. Occasionally, we receive an airplane perfect for use in one of our partner field bases. But, most often, we use donated aircraft to raise mission-critical funds — raffling them off in one of our two yearly airplane raffles which raise upwards of \$800,000 annually or selling them to aviation enthusiasts.



Plane Pull Fundraiser Sparks Friendly Competition Among Participating Teams

Wings of Hope's inaugural Pulling for Hope fundraiser took place on Oct. 14, 2023. Eight teams raised a minimum of \$1,000 for their chance to pull a 15-ton jet in a 30-foot timed pull. The winning team crossed the finish line in 11.22 seconds — just a fraction ahead of the second and third place teams, who wasted no time challenging their newfound rivals to another chance to compete for bragging rights in 2024.



Boeing Grant Funds SOAR into STEM Expansion

On Nov. 11, 2023, Boeing presented Wings of Hope with a ceremonial \$100,000 check at the organization's Career Exploration Fair which was held in the Wings of Hope hangar to coincide with the final session of the fall SOAR into STEM program. The Boeing Global Engagement grant was the latest in Boeing's support for SOAR into STEM which the company has been generously funding since we launched the hands-on STEM and aviation education program for students in

2019. The 2023 grant funded the expansion of SOAR into STEM to the Washington School District about an hour's drive west of Wings of Hope's headquarters at Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield, Mo., supporting equitable access to aviation education for all students.

2023 IMPACT



28,895
HOURS DONATED

239
VOLUNTEERS

\$991,982
MONETARY VALUE

TO OUR DONORS
AND OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank You

We fulfill our mission through the power of aviation, but our donors and volunteers provide the financial resources and tireless support to keep our wings in the air.

We are happy to recognize donors who support Wings of Hope with their generous gifts of \$500 or greater.

Scan this QR code with your mobile device for list of donors.



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*Changing & Saving
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