

# LIFT

SPRING/SUMMER 2019 | VOL. 5 | ISSUE 1



Students get hands-on STEM aviation learning at Soar into STEM program.

## *Dear Wings of Hope Friends,*

There is a first time for everything.

The first six months of this year have proven to be no exception to that age-old bit of truth. In the pages of this newsletter, you will read about...

- The excitement of establishing our first field site in Colombia through a new partnership with Patrulla Aérea Civil Colombiana.
- The collaborative efforts of offering for the first time our new Soar into STEM program in partnership with Boeing, Maritz, the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri and the Kirkwood, Jennings and Ferguson-Florissant school districts.

- The awe we experienced when tallying the first six months of contributed volunteer hours through a new database called Volgistics.
- The eye-opening experience of visiting a field site for the first time by one of our newest employees.
- The honor of accepting our very first St. Louis Regional Chamber Arcus Award.
- The experience of attending a first Wings of Hope Board of Directors meeting by our three newest board members.

There are many new and exciting things happening at Wings of Hope, but what is not new is our deep appreciation for you. As a member of our Wings of Hope family, you help make it possible to save and change lives through the power of aviation – each and every day. For that, I am forever grateful.

Enjoy summer!

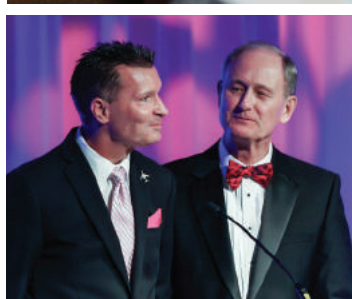
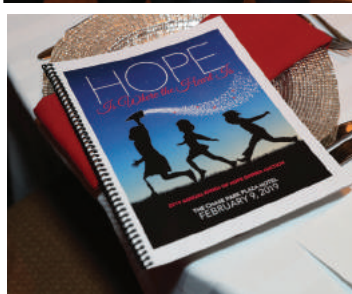


*Changing & Saving Lives  
Through the Power of Aviation*



Bret Heinrich,  
President & CEO

# Event RECAP



## *Oh, what a night!*

### 2019 DINNER AUCTION BREAKS RECORDS

**M**ore than 450 guests packed the Khorassan Ballroom at the Chase Park Plaza for our 2019 Hope Is Where the Heart Is gala on February 9 – setting a new attendance record and raising nearly \$400,000 (an all-time high) for Wings of Hope's U.S. Medical Air Relief & Transport (MAT) program.

Board Vice Chair Fred Meyland-Smith and Susan Meyland-Smith co-chaired the event with Board member Rich Ropp and his wife, Melissa.

Guests were able to see, firsthand, how their support is making a real difference as two young women and their families shared their Wings of Hope stories.

Wings of Hope has flown 11-year-old Gracin 27 times from her home in Kansas to St. Louis Shriners for bone-lengthening surgeries and therapy. Gracin was born with one leg shorter than the other. Thanks to the excellent pediatric orthopedic doctors at Shriners, Gracin can now walk without crutches – and is completing some intense physical therapy this summer to help her get ready for volleyball season. Her mom, Traci, shared the relief she felt when she learned that Wings of Hope places no limit on how many times we fly someone to care. And she is correct – once we start flying someone, they are part of the Wings of Hope family for life!

Guests also met 24-year-old Madison and her family. This young woman was 22 years old when doctors discovered a rare form of cancer, adenoid cystic carcinoma, while removing a tumor from her mouth. Wings of Hope flew Madison commercially from her home in Kirkwood, Mo., to M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston for three major surgeries and 35 days of radiation treatment. We are happy to report that Madison is in remission and is doing very well now.

As Gracin and Madison stood on stage and shared their Wings of Hope stories, our guests were visibly moved. This is what changing and saving lives through the power of aviation looks like. This is why we all ventured out on a cold February night to support the Wings of Hope MAT program.

**Thank you** to all our guests, sponsors and volunteers – everyone who contributed to making this most recent gala our most successful yet!



## SOAR INTO STEM LAUNCHES

If you happened by the Wings of Hope hangar on a Saturday this past April, you might have seen some very young “mechanics” working on our aircraft. These were 20 students from the Kirkwood, Jennings, Ferguson-Florissant school districts and the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri participating in our pilot Soar into STEM program. For four Saturdays, they gathered in our hangar for hands-on STEM training on a Cessna 182 that’s destined for service in Paraguay. Wings of Hope volunteers and aviation and STEM experts volunteered as mentors, teaching students STEM aviation principles and opening their eyes to the myriad job opportunities in STEM and aviation fields. The program’s goal is to ignite in youth – especially girls and students of color – a passion for STEM learning and career opportunities. Program supporters included Boeing, Maritz and Elite Aviation.

Integral to the program is connecting STEM learning with service learning – specifically, by showing students how the plane they worked on will be used to fly life-saving medical missions in an underserved community in South America.

If feedback from the students is any indicator, the program hit the mark: “Service for the good of others – or just thinking about helping others – gives me an overwhelming feeling of gratitude,” said Ashley, a 17-year-old student participant. “Thinking about the things Wings of Hope is doing makes me want to cry from how powerful it is and how it has helped so many people. If I ever get my pilot’s license, I would like to do something like this.”

Based on the tremendous success of the pilot program, Wings of Hope will host two Soar into STEM sessions in 2020. For more information about how to get involved as a partner or participant, visit [wingsofhope.ngo/stem](http://wingsofhope.ngo/stem).



Wings of Hope representing at the 2019 Arcus Awards: Steve Akre (board chair), Adam Kruger (board member), Sara Kruger, Anne Heinrich, Bret Heinrich (president and CEO), Rich Ropp (board member), Melissa Ropp, Don Kukla (board member), Maria Kukla, Laura Helling (VP)

## WE ARE THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE!

When Wings of Hope learned we had made the cut as a finalist in the St. Louis Regional Chamber’s Arcus Awards – which recognizes organizations that make St. Louis a great place to live, work and invest – we had no idea we would walk away with the People’s Choice Award. All finalists had a chance to win by garnering the most online votes for their organization during the weeks leading up to the awards ceremony. We knew our enthusiastic cadre of supporters would put us in the running, but we were up against some large and popular contenders. Live voting continued during the event – and it was a nail-biter at the Wings of Hope table. When Wings of Hope was announced as the winner, the table erupted in applause and our President and CEO practically ran up to the stage to accept the honor. When the Chamber’s Judy Schrum stopped by our hangar to present us the award a few weeks later, she let us in on a secret: Wings of Hope was so far ahead of the other finalists before the event that the live voting didn’t matter. We are so grateful to the St. Louis Regional Chamber for being a great civic partner – and proud of our Wings of Hope family for, once again, showing how much they care!

## SPRING AIRPLANE RAFFLE SELLS OUT IN RECORD TIME!

Our April 1<sup>st</sup> airplane raffle sold out so fast – 2 hours 50 minutes – we barely had time to get our second cup of coffee before all 4,000 tickets were gone. The grand prize, a 1978 Beechcraft C-23 Sundowner, was getting a lot of attention in the days leading up to the raffle so we knew it would go fast, but we were truly blown away by generosity of our loyal and growing band of supporters. We drew the winning ticket on May 17 and will soon deliver the plane to its new owner, Michael Budde in Claremore, Okla. Best of all, the raffle raised \$260,000 in support of our U.S. Medical Relief & Air Transport program. Set your alarm for our next airplane raffle which goes live 6 a.m. Central time on September 16. Rumor has it we are raffling off a classic 1965 Cessna 172 with less than 3,500 total time – don’t miss out!





# Field NOTES

## NICARAGUA



Norman Hansen, Tiffany Nelson, Jessica Watson

In May, Director of Programs Jessica Watson and Global Programs Manager Tiffany Nelson visited our partner Adventist World Aviation (AWA) in Nicaragua. AWA provides lifesaving medical air transport to indigenous communities along the Miskito Coast. Wings of Hope spent time with AWA pilot, Norman Hansen, and business manager, Nancy Hansen, to better our ability to support their operations.

Norman shared a story with Wings of Hope that demonstrates how they are changing and saving lives along the Miskito Coast.

In early April, the Hansens received a phone call stating that a 6-year-old boy named Garby was bitten by a Barba Amarilla, or venomous pit viper, early in the morning at a remote community near San Carlos on the northern border of Nicaragua. This is an extremely poisonous snake and the venom is fast-acting. The little boy was in dire need of emergency medical transport to Waspam, the nearest pueblo, to receive the antivenin. The fastest route to the hospital from the community was 10 hours by boat along the River Coco. They called the AWA base in hopes that the Hansen family would be able to provide emergency air transport. Unfortunately, AWA had not yet received landing permissions for that community and did not know how they would be able to carry out the mission. Norman and Nancy pleaded for emergency landing permissions which were, unfortunately, not granted. At this point, the pair had to think creatively if they wanted to save the boy.

They thought, "If we can't bring the boy to the antivenin, then we



will bring the antivenin to the boy" –and quickly fabricated a plan to airdrop the medication to the boy in his village. They hoped that the boy would survive the night as they planned to make the drop in the morning. Having never done an airdrop before, Norman and his son spent all night researching the best methods to minimize the breakage of vials.

To prepare for airdropping the antivenin into the village in San Carlos, they woke at 4:30 a.m. and completed a practice drop over the runway at their base in La Tronquera. When they felt confident, the two took off toward the village.

Norman flew in low to the ground and his son opened the door and dropped the package of antivenin. The drop was a success – out of 100 vials of antivenin, only one broke! Because of the efforts of the Hansen family, only 24 hours after being bitten, Garby was able to receive the lifesaving antivenin. The pain he had been experiencing began to subside and, after a few days, Garby was running and playing again.

This success story would have never been possible without the dedication of the Hansen family and the lifesaving power of aviation.



## NEW SOUTH AMERICAN PARTNER!

We are excited to announce a new partnership with Patrulla Aérea Civil Colombiana – a nonprofit in Bogotá, Colombia with 51 years' experience in medical and humanitarian brigades for people living in extreme conditions of poverty, social or geographical exclusion, and victims of catastrophe. On average, their monthly brigades benefit about 700 people with 1,100 specialized medical consultations and 120 medical procedures. We are proud to join our wings with theirs in providing better access to health care for the Colombian people.



### LADIES LUNCHEON HIGHLIGHTS POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

The ladies of Wings of Hope gathered at the Chase Park Plaza for their annual luncheon on June 6. Wings of Hope Board member and Executive Director of St. Louis Children's Hospital Shelley Perulfi was the featured speaker. Shelley shared a wonderful story of Isaac, a young patient Wings of Hope flies to St. Louis for treatment at Children's Hospital – showing in very human terms how Wings of Hope's partnership with St. Louis Children's is making a powerful difference in the lives of children and families. Connecting the generations, Emily Mueth – a recent St. Louis University School of Nursing graduate and grand-daughter of longtime Wings of Hope supporter Joan Mueth – introduced Shelley who also started her career as a nurse. In addition to a socializing, lunch and presentations, guests enjoyed choosing among the many scarves provided as table gifts which has become a Ladies Luncheon highlight and tradition.



Shelley Perulfi, Emily Mueth, Joan Mueth, Laura Helling

### SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS TO SECURE OUR FUTURE

Wings of Hope is in the midst of a major campaign to grow our endowment to secure the future of our U.S. Medical Relief & Air Transport (MAT) program. The goal of the *Soaring to New Heights Endowment Campaign* is to ensure we have the capital to secure the planes needed, cultivate the next generation of volunteer pilots, and expand the MAT program to get patients where they need to be – allowing us to serve 50% more people with free transportation to health care.

"With rural hospitals closing at an unprecedented rate, the need for Wings of Hope has never been greater," said Wings of Hope President and CEO Bret Heinrich. "At the same time, Wings of Hope has never been more strongly positioned to secure our future. With the support of our friends and partners, we will build our capacity to expand our ability to do this work – and save many more lives."

Interested in contributing to our endowment? Please contact Laura Helling at [laura.helling@wingsofhope.ngo](mailto:laura.helling@wingsofhope.ngo) for more information or to set up a meeting to learn more about Wings of Hope.



New board members: Adam Kruger, Manish Kohli and Kendra Holmes

### MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBERS

On June 26, our three newest board members spent the day at Wings of Hope – meeting with our team leads and learning more about what we do. We are excited to welcome them to the Wings of Hope family. "The Governance Committee of the Wings of Hope Board of Directors hit a homerun by selecting our 2019 class of directors. Dr. Holmes, Dr. Kohli and Mr. Kruger all bring unique skill sets to our board that will support our future growth and expansion. It is an honor to have them join our Wings of Hope family and I look forward to working with each of them," said Wings of Hope President and CEO Bret Heinrich.

**Dr. Kendra Holmes** is vice president and chief operating officer at Affinia Healthcare where she started as a staff pharmacist in 2003. Dr. Holmes received the St. Louis College of Pharmacy Distinguished African American Alumni Award in 2013, and serves on the St. Louis College of Pharmacy Board of Trustees. She is a member of the 2015 *St. Louis Business Journal's* 40 Under 40 Class and received the St. Louis American Foundation's Excellence in Healthcare Award in 2016. Dr. Holmes serves on the board of HealthWorks Museum, which has a mission to inspire children to make positive health choices. She is passionate about improving the lives of underserved populations and an advocate for social and economic justice.

**Dr. Manish Kohli** serves as chairman, Global Board of Directors of Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), a nonprofit focused on better health through information and technology. Dr. Kohli is a champion of transforming health care and wellbeing through better access to quality care for individuals anywhere, anytime. He has extensive experience in variety of international health-care settings focusing on clinical care and use of health information technology to advance common goals of better access to quality and value-based care. Dr. Kohli is a Fellow of HIMSS and is dually board certified. He is a Diplomate, American Board of Preventive Medicine-Clinical Informatics and also the American Board of Family Medicine.

**Adam Kruger** is chief compliance officer for MBM Wealth Consultants. A St. Louis native, Adam enjoys building connections and creating value for his community. Adam was a founding member of the Young Ambassadors of Wings of Hope and worked to build a successful young professionals group dedicated to promoting the mission of Wings of Hope. The Young Ambassadors have hosted numerous events that have raised thousands of dollars to support international missions and connected hundreds of young people to the life-changing impact of Wings of Hope. Adam is also the President of El.BO, a 501c3 nonprofit that supports programming education for kids in the Midwest.



Brooke Bennett, Tiffany Nelson



Beth Campbell



Steve Tompkin



Lena Freeman

## NEW STAFF SUPPORTS GROWTH & STRATEGIC PLAN

You may have noticed some new faces among the Wings of Hope staff – and a few who are familiar.

**Tiffany Nelson** joined our team as the new full-time global programs manager in March. Tiffany is managing new funding and partnership requests, and researching funding opportunities for the international programs. In her role, she is making site visits (see story about Nicaragua visit, p. 4) and helping secure airplane parts for our partners. Tiffany is also collecting data on existing field sites to measure program impact.

**Brooke Bennett** also joined Wings of Hope in March as our new education and outreach manager. Brooke's primary job is to research and submit new grant opportunities for our Medical Relief & Air Transport and global programs. Formerly a teacher, Brooke acted as lead teacher in our Soar into STEM pilot program. Brooke is also liaison for our Young Ambassadors group.

**Beth Campbell** became our full-time CFO in January. With the growth we are experiencing, it is critical to have a full-time, hands-on professional to help develop a structured control measure, keep

financial records, complete financial reporting and handle banking relationships. Beth had been volunteering in this role, part-time, since May 2016.

This past October, **Steve Tompkin** joined the staff as our full-time aircraft avionics technician, following two years volunteering as a mechanic and avionics technician.

In June, we hired **Lena Freeman** as a part-time administrative coordinator to assist our VP Laura Helling in managing donor communications, gift acknowledgements and donor research. Lena joined Wings of Hope as a volunteer on the administrative team in 2017, so she has hit the ground running in her new position.

Wings of Hope is experiencing unprecedented growth – in our programs (both domestic and global), our endowment and our financial support. It makes sense that our staff grow to support us in fulfilling our mission.

## VOLUNTEER HOURS ADD UP!

In January 2019, we started tracking volunteer hours using Volgistics, a volunteer management software tool. Since then, 238 volunteers have tracked their hours, checking in and out of Wings of Hope using a touchscreen monitor every time they volunteer. Year to date, our volunteers have logged 18,651 hours. Independent Sector recently calculated the value of one volunteer hour as \$25.43. Multiplying the 18,651 hours our volunteers have logged so far this year by this hourly rate values their service at \$466,387.73. At this pace, we are well on our way to seeing that value exceed \$1 million by year's end. This affirms what we have known all along: Wings of Hope absolutely could not operate without the support of our volunteers.

We know our volunteers are valuable to us – but they could choose to spend their time anywhere. Why Wings of Hope?



"I prefer being useful and busy," said Chris Whitenack, a retired teacher who has been volunteering as a receptionist with us since September.

"When I investigated Wings of Hope, it just fit the bill. I like the mission." In addition to volunteering one to two days a week answering phones at the front desk, Chris volunteered as a mentor for our Soar into STEM program this past spring. Her background in education made her ideal for the role.

"I know a little bit about aviation, but I know a lot about working with kids," she said.

Chris is a great example of how our Volunteer Fulfillment Team tries to match each volunteer's unique skills and experiences with the jobs that can put that expertise to work.

We are grateful for any time our volunteers choose to share with us, so we are extremely flexible in our scheduling. Chris appreciates this: "You can do as much or as little as you like."

Thank you, Chris, and all of our volunteers. You really are worth your weight in gold!

## Calendar OF EVENTS

### AUGUST 10

Fly-In Plane Wash  
Wings of Hope Hangar

GSLBAA Trivia Night  
(benefiting Wings of Hope)  
CBC High School

### SEPTEMBER 7-8

Spirit of St. Louis Air Show  
& STEM Expo  
Spirit of St. Louis Airport

### SEPTEMBER 16

Fall Airplane Raffle

### SEPTEMBER 18

2020 Gala Host Committee  
Information Meeting  
Wings of Hope

### OCTOBER 5

Taste of Hope: Young  
Ambassadors' Culinary Event  
Wings of Hope Hangar

### 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

# THANK YOU

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

If you are interested in finding out how you can include Wings of Hope in your legacy and estate planning, please email Laura Helling at [laura.helling@wingsofhope.ngo](mailto:laura.helling@wingsofhope.ngo) or call 636-537-1302.

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# SAVE THE DATE! SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

## 3:30-6:30PM

Join us in the Wings of Hope Hangar  
to sample fare from the best  
international restaurants in town!

*Proceeds Benefit Wings of Hope Field Operations*

**Online tickets \$30 each, or 2 for \$50.**

*(Beer & wine samples included.  
Free for children 12 & under.)*

**[www.wingsofhope.ngo](http://www.wingsofhope.ngo)**

