

Legacy Flight Academy at St. Louis Downtown Airport offers opportunity for youth to experience a career in aerospace from the cockpit

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Spots still available for unique, free Sept. 10 program born out of the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen

CAHOKIA, ILL. - St. Louis Downtown Airport is preparing to welcome the Legacy Flight Academy on Saturday, Sept. 10, for a unique outreach and flight orientation program aimed at fostering an interest in aerospace careers among minority youth. Spots are still available for interested participants who want to experience the thrill of flight at no cost.

Eyes Above the Horizon was launched in 2015 to give under-represented minority youth an opportunity to develop an interest in the exciting field of aerospace through flight introductions, mentorship and immersion into the rich history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. The program is free and open to minority youth who are between the ages of 10 and 19 on the date of the event, but RSPV's and parental permission are required. Space is limited so those interested in participating are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Sign up information is available at www.legacyflightacademy.org/eyes-above-the-horizon/.

During the event, which runs from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., participating students will experience a short flight in a basic training aircraft flown by a licensed pilot. While in flight, the students will have the opportunity to actually fly the plane with guidance from the pilot and to experience the confidence and thrill of being a pilot themselves.

In addition, a team of dedicated role models, whose experience covers a vast array of aviation professions, will lead discussions around academic college preparation, the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, and exciting career opportunities in both the military and civilian industry. The day will be made up of several hour-long sessions with a focus on team building and will include a luncheon with a keynote motivational speaker.

“The central and defining aspect of our program is the incredible story of the Tuskegee Airmen,” notes Major Kenyatta Ruffin, founder of the Legacy Flight Academy.

“Through interactive activities and examples of the original Tuskegee Airmen and present role models, we educate our students on the critical importance of positive character values.”

Seminar leaders will come from Legacy Flight Academy, Scott Air Force Base and the United States Air Force (USAF), Southern Illinois University, Middle Georgia State University and others. Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 64, assisted by other St. Louis area EAA pilots, will provide Young Eagle Flights for all participants and students will tour the Greater St. Louis Air and Space Museum. Ideal Aviation will support the operation and St. Louis Downtown Airport Fire Department will provide an Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) truck demonstration.

“This is the first time this innovative program has been offered away from the Legacy Flight Academy’s home airport in Tuskegee, Alabama and we’re excited to host it,” noted Erick Dahl, director of St. Louis Downtown Airport. “We’re hoping for a terrific turn out from students in the St. Louis region and across the Midwest and are confident the participants will be inspired and motivated to excel in their academic and career endeavors.”

For more information, visit www.legacyflightacademy.org/eyes-above-the-horizon/, call 1-855-TUSKEGEE (877-5343) or email info@LegacyFlightAcademy.org.

Program History and Vision

Eyes Above the Horizon (EAH) emerged early in 2015 through a genuine desire to motivate minority youth. Partnering with the Legacy Flight Academy (LFA) in the fall of 2015 and with the support of Golden Eagle Aviation, Middle Georgia State University and others, EAH has conducted four extraordinary events, providing more than 200 students from six different states with introductory flights and education on aerospace careers. With the continued support of partners and community organizations, EAH seeks to provide opportunities for at least 500 students annually to help them live the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen and experience the thrill of flight.

Legacy Flight Academy

Legacy Flight Academy is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to helping minorities and at-risk youth achieve success as aerospace professionals. Our organization was founded to comprehensively address the problem of under-representation in aviation career and to promote the legacy of the Tuskegee Airman. Along with our other programs, Eyes Above the Horizon ensures that the Tuskegee Airmen legacy not merely survives, but that it thrives.

About Bi-State Development

Bi-State Development (BSD) is the operator of the Metro public transportation system for the St. Louis region, which includes the 87 vehicle, 46-mile MetroLink light rail system; 391 MetroBus vehicle fleet that operates on 77 MetroBus routes; and Metro Call-A-Ride, a paratransit fleet of 120 vans. BSD also owns and operates St. Louis Downtown Airport and the Gateway Arch Riverboats, as well as operates the Gateway Arch Revenue Collections Center and Gateway Arch trams. BSD also operates the Bi-State Development Research Institute and the St. Louis Regional Freightway, the region’s freight district.