



LADUE NEWS

FROM THE CENTRAL WEST END TO CHESTERFIELD, AND ALL AREAS IN BETWEEN. | JUNE 11, 2021



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Flying High, Saving Lives

By Brittany Nay | Photos courtesy of Wings of Hope

From the U.S., to the plains of Tanzania, to the Ecuadorian rainforest, to the most remote corners of Colombia, Wings of Hope is changing and saving lives through the power of aviation.

Twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, the 58-year-old global humanitarian nonprofit provides free U.S. medical air transport flights to people who need special care within a 900-mile radius of its St. Louis headquarters and partners with organizations in 10 countries around the world to offer medevac flights and health care access for remote communities.

"All of our pilots and medics are volunteers," president and CEO Bret Heinrich says, noting the nonprofit has more than 350 volunteers. "We have an amazing collection of dedicated people who are bringing high-level skills to the organization."


Through 200 annual U.S. flights and countless transports around the world, Wings of Hope helps 70,000 people each year. "We are reaching people who are forgotten, with care that we take for granted," Heinrich notes.

Many patients become Wings of Hope "frequent flyers," as their conditions require multiple rounds of treatment, from adults battling cancer to infants with orthopedic conditions. "We see these children grow up before our eyes," Heinrich says. "One young patient, Elizabeth, had a condition that only allowed her to 'army crawl' – then she was in a wheelchair and then in leg braces. We look forward to seeing her run across the hangar and play like all

kids do."

Heinrich says the nonprofit's pilots love flying patients – who often become family: "Each flight, we always try to have the same volunteers available, to give [the patient] a sense of security and family."

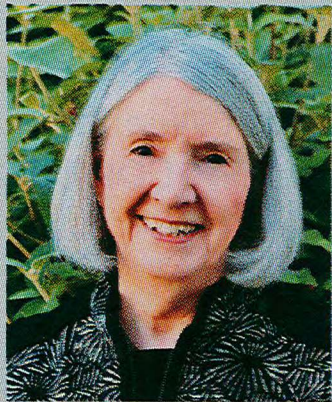
A new initiative taking flight at Wings of Hope in recent years is aimed at building the future pipeline of global humanitarianism. With the help of Boeing and Maritz, the charity's Soar Into STEM program introduces students to aviation careers. "Last year, students worked on an aircraft that was put into service in Paraguay," Heinrich says. "They were able to see how the plane they touched with their hands, right here in St. Louis, is touching the lives of people around the world."

Wings of Hope's dedication to its mission reminds Heinrich of when President John F. Kennedy visited NASA before the moon landing. "He's walking through the halls, asking people their roles, and there's a janitor sweeping, and he says: 'What do *you* do here, sir?' and the janitor replies: 'Mr. President, I'm here to put a man on the moon,'" Heinrich says. "It's that kind of singular focus we have at Wings of Hope – everyone is here to change and save lives through the power of aviation." 

*Wings of Hope, 18370 Wings of Hope Blvd., Chesterfield,
 636-537-1302, wingsofhope.ngo*

CAROLYN HAMPEL

WINGS OF HOPE



Wings of Hope captured 80-year-old Carolyn Hampel's heart from day one.

Hampel, who spent 50 years in the medical field and beat cancer twice, thought she had seen it all – that is, until her first time volunteering for Wings of Hope more than six years ago. At that time, she spotted a tiny patient

being transported into St. Louis for medical care. "I saw this little baby in his pumpkin seat being flown in here for treatment," she recalls. "I thought I was going to lose it – it was so heartwarming."

Some 18 Wings of Hope flights later, and Hampel says: "This little guy with casts on his legs was able to have braces put on and walk ... and now he runs."

Among Hampel's many projects for the organization through the years was an exterior facelift, complete with gorgeous pollinator gardens and a new monument sign. "What takes place inside Wings of Hope is so wonderful," she says. "The

people who come inside – our patients, our volunteers, our donors and the staff – see the beautiful work taking place. But if people pull up and see 2-foot-high weeds in your front yard, that doesn't make for very good curb appeal. That's why I wanted to make Wings of Hope as beautiful outside as is the work being done on the inside."

Hampel is available to help whenever asked, the nonprofit's staff says. But if you ask her, she humbly replies: "I'm a little grain of salt – or I should say, pepper – of the whole operation. There are so many here who give so much."

There are
so many
here who give
so much."

– CAROLYN HAMPEL



TWENTY TWENTY-ONE Charity Awards

REGISTRY & GIVING
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CLASSIC 107.3 (Radio Arts Foundation)

Serving the St. Louis Community since 2013, Classic 107.3 (Radio Arts Foundation) is a one-of-a-kind, community-supported radio station with a commitment to providing outstanding programming in support of the arts for the benefit of the St. Louis community and proudly serves as the "Voice for the Arts in St. Louis."

7711 Carondelet Ave., Suite 302, 314-881-3523,
classic1073.org

ST. ANDREW'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation is dedicated to providing compassionate care to economically disadvantaged adults 65-plus living in the greater metropolitan St. Louis area. As a part of St. Andrew's resources for seniors, the faith-based, nonsectarian, nonprofit works to improve the quality of life for seniors in need.

standrewscharitablefoundation.org

SAINT LOUIS CRISIS NURSERY

Saint Louis Crisis Nursery has been preventing child abuse and neglect for the past 35 years and wants to thank everyone who has supported its mission, especially longtime partners SSM Health, BJC HealthCare, Centene Charitable Foundation and Emerson. It could not save babies lives and keep kids safe without this help!

314-292-5770, crisisnurserykids.org