



IMPACT REPORT

JANUARY-JUNE 2024



Navigating Lasting Impact



NAVIGATING LASTING IMPACT

In 1994, the U.S. Air Force closed Lowry Air Force Base. Hangar One, where Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum resides today, was turned over to a group of volunteers for use as a museum. It wasn't an easy start for the volunteer-led organization. A World War II era hangar requires extensive upkeep, and resources were limited. The story goes that board members had to take turns paying the bills to keep the lights on. While every organization has its mountain to climb, I imagine navigating these formative years of Wings Over the Rockies felt like summiting Mt. Elbert.

The Wings Over the Rockies of today has over 50 staff members and a robust volunteer program that allow us to offer aerospace education and outreach experiences to over 5,000 students on the eastern slope each year. Since 2000, our donors have generously enabled us to provide over \$1.2 million in funding for flight scholarships for high school age students. The support and encouragement of our corporate partners fuels our inspiration to achieve our vision to inspire innovation and action for the next generation of aviation and space explorers with our PBS show, video series, and podcast, Behind the Wings®.

A keen understanding of the past is a powerful tool for shaping the future. The history of Wings Over the Rockies is one of perseverance, preservation and passion. Lowry Air Force base was a technical training base with the motto *Sustineo Alas* ("I sustain the wings"). Within Hangar One today we take that motto to heart and continue to find new and innovative ways to grow our impact and ensure the next generation will be inspired to sustain the wings of aerospace.



Kristina Stuber
Chief Development Officer

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INSPIRING STORIES



World Eye Cancer Hope Tour

There's a lot to discover at Wings Over the Rockies. A new tour developed for children with ocular cancer took a hands-on approach to learning about airplanes.

It's not unusual for a child to feel overwhelmed by museums. The crowds, the unexpected noises, new experiences and general expectations of best behavior can be a lot for many kids. For a child with vision impairment this could compound their anxiety. Museum educator, Phil Steffes, led the effort to make the World Eye Cancer Hope tour as stress free as possible for the elementary and middle school age children. Phil Steffes adapted the tour by focusing more on detailed descriptions of each part of the tour and worked with the restorations volunteers to create a tactile experiences that took kids behind the ropes to feel aircraft, tools, and plane parts.

“

Everyone was so nice and patient! Thank you for making the trip extra special for our group. We were extremely impressed with everything.”

– Tula's Tots, Early Childhood Education Tour, March '24



INSPIRING STORIES

Volunteer Highlight

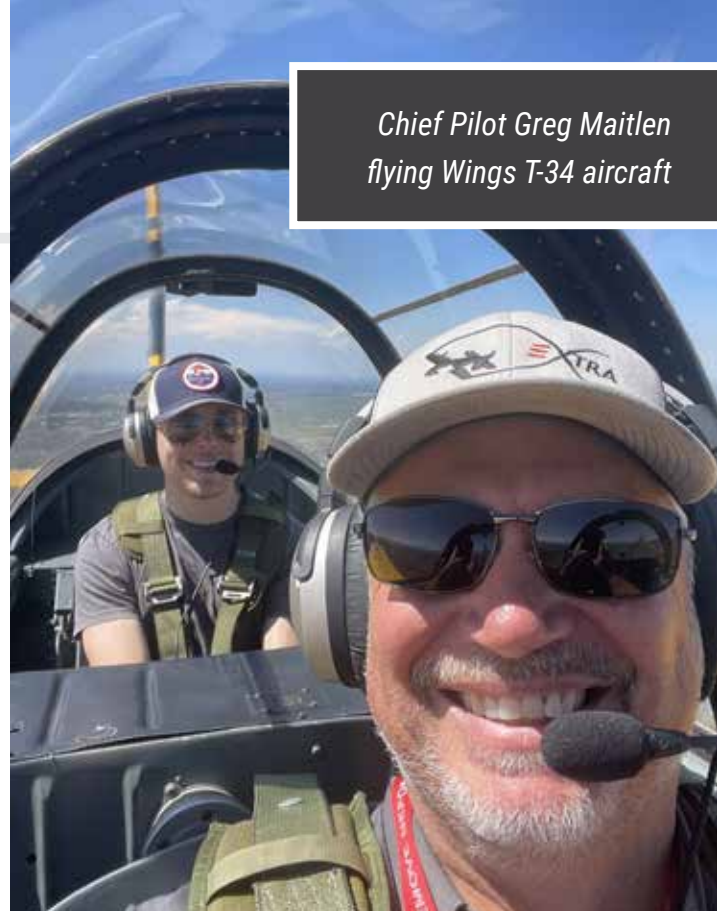
Wings Over the Rockies volunteer program has over 300 volunteers who lend their unique talents to the Air & Space Museum and Exploration of Flight.

They are often the public face of the museum- greeting all who arrive, acting as a docent and steward of the collection. There are also many volunteer roles which go unseen by the public - cataloging the archives, restoring artifacts and more. One unique “behind the scenes” volunteer role for Wings, which isn’t found in most museums, is that of Chief Pilot.

For over ten years, Greg Maitlen has served as Wings’ Chief Pilot. Maitlen’s role is mandated by a letter of authorization with the FAA. He humbly describes Chief Pilot as being a “wrangler” of his fellow volunteer pilots. He is responsible for ensuring Wings operates within local and federal regulations and that other volunteer pilots are checked out and meet flight hour requirements for all Wing’s aircraft.

Maitlen says it isn’t easy to measure how many hours a month he volunteers because the role requires that he be responsive. When traveling for his full-time job with Bell Helicopter, he may receive a text about an aircraft maintenance issue and need to respond. Maitlen doesn’t view it as a burden however,

“*I’m a big believer in the safety culture. It’s an enjoyment, the pilots are giving back and we’re having fun in the process.*”



Chief Pilot Greg Maitlen
flying Wings T-34 aircraft

Maitlen’s love of flying began at a very, very young age.

“

My dad was a Vietnam helicopter pilot and an air frame and power plant mechanic. My first helicopter flight was when I was two weeks old.”

– Greg Maitlen



Thanks to Maitlen’s oversight as Chief Pilot, Wings volunteer pilots can participate in Young Eagles, a program created to inspire youth interested in aviation careers. They also fly teachers through Teacher Flight Pathway and mentor future pilots in the Pilot Pathway program.

Lockheed T-33A Shooting Star

Before a pilot took their first flight in an F-4 or a B-52, they trained in a T-33 Shooting Star “T-Bird”.

Entering service in 1948, the T-33 addressed the performance differences between propeller airplanes and early jet aircraft. It was an effective and well-loved plane.

Like many of the military aircraft on display at Wings, the T-33 is missing components, including its engine and many of its cockpit instruments. Restorations volunteers are working to restore the aircraft, with the goal of maintaining its historical accuracy and making the plane more dynamic for guests.

Since the beginning of the year, a retinue of volunteers have transformed the exterior of the T-Bird through extensive polishing and the reapplication of missing decals. They refinished the canopy and windscreen, which had become cloudy and nearly opaque over the years.

While work on the outside continues, some volunteers are recreating the instrument panels in the cockpit. When possible, they acquire and install extant gauges or fabricate duplicates as necessary.



INSPIRING STORIES

Donations Help Wings Tell the Story of the Berlin Airlift

In January, Wings Over the Rockies opened The Berlin Airlift: Supplies from the Sky.

The exhibit told the story of the airplanes that flew nonstop to deliver lifesaving supplies to the people of Berlin. Through interactive elements and an immersive design, visitors were able to visualize the airlift's impact. Donated artifacts featured prominently, particularly items given to Wings by the family of Thomas Moss, who was a C-54 pilot during the airlift. The exhibit displayed his log book, photographs, Berlin Airlift Medal, dog tags, throat microphone, and a cartoon map of the airlift from his collection.

The exhibit also featured coal donated by Westmoreland Mining, LLC, of Lone Tree, CO, and rubble donated by Superior Demolition, Inc., in Denver. Boeing also donated reproduction rights for two of the images used in the exhibit.



Artifacts donated by the family of Thomas Moss, a C-54 pilot during the Berlin Airlift



DONOR HIGHLIGHTS



A Slow-Moving Plane's Restoration Takes Its Time

The thrill of aviation isn't always about speed. Wings Over the Rockies' newest addition to its fleet is also its slowest, providing patrons, teachers, and youngsters with a unique flight experience.

Only slightly faster than the average car, it is fitting that the plane was donated by an automobile enthusiast.

Donor Lou Hutchison is first and foremost a car guy. His family's collection is so extensive that his daughter founded Vehicle Vault, a car museum in Parker, CO, to house and share it with the public. Hutchison's love for aviation is less well known. The self-confessed "road warrior" already had some flight lessons under his belt when he bid at an auction on a combination lot benefitting military veterans, winning a 1958 Dodge M37 and a 1959 Cessna L-19 "Bird Dog."

An incredibly slow-flying aircraft, the L-19 was built for military reconnaissance. In the Vietnam War, it served as an observation platform and spotter airplane, allowing airmen to peer out its

V-shaped windows and report on activity below.

Now, it will be used for countless free flights through Wings' Teacher Flight and Young Eagles programs, introducing educators and children to the thrill of aviation. "They have the opportunity to catch a bug and make a plan, whether it's for a career or just because of a love of flying," Hutchison says. "Wings puts lead on the target for that mission consistently."

Jordan Ashley, former executive director of Wings Over the Rockies Exploration of Flight, is one of the few approved to fly the Bird Dog, which stands out among Wings' other aircraft. In addition to having a maximum speed of 132 mph, it is low-flying, and a more accessible option for flight experiences at half the cost of a ride in Wings' Beechcraft T-34 Mentor.

Ashley compares cruising in the new plane to taking a spin in a convertible. "It's like driving your car at 500 feet above the ground," he says. "You can see all kinds of stuff."

Hutchison says he initially hoped to fly the airplane himself. In retrospect, that was more than a bit optimistic. "Not only do I not have my [pilot's] license, I wouldn't have right off the bat had an endorsement for a taildragger," he says.

He offered the aircraft to Wings, loving that grounded or airborne, his donation would support an education-driven mission.

“Even as a static display, the Bird Dog has a great place in military history,”

he says. *“But the fact that it is a functional, air-worthy aircraft and can be used to let people just experience what different types of aircraft do and how the different types fly, it’s all part of that education mission as well.”*

Getting the Cessna ready for flight was an education itself, as well as an exercise in patience.

Wings Chief Pilot Greg Maitlen was at the auction when Hutchison won the refurbished L-19. He overheard a conversation about the logistical challenge of shipping the plane to its new owner in Denver. There were plenty of pilots around, but none who knew how to fly a taildragger. Maitlen volunteered, leaving the plane in Scottsdale for a few days while he did his homework.

“I read the flight manual on the way home, and went, okay, yeah. I can do this,” he says with a laugh. He returned to Arizona and successfully flew the L-19 to its hangar in Colorado.

Years later, he reunited with the plane, which had not been registered let alone flown—possibly since Maitlen last sat in the cockpit. With the official paperwork missing, it took a year to prove legal ownership of the L-19 before it could get its annual and fly again.

After clearing one major hurdle, Maitlen and the team at Wings Over the Rockies encountered a new problem they had to solve: The L-19 that flew across state lines less than a decade earlier was now in rough shape.

“It had some little wonky handling qualities to it,” Maitlen says. He had to restraighten the shims on the gear, swap out the 25-year-old tires, replace the cracked oil cooler, and address sticky throttle cables, among other fixes.

After countless RUDR (Run Up and Down the Runway) exercises, a few bumpy landings, and more repairs and replacements, the plane passed inspection. But Maitlen still had to befriend Wings’ newest aircraft, learning its quirks and preferences.

He’s comfortable with the 1959 aircraft now and has taught other pilots how to handle it. After two years of work, the Bird Dog’s first passengers are enjoying tours in the slow-moving vehicle.

Maitlen says he loves seeing the emotions the restored plane stirs in people. *“Flying it, especially now in the summertime when we’ve got the doors all the way open, it’s just like having an air Jeep with the wind in your hair.”*

After his first flight in the Bird Dog he donated, Hutchison was elated. *“It’s just like a huge kite. It just floats through the air,”* he says. *“I do encourage anybody who has the opportunity to go up and fly. It’s a great experience.”*

“ I do encourage anybody who has the opportunity to go up and fly. It’s a great experience. ”

– Lou Hutchison



OUR IMPACT

JANUARY 2024 - JUNE 2024



91

Hours of training on the FMX Redbird Simulator were completed by pilots and flight students



11,650

Volunteer Hours Clocked
*an estimated value
of over \$370k*

4,423

Tour Participants



69% Students



188

Campers kicked off their summer vacation learning with Wings

Wings Aerospace Education Impact



*4,000 students,
approximately, touched by
education outreach*

7 Graduates from the
WAE program

4 Certifications provided by
Spartan Aeronautics and
Technology College

10 Students competed
against South Korea in the
World Cup Drone Soccer
Championship in San Diego



108 

Young Eagles flown from
the Clay Lacy Field of
Dreams Ramp



*506 students and aerospace
professionals attended our
career symposium.*

This showcase event featured 48 participating organizations, including airlines, military recruiters, college programs, youth programs, local and federal government, FBOs, and scholarship providers.

5280
MAGAZINE

5280 magazine's readers voted
Wings Over the Rockies *"The Best of Denver"*
for Kid-Focused Entertainment.



Wings reached a
different audience
with its first Adult
Night Out



Supporting Our Communities *through Volunteer Appreciation*



Summer Teen Volunteer Program

The first Teen Volunteer Program launched at Wings with 16 students across both locations.



Teens are making valuable contributions to Wings by operating science carts and simulators, assisting guests, and developing reference materials.

Volunteering at Wings is an opportunity for them to give back in an area of interest and learn valuable workplace skills. United by a love of aviation and space, these students are aspiring teachers, pilots, and aerospace engineers.



Volunteer Appreciation Month

For Volunteer Appreciation Month, Phil Mentesana sat down with the crew of Behind the Wings to discuss his experiences as an Air Force and airline pilot.



New Addition to Volunteer Appreciation - The B-52 Pin

Look out for volunteers wearing the B-52 Hat Pin. As part of Volunteer Appreciation Month, these were awarded in April to volunteers who served 98 hours or more in 2023. Volunteers will vote soon on the hat pin design for 2024.

OUR IMPACT



Supporting Our Communities with Outreach Events

Exploration of Flight hosted the first annual Centennial Airport Runway 5K in June.

Presented in partnership with Centennial Airport and the Centennial Airport Foundation, the event welcomed more than 1,000 guests to Exploration of Flight and the Clay Lacy Field of Dreams Ramp. Participants ran and walked on Runway 10/28 and Taxiway D, which the airport closed for the race.

Attendees enjoyed our exhibits, simulators, and aircraft, shopped for special items in the Museum Store, and learned about Wings' membership, educational programs, and corporate partnership opportunities.



I was always that kid that would look up to the sky, see an airplane and wish that I was the one in that cockpit... It's an amazing feeling.

– Kyle Wren

Honoring Our Past Students

Getting a driver's license is a major milestone for many teenagers, but Kyle Wren set his sights higher than the road—thousands of feet higher. At 17 years old, Wren became a certified private pilot with support from a Wings Over the Rockies flight scholarship. Fox affiliate KDVR shared his story with the Denver community in June 2024.

The flight scholarship paid for aircraft rentals, flight instruction, and ground instruction. Now a student at Metropolitan State University of Denver, Wren is pursuing a bachelor's degree in aviation and aerospace.



Supporting Our Communities

by Honoring Our Past Students

Former Student of the Year Graduates from Wings Aerospace Education Program



Students enrolled in Wings Aerospace Education Pathways are passionate about aviation and space, but Makayla Galler is a superfan. After four years and too many classes to list—she’s taken nearly every course Wings offers—Wings’ 2023 Student of the Year graduated high school and the WAE program this May.

An interest in STEAM education brought this extraordinary young woman to Wings Over the Rockies her freshman year of high school. After a free discovery flight through the EAA’s Young Eagles program, she applied for and was granted a Wings’ Flight Training Scholarship supported by the James C. Ray Foundation. She says learning how to fly gliders kickstarted her career in aviation.

During her time as a Wings student, Galler became a certified glider and drone pilot, built an RV-12 with

her classmates, launched rockets, captained the USA All Stars Drone Soccer Team, and started a group called Stellar Explorers. The group gamifies rocketry by making math and physics competitive.

At Wings, she experienced the satisfaction of creating functional technology. *“I gradually started to enjoy working with my hands more and seeing the things that I created working in front of me,”* she says. *“At the end of two years of working on the RV-12 build, I actually got to fly in our aircraft, which was pretty amazing.”*

Though her time in WAE is over, the experience brought this aspiring astronaut closer to reaching the stars. Galler is spending her summer interning for NASA and will start at Arizona State University in the fall with a full-ride scholarship from the Navy. She’ll be part of the Naval Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (NROTC) program and studying aeronautical management technology, with a double-major in unmanned aerial systems and air transportation.



I wouldn’t be where I am today without Wings.”

– Makayla Galler

OUR IMPACT



Supporting Our Communities through Aerospace Education

Wings Aerospace Education

Wings Aerospace Exploration Pathway is centered on hands-on, experiential learning in a real-world context that allows students to develop skills and experiences needed to succeed in the aerospace industry. Teamwork, problem solving, design thinking and applied technology are at the heart of the program and are skills needed for more than just aerospace careers.



Formerly referred to as Wings Aerospace Pathway (WAP), the pathway underwent updated branding and is now referred to as Wings Aerospace Exploration (WAE).



Drone Education



Wings offered an intensive three-week drone certification class held in the evenings specifically for students 16-18 years old. Over twenty-five students participated in the program.



Teacher Flight Education

Wings released a new Teacher Flight Pathway promotional [video](#), filmed in partnership with former NASA Astronaut Eileen Collins.

OUR IMPACT

Supporting Our Communities through Aerospace Education

Flight Scholarships

In June, 26 candidates were awarded scholarship funds ranging from \$7,000 to \$12,000 based upon the applicant's previous flight experience. The majority were just 16 years old, and more than 46 percent were female. Nearly onequarter of the awardees identify as Black, indigenous, or persons of color. Each awardee is assigned a "wingman" mentor that encourages and advises the students through the process of achieving their private pilot's license.



**119 APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED FOR FLIGHT
SCHOLARSHIPS,**

**a 32% increase over 2023 and the
largest increase in applications year
over year to date!**

**Aviation legends Clay Lacy and Seymour "Si" Robin surprised
summer camp students with a visit in June.**



SHARING AEROSPACE INNOVATION



It's time to go...
Behind the Wings!

Hon. Frank Kendall III | Secretary of the U.S. Air Force
Tracy LaTourrette | Behind the Wings Host



Behind the Wings®, a Heartland Emmy nominated series is produced by Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum, Colorado's Official Air and Space Museum. The programming includes: a PBS TV series, Behind the Wings YouTube monthly videos, and a podcast.

The stories are a captivating and informative exploration into the world of aviation and aerospace. The content offers viewers and listeners an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at various aspects of aviation, including aircraft restoration, historical insights and interviews with industry experts. With high production quality and engaging storytelling, *Behind the Wings* provides aviation enthusiasts and the general audience alike with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the rich history and advancements in aviation and space endeavors.

Behind The Wings video series is also distributed internationally through American Public Television (APT)

SHARING AEROSPACE INNOVATION



Season 6 *of Behind the Wings*

– our flagship series continues to explore the incredible world of aerospace innovation and history.

This season, we're diving deeper than ever before, with episodes that will captivate both enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

Here's a sneak peek of what's in store:

EPISODE 1: AI in Military Aviation - Testing and simulation progress AI pilot agents from the lab to the field.

EPISODE 2: Collaborative Combat Aircraft - The ethics of deploying AI in Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA), are weighed against the risks of falling behind technologically.

EPISODE 3: The Super Guppy - The unlikely story of the original super cargo transport aircraft that helped America win the space race.

EPISODE 4: Hypersonic Flight Testing - The world's largest operating aircraft enables a new era in hypersonic flight testing.

Season 6 airs on Rocky Mountain PBS on November 7th and 14th at 7:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. MT



340K+

Social Media Followers

70M+

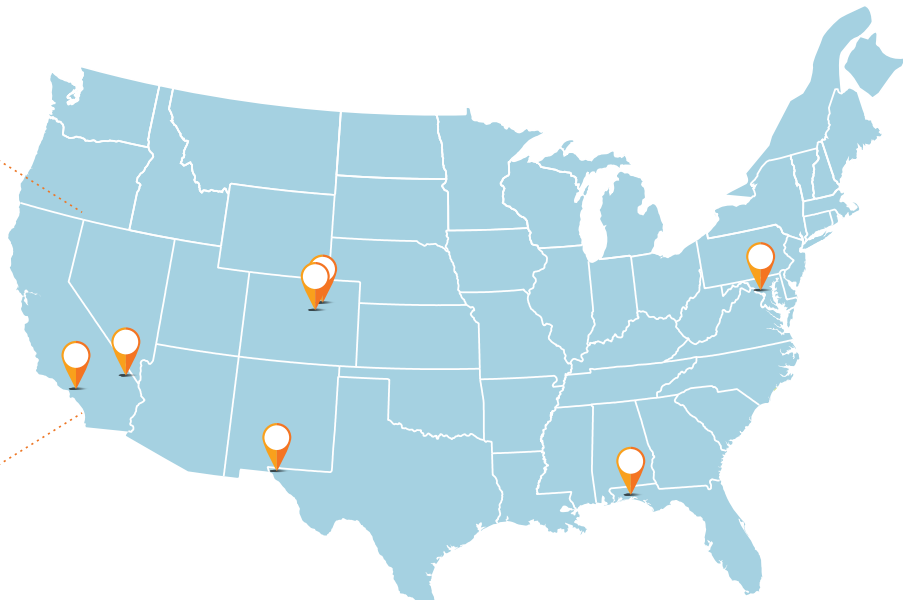
YouTube Lifetime Views



Behind the Wings® PBS Series has aired in 106 markets, 39 states and reaches 60% of the country.

SEASON 6 FILMING LOCATIONS INCLUDE:

- Mojave Desert, CA
- Santa Monica, CA
- El Paso, TX
- Berthoud, CO
- Denver, CO
- Eglin, FL
- Washington, DC



OUR ORGANIZATION



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MICHELLE MCMAHON

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SCOTT SHINKLE

Director of Facilities

AMANDA MORTON

Director of Guest Experience

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



ONE ORGANIZATION. TWO LOCATIONS.

AIR & SPACE MUSEUM
7711 E. Academy Blvd
Denver, CO 80230

EXPLORATION OF FLIGHT
13005 Wings Way
Englewood, CO 80112

FOLLOW US



@wingsmuseum

WingsMuseum.org



SPREADING WINGS CELEBRATION

SEPTEMBER 26TH

5:45 PM - 9:30 PM

Celebrate with us!

Join us for an unforgettable celebration
of our 30th anniversary.

This milestone event will include cocktails,
entertainment, dinner and much more!

PURCHASE TICKETS:
WingsMuseum.org/Celebration

