

PFA POST



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Aviation Students Take First Private Flight

This year, Pine Forge Academy (PFA) added Aviation 100 to its credit-bearing elective course offerings. The academy partnered with BMRI High School Aviation STEM Co-op, which uses a curriculum created by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Foundation. The course is a four-year program aligned to Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airman Certification Standards. The curriculum consists of two Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways: pilot and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). At the conclusion of four years, students will have the knowledge to sit for their private pilot or their UAS license and be ahead of others entering college-level aviation programs.

Twelve students—10 male and two female—chose the elective course. “The aviation industry is in desperate need of pilots, and now our students can have the exposure and experiences they need to see themselves filling this gap,” says instructor Tracey Jackson.

Jackson continues, “The BMRI co-op and the AOPA provided everything I needed to teach the course. ... However, I was still a little uneasy, since I do not fly myself. So I visited one of our

local airports to inquire about any assistance they could offer. I knew God had led me there when the president of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 1250 and the manager of the Heritage Field Airport told me, ‘We’ve been waiting for you to walk in here for 100 years.’ They had been trying to get into local public schools for years but could never work through the red tape. That meeting connected me to Bill Dupree, my co-teacher, a semi-retired aerospace engineer and private pilot owner of a 1980 Cessna 172.”

After the PFA students studied aerospace and aviation theory/history, engineering innovations and practices, and FAA safety laws and regulations, Dupree, with his dedication to the academy and many years of experience, arranged for a private event with the Young Eagles EAA Chapter 1250.

Young Eagles is a national organization that gives youth opportunities to fly in a general aviation airplane for free. Their Saturday events exclude PFA participation, so Dupree coordinated a private Sunday event. Two other volunteer pilots, Carl Danslow and Wayne Halbsgut, also helped by offering plane rides.

The flights left from Heritage Field Airport, and for 15 to 20 minutes, the students rode around sections of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, including PFA’s campus. Each plane had dual pilot cockpits, allowing daring front seat passengers a chance to try their hand at the controls.

At the conclusion, each student received a Young Eagles Certificate, a flight logbook, and their name was later entered into the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, Wis.



Sophomore Akira Johnson buckles in for her flight in a Wayne Halbsgut home built Van’s RV-7A aircraft.