



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Gary/Chicago International Airport Hosts Tuskegee Airmen
"Young Eagles" Aviation Initiative***

Youth Initiative Fosters Next Generation of Aviators and Aeronautic Engineers

(Gary, Indiana – July 31, 2019) –Nearly two dozen local students were initiated as the newest members of the "Young Eagles" youth aviation program on a hot and humid afternoon on July 13th at the Gary / Chicago International Airport (GYY). The Young Eagles is a nationwide youth initiative created by the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) introducing local students aged 8 to 17 to aviation. The Chicago "DODO" Chapter of the historic Tuskegee Airmen coordinated the event, and many members were on hand to welcome the young aviators as they prepared for takeoff.

"Introducing young men and women to the aviation field is critical to create the next generation of pilots, technicians and aeronautical engineers," said Duane Hayden, executive director of GYY and a colonel in the Illinois Air National Guard. "This initiative exposes children to the possibilities of aviation as a career option, showing the different aspects where jobs are needed."

The Young Eagles program encourages EEA pilots to volunteer their time, aircraft and fuel to give free introductions in aeronautics to local children. The program includes a ground orientation to the principles of flight, an introduction to basic aircraft systems and controls, including the interior mechanisms and culminates in an introductory flight where the children experience the joy and excitement of flight first-hand. Flight support was provided by Golden Eagle Aviation in Tuskegee, Alabama and the birthplace of the Tuskegee Airmen

"For many children, this program represents their first real opportunity to be in the air, and we at the airport are pleased to be able to provide this experience," continued Colonel Hayden. "The opportunity to engage with flight pioneers such as the Tuskegee Airmen can result in a life-long passion for aviation that continues the legacy established by these aviators."

The Chicago "DODO" Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, INC. (TAI) was established in 1976. TAI is a non-profit organization, with over 50 chapters nationwide. Their mission is to preserve the legacy of African Americans who participated in World War II with the Army Air Corps, while focusing on introducing young people across the country to the world of aviation and science through programs such as Young Eagles and other educational opportunities.

The Chicagoland area's Young Eagles program was developed by the EAA in 1994 and began operating out of GYY in 2003. Since then, the program has introduced over 3,000 kids and teens to the world of aviation at GYY, and around 40 budding aviation students participate in the educational rallies each month.



It operates year-round, weather conditions permitting, typically on the second Saturday of each month at the Gary-Chicago International Airport. The next EAA Young Eagles initiative will take place on Saturday, August 3rd, 2019, out of respect for the annual Bud Biliken Parade that will occur on Saturday, August 10th.

About Gary/Chicago International Airport

Located minutes from the shores of Lake Michigan and just 25 miles from downtown Chicago, Gary/Chicago International Airport (GYI) is a full-service airport and a premiere destination for corporate and weekend flyers in the Chicago metropolitan region and Northwest Indiana. To learn more, visit the airport's website at FlyGYI.com.

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