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PRESS RELEASE

Female Space Traveller Lands in Abbotsford March 7 to Inspire 10,000

Astronaut and US Navy Helicopter Pilot (Ret) Wendy Lawrence to attend free Lower Mainland event

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10,000 girls, women and their families gathering from around BC are excited to discover why the sky really is no limit and meet with Astronaut Wendy Lawrence, veteran of 4 missions to space.

February 23, 2015 – When the Apollo 11 crew landed on the Moon on July 20, 1969, a ten year old Lawrence watched in black and white from 393, 309 km away. That’s when she became an astronaut.

From that day, Lawrence applied herself heart and soul towards her goals. After graduation from the US Naval Academy in 1981 she flew helicopters off ships, and was tasked with helicopter combat support and anti-submarine squadrons. Later, Lawrence became the first graduate of the US Naval Academy to fly into space, and has flown four space missions including a visit to MIR, the Russian Space Station.

On March 7-8, 2015 over 10,000 BC females of all ages and their families will gather at the Abbotsford International Airport for The Sky’s No Limit – Girls Fly Too! a fun, unique, hands-on outreach event held annually during the week of International Women’s Day and in celebration of past, present and future women in aviation, aerospace and space. Event participants will be able to meet with Lawrence, ask questions about her experiences and find out what it takes to become an astronaut, pilot or engineer.

Participants can try their hand at many fun activities such as riveting a real aircraft, remove/install parts from engines, simulate bombing forest fires with a firefighting aircraft, simulate air traffic control, learn about piloting an aircraft and more. The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is bringing Starlab - a portable planetarium - to provide an immersive space experience. The RCAF, RCMP, Canadian Coast Guard, Air Cadets, and Civil Air Search and Rescue will be on hand. Civilian and non-civilian aircraft will be available to explore.

The entire event is free, thanks to community-minded partners such as the University of the Fraser Valley, Carson Air Group, Teck Construction, Vancouver International Airport (YVR), Bert’s Electric, Province of BC - Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training along with other community and industry partners. Families are welcome and no registration is required to attend.

Free introductory flights are offered for female first-time fliers (any age welcome). Moms are encouraged to fly with their daughters. Advance registration at www.girlsfly2.ca is required for the female fliers.



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The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too!, annual events are part of an outreach initiative founded by BC pilot Kirsten Brazier in 2012. Events organized by The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too! have won several international awards and set two world precedents.

Out of 24,505 professional pilots in Canada, only 1356 of them are women. Out of 19,601 aircraft engineers, only 560 of them are women. Less than 3% of the technical positions in the Royal Canadian Air Force, such as pilot or maintenance technician, are held by women.

"It would be easy to conclude that women are unwelcome in these fields. Instead, studies have shown that a common perception persists that aviation and aerospace careers are reserved for men," Brazier said. "Since society observes mostly men employed in these fields, this perception is reinforced."

The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too! free outreach events aim to change this perception by welcoming women to the airport and giving them a hands-on introduction to aviation, aerospace and space.

"The first flight experience is so incredibly amazing that we just have to share it," said Kirsten. "It's often the catalyst to inspire interest in aviation, aerospace and space. The free flights, along with our unique hands-on approach grabs participants' attention and we hope our events will inspire many future leaders from shop floor to top floor in these fields."

The event is about education as much as it is about inspiring girls and women. Therefore everyone - male and female alike - is encouraged to participate or volunteer at the event.

Brazier is a professional pilot from the Lower Mainland, BC and she holds Airline Transport Ratings for both aeroplanes and helicopters. With over 20 years of flying experience, Brazier has enjoyed a diverse career flying across Canada, US and the Caribbean on wheels, floats, skis and skids as well as two-crew operations in both aeroplanes and helicopters.

www.girlsfly2.ca

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