



Changing perceptions, inspiring vocations

PRESS RELEASE

The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too! 2014 Event Sets Worldwide Precedent, Wins World Trophy

BC's Langley Regional Airport hosts the largest female aviation outreach event of its kind in world history and wins 'Most Female Pilot Friendly Airport Worldwide' award

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2014 - During the weekend of March 8 over 6,000 participants swarmed BC's Langley Regional Airport, eager to discover the many facets of aviation available to women at the 3rd annual The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too! community outreach event. The event, held in honour of International Women's Day and Women of Aviation Worldwide Week, became the largest single outreach event of its kind in world history for the second time in three years. The event also won a trophy for Most Female-Pilot-Friendly Airport Worldwide. Previous Girls Fly Too! events were held in Yellowknife, NT.

This year, 1310 girls and women of all ages experienced the magic of first flight in a small aircraft. Five modern helicopters and five beautiful Navion airplanes from the Fraser Blues Formation Demonstration Team provided the introductory flight experience.

The entire event, including the first flight experience was completely free courtesy of the generous support of local businesses such as RDM Enterprises, Teck Construction, YVR Airport Authority, University of the Fraser Valley – Aircraft Structures Program and Ascent Helicopters as well as thirteen local pilots.

Two of the local BC pilots won international recognition: Frank Walcher, as co-winner of 2014 'Most Supportive Male Pilot Worldwide' and George Tecklenborg, as First Runner Up for that title.

The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too! initiative was founded by Kirsten Brazier, an Airline Transport rated pilot with over twenty years' experience flying both airplanes and helicopters. She, and others like her hope to mitigate the shortage of women in the aviation industry by raising awareness and changing the perception that aviation is mostly for men.

According to Transport Canada personnel licensing statistics, only 6 percent of pilots are women. Moreover it is estimated that only 2 percent of Canadian aircraft engineers are women. The Royal Canadian Air Force states that women account for only 3 percent of RCAF pilots and aircraft mechanics.

Brazier who is absolutely thrilled with this year's results, said: "As word got out, the initiative kept growing – from 1500 participants in 2012 to over 6000 this year. To date, Girls Fly Too! events made it possible for 2365 girls and women from all walks of life to be introduced to flight."



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Aside from the exhilarating first flight experience, females of all ages had the opportunity to handle various samples of aircraft structures, operate a rivet gun to make a keepsake keychain, explore an impressive line-up of static aircraft and take part in other hands-on activities that were both fun and educational.

Specializing in aircraft structures programs, the University of the Fraser Valley had an intriguing display aimed at attracting more women into the maintenance trades. YVR Airport Authority was among those that offered displays and activities geared towards educating girls and women about airport management, airspace, air traffic control and other aviation related trades.

The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), Royal Canadian Air Cadets, Canadian Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were all on hand with various aircraft and VIPs to showcase the diverse range of aviation careers available with the crown agencies. Members of the Aerobatics Club of BC as well as private individuals brought vintage and general aviation aircraft for the girls to explore.

The local Air Cadets, primarily from the Langley airport-based 746 Lightning Hawk Squadron performed an impressive drill, band and colour display for the event opening ceremony. In addition, the Cadets took on key duties in support of the event, including escorting female participants to and from the flying aircraft, ensuring passengers were safely buckled in and assisting with passenger briefings. In all 240 volunteers from around the Fraser Valley, the Lower Mainland and beyond dedicated their time and energy to ensure a successful event.

The Award Ceremony, hosted by the Langley Regional Airport, will be held at 2pm on Friday April 11 at the Canadian Museum of Flight, Hangar #3, 5333 216th Street, Langley, BC. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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Background:

- Less than 3% of aircraft maintenance engineers are women.
- Less than 6% of pilots are women.
- Less than 3% pilots and aircraft mechanics with the RCAF are women.
- Less than 10% of aerospace engineers are women.
- The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too! is an outreach initiative that aims to change perceptions, inspire vocations and achieve gender balance in the aviation industry. A key element of this initiative, is to offer hands-on, participatory events that provide females of all ages the opportunity to experience various aviation activities.
- Statement about the Langley event by Mark Warawa, MP, at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, ON, Canada: <http://youtu.be/9eURpTAUtf0>
- High resolution photos available upon request kirsten@girlsfly2.ca