



## A United Flying Octogenarians Activity for Achieving our “Inspiring Youth to Fly” Goal

*By Warren Glaze*

### Middle School Airport Field Trip

The Brookings Flying Club has restarted the Airport Field Trip for Middle School student in Brookings, Oregon, under the leadership of the Oregon UFO Area Representative. The BFC conducted this activity earlier to interest students in an aviation career or avocation and apply for our scholarship funds to attend an aviation college. The reported success of this activity makes it reasonable to assume that it would be an easy and enjoyable way a UFO member could contribute to achieving our ‘Inspiring Youth to Fly’ goal.

This age group is chosen because research indicates that is when many pilots report they experienced their first urge to fly.

Below is a brief description of the program and the steps that can be used to introduce about 120 young people to aviation each year. You may want to consider such an activity as one of the enjoyable ways you could participate in the UFO’s efforts. Initiating such a program would make you a participant in making the UFO a partner to other aviation organizations like EAA and AOPA in one of the most important goals of the aviation community. It would also earn public recognition for the UFO. To be a participant in working towards this goal, we would have one more reason to be proud to be a UFO member and wear our logo.



### **The Program**

Two field trips to an airport are held in one day, 60 students are bused to your airport in the morning and 60 in the afternoon. They are divided into four groups of 15 and rotated through four learning stations. The stations are manned by pilots, promoted to be Aeronautical Instructors for the day, and provide a 25 minute inspirational lesson at each station on one aspect of safely flying an airplane. ( see pictures attached of stations in action)

### **The Navigation Station**

This learning station is held in a room which seats 15 and whatever else a pilot instructor wants to use to explain the elements of planning a flight and navigating an airplane to an airport about 200 miles away. Students are introduced to flight planning and the shorter time it takes to fly that far rather than drive.

### **The Preflight Station**

This station is at one or two tied down planes where a pilot instructor can explain the components that make planes fly and lead the group through a preflight procedure. Students are encouraged to ask questions and they will oblige.

### **The Touch and Go Station**

An inside space, like a hangar floor, where a plan of the airport can be displayed and the pilot instructor can explain traffic pattern procedures. Getting the kids to hand fly small planes entering a traffic pattern and following the landing procedures as one of them gives directions as an ATC. This is usually a lot of fun.



### **The Airport Tour Station**

Students meet with a pilot instructor that walks them through an airport tour to point out such items as the automated weather station, taxiway and runway markings etc.

## **Procedure to Organize a School Airport Trip**

Step 1. Introduce the program to a local Flying Club and FBO operators as one way to introduce youth to aviation with the possibility of increasing flying activity and business at their airport. Point out that by doing such an Inspiring Youth to Fly program they would be joining other organizations like the EAA Young Eagles and AOPA in their programs which can eventually benefit them and the aviation industry.

Step 2. Invite pilots to volunteer to be Aeronautical Instructors for each Learning Station listed below. You'll need four at the minimum, but two for each station is better. A time keeper with a bell or other noise maker to keep the program on schedule will be needed. (see schedule below)

Step 3. When you have a program basically planned and a commitment from enough pilots, contact a Middle School within bussing distance of the Airport and present the program to the Principal. It is very effective to classify the field trip as an educational experience where students will be rotated through four learning stations where various aspects of flying an airplane will be explained in terms they can understand. All schools in the Brookings area have welcomed the opportunity for their students.

Explain your concern for and plans to insure student safety. Students should not be allowed to enter airplanes or come in contact with any dangerous situation. The schools insurance covers liability for field trips. In a later contact with the school you should indicate your need of 4 certified teachers for supervision, one for each group of 25 – 30 students. And it's good to invite the Principals and other administrators, they usually show up year after year.

Step 4. Your Pilot Instruction Team needs to prepare lesson plans and visual aids. Let them determine what they want to present at each station, remembering that the goal is to inspire youth to get them into aviation. They will be more comfortable with the plans they create, and whatever it is, it will be so new and exciting for the kid they will get all they need to inspire them to fly.



Two group meetings with the Pilot/Instructor can be held, one to let them share with the others what they have planned to present and another, for the first trip, to rehearse the program just before the field day event.

Step 5. Identify locations at the Airport for the two inside learning stations. Agree with the school on a date forecast to have good weather. You should get a definite confirmation that on the scheduled date the school will deliver the students and supervising teachers to the airport at a specified time and follow the schedule of your program. We do that in writing.

Ask the school to have the students divided into 4 groups and named alphabetically or numerically before they get to the airport.

### **Program and Suggested Morning Schedule**

8:30 - 8:55 - Students disembark buses and form a semi-circle around the leader and pilots/instructors, all wearing name tags titled "Aeronautical Instructor."

Give a brief orientation to the program and schedule, etc. etc. What you do and say is up to you. Remember kids at that age like to raise their hands. Ask for a show of hands to see

how many haven't been to the airport before. Welcome them all to the airport. Get a show of hands of those who have flown in a large plane, then in a small plane like they see around them. Let them know that the age for getting a pilot's license is the same for driver's license, etc. etc.

Point out to the teachers and students the locations of the four stations which should be identified with numbers 1 to 4 on a large card and assign each of the four student groups, and their supervising teacher to proceed there.

### **Class Schedule**

Time keeper should make three distinct clangs three minutes before the period ends (9:22; 9:52; 10:22 and 10:52) and a continuous clanging at 9:25; 9:55; 10:25 and 10:55, when groups are to change to the next station. Pilots can begin teaching when the next group arrives.

|               |                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 8:55 – 9:00   | Groups go to learning stations |
| 9:00 – 9:25   | 1st period                     |
| 9:30 – 9:55   | 2nd period                     |
| 10:00 – 10:25 | 3rd period                     |
| 10:30 – 10:55 | 4th period                     |

10:55 – 11:20 – Here are suggestions only. Line up for group pictures, and express your thanks for letting you share a bit of the exciting world of aviation with them. Let kids share what they learned and ask for a show of hands of those who think they might want to learn to fly someday. We ask the kids to submit a one page essay on their impression of the field trip. These will be judged by the Pilot Instructors and three winners will get a free plane ride on our Airport Day when we fly the public to raise money for the Scholarship Fund.

When they broke up to go to the busses they crowded around me wanting to know where they can sign up for flying lessons. You can let your local FBOs take care of that.

Walk to the busses to see students, teachers and administrators off, waving as the busses leave, that caps the event with a bit of class. Other teachers at the school reported they heard nothing but good about our trip. I'm sure you will too. Our BFC pilots are anxious to do another trip next spring. Have fun and good luck.

