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# Camp promotes careers in aviation

## Aviation promotion group hopes to stem decline in number of pilots.

By WILLIAM SMITH  
[wsmith@thehawkeye.com](mailto:wsmith@thehawkeye.com)

A love for flying is genetic. At least, that's what Haley Villont, 13, believes. Her grandfather worked on airplanes during World War II. Her aunt is a stewardess. And when Haley gets a little older, she hopes to get a private pilot's license.

"I just want to do it for fun," she said.

It's that kind of enthusiastic attitude Chuck McDonald is seeking. As the director of the Iowa Aviation Promotion Group, it's his job to get youth interested in a profession that isn't quite as popular as it used to be. That's why he organized an aviation camp Saturday at the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport, which hosted 35 local children who spent the day learning how those metal beasts fly.

"We've been asked by the DOT to get our kids interested in aviation. One of the things that is kind of sad is that the number of pilots in the country is really declining," he said. "The pilot population is very old, and we need young blood coming in at the other end. The military is not training as many pilots as it used to."

The New York Times reported the number of student pilots in the U.S. has decreased from 129,000 in 1990 to fewer than 88,000 today, and the numbers keep shrinking.

"We could reach the point where the airlines won't have enough pilots to fill our needs," McDonald said.

McDonald's nonprofit organization is hosting several similar aviation camps in Iowa throughout the summer, and the one in Burlington served as part of the Fly Iowa Event that will be coming to the airport in September. McDonald was assisted by about 15 members of the Local 700 chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, who taught camp participants

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John Lovretta/The Hawk Eye Participants and volunteers toss paper airplanes during an aviation camp Saturday at the Southeast Iowa Regional Airport. The camp provided children with hands-on experiences in the world of aviation and connected aviation to history, science, math and communications. Participants learned about airplanes, aerodynamics, airports, weather, the language of aviation and careers in aviation.

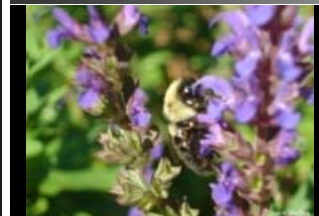


John Lovretta/The Hawk Eye Jarod Hoelzen, 11, of West Burlington looks up as Scott Scheetz of Carthage, Ill., discusses aerodynamics.

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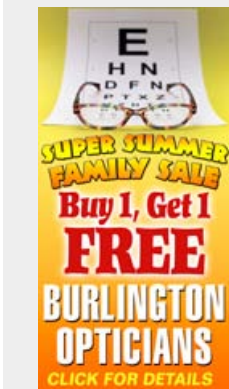
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everything from flight planning and map reading to how to read and manipulate an aircraft's control panel.

"You can fly farther on the amount of fuel you have with a tail wind," EAA member Scott Smith told the children as they examined flight maps before them. "The computer figures all of that out and draws a circle where you're going to run out of fuel."

Participants also toured the airport, including up-close look at the new Crash Fire Rescue Truck the Burlington Fire Department purchased about six months ago. Equipped with tires taller than most of the kids and multiple hoses and nozzles capable of spraying water and foam to extinguish fuel fires, firefighter Roger Siefken estimated the value of the truck to be around \$500,000.

"We can pump with it as we're driving," Siefken said. "It rides pretty good, and with these big tires, it will go through just about anything."

"Can you crush cars with it?" one boy asked.

"My boss wouldn't be very happy with me if I did that," Siefken said.

David Freitag, 11, and his brother Raymond, 13, were infinitely impressed with everything they saw. No one had to tell David to take an interest in aviation. He already has a flight plan for his future.

"I feel like going into the Air Force and being a navigator," he said.

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