

## **Matching-funds effort for Harrison Ford EAA Scholarship gets under way**

### ***Endowment will match up to \$100,000 for youth aviation education***

By all accounts, Sept. 29 was a huge day for the EAA Young Eagles Program: Actor, pilot, and EAA member Harrison Ford stepped down after serving for five years as the program's chairman, and he announced that famed US Airways pilots Sully Sullenberger and Jeff Skiles would step into his shoes. At a special dinner presentation that night, EAA members, the aviation community, and even California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger paid tribute to Harrison Ford for his service and welcomed the new program co-chairs.

But one brief segment of the evening's activities -- perhaps easily missed amid the big announcements and high-profile appearances -- may leave the most enduring legacy.

**Jim and Angela Thompson**, longtime EAA members and supporters, spoke from the dais for a matter of only seconds, but their pledge that night will touch the lives of young people for years. They announced their establishment of an endowment to EAA to help fund scholarships in Harrison Ford's name to help young people achieve their dreams of flight. They explained that the endowment amount would match contributions from other donors up to \$100,000, creating a scholarship fund of as much as \$200,000.

"As EAA Young Eagles chairman for five years, Harrison Ford invested a big commitment of his time. He made a wonderful contribution to the general aviation community," said Jim Thompson, a pilot for 27 years. "Angela and I would like to say 'thank you' to Harrison for what he has done. This endowment is a way to put a marker down to remember it by."

Beginning next year, EAA will begin applying the dividends from the donations and the Thompsons' matching contribution toward flight training for young people. Qualifying youth will have completed an EAA Young Eagles flight experience and the follow-up companion program provided by Sporty's Pilot Shop, the free online Sporty's Complete Pilot Training Course.

"Some of the youth inspired by their EAA Young Eagles experience will want to take their interest in aviation all the way. The Harrison Ford scholarships will help them continue to participate beyond the Sporty's training, with underwriting of

training toward a sport pilot or private pilot's license," said Elissa Lines, EAA vice president of development.

"EAA's approach is to create a recipe for success by providing not only financial aid in the form of scholarships but also encouragement, mentoring, and guidance through the participation of active EAA members at more than 1,000 EAA local chapters worldwide," Lines added.

Several parties have expressed an interest in donating toward the endowment fund, according to Lines. Her hope is that the Thompsons' gift will inspire numerous donors. "EAA Young Eagles is such a grassroots program, it would make sense for us to raise the \$100,000 that the Thompsons will match by securing \$1,000 donations from a hundred givers -- or even some smaller donations from even more aviation enthusiasts who believe in the value of the Young Eagles experience for our young people," Lines said.

Assuming a 5% annual dividend on a \$200,000 endowment fund, the Harrison Ford EAA Scholarship will provide \$10,000 each year for the aforementioned purposes. EAA also manages similar scholarship funds in the names of Ford's predecessor Young Eagles Program chairs -- actor and pilot Cliff Robertson and aviation legend Chuck Yeager -- and other donors.

To learn more about EAA scholarships and how to apply, go to <http://www.eaa.org/support/scholarships.asp>. All recipients of EAA scholarships must be EAA members or receive a recommendation from an EAA member.

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