



For Immediate Release:

East Haven Middle School Students Soar to New Heights

Avelo Airlines, Yale Aviation Flying Club and Robinson Aviation partner to provide students with free introductory flying lessons

EAST HAVEN, Conn.; May 24, 2023 — The sky is the limit for the 35 East Haven middle school students participating in Avelo Airlines’ Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Program. This afternoon, Avelo Airlines, the Yale Aviation Flying Club and Robinson Aviation are collaborating to provide the students with free introductory flying lessons at Tweed-New Haven Airport.

East Haven Public Schools Superintendent Erica Forti said, “We are so grateful to Yale Aviation Flying Club, Avelo Airlines’ ACE Program, and Robinson Aviation for providing their facility, all of whom are affording a runway to our students’ dreams.”

Each student will have the opportunity to fly a single-engine Piper aircraft under the guidance of a licensed flight instructor. Yale Aviation Flying Club is providing both the aircraft and the flight instructors. Robinson Aviation is hosting the students in their facilities for their discovery flights. Each discovery flight is expected to last approximately 20-30 minutes.

Avelo Airlines Chairman and CEO Andrew Levy said, “We can’t imagine a more appropriate or exciting capstone experience for these future aviators than to give them the chance to fly. The sky is the limit for these remarkable young people. We hope this discovery flight will inspire them to keep flying high in pursuit of their dreams. Nothing would make me prouder than to call them fellow Avelo Crewmembers in the future.”

The six-month ACE Program is the first middle school-focused curriculum of its kind in the country to inspire a new generation of aerospace professionals. East Haven Public Schools and Avelo Airlines are collaborating with Exploring - a co-ed career awareness program run by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) - to provide essential curriculum development and program management.

Connecticut Yankee Council, BSA Director of Exploring Paul Lukas said, “Exploring programs are designed to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that will inspire future careers. These programs are successful because the people and resources of businesses and organizations are aligned with the interests of students in the community. The partnership between East Haven Schools, Avelo Airlines and Connecticut Yankee Council, BSA is a collaboration that seeks to inspire the next generation of aerospace professionals right here in our community.”

To inspire young people to consider aerospace careers earlier in their education journey than conventional high school career orientation programs, students were selected from the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Middle school-aged children are still young enough to adjust their academic and extracurricular choices to prepare them for an aerospace career.

Since the program’s debut last December, the students have participated in several events:

- Last Friday, the students visited Avelo’s Orlando flight training center where they had the opportunity to fly a pair of \$10M state-of-the-art commercial airline flight simulators.
- Students attended a two-hour “Exploring Aviation Open House” at Tweed Airport where they received a behind-the-scenes tour of airport operations.
- Students took a roundtrip orientation flight provided by Avelo from Tweed to Baltimore. The trip was the first time the majority of the students had ever flown.
- Students have met with numerous aviation and aerospace professionals along the way, including pilots, flight attendants, airport crew, aircraft maintenance technicians and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers.
- Students received a private tour of Sikorsky’s Stratford, CT helicopter manufacturing facility.
- Students joined a virtual town hall discussion with United States Air Force (USAF) Colonel Fred Gregory (Ret.), former USAF pilot, military engineer, test pilot and NASA astronaut as well as the former National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Deputy Administrator. Colonel Gregory was the first African American to command a space flight.

On Wednesday June 7th the students will participate in a special Closing Ceremony at East Haven’s Joseph Melillo Middle School.

According to East Haven Public Schools, more than 50% of their middle school students are believed to have never flown on a commercial airline flight. The ACE Program is intended to expose students and their parents to the broad range of aerospace career opportunities. Aerospace is one of the fastest-growing U.S. job sectors, employing more than one million people. The aerospace sector expects to see an especially significant surge in space exploration-related jobs as the private space sector grows.

Since taking flight at HVN in November 2021, Avelo has flown more than one million Customers at Tweed Airport. Avelo currently operates five 737s at its HVN base which serves 17 nonstop destinations across seven states. Avelo has invested more than \$100 million in its HVN-based operations and Connecticut presence. This includes the hiring of nearly 180 Avelo Crewmembers and the creation of more than 300 direct and indirect airport-related jobs.

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