



Contrails of Grace

A Mission Moment

A few words of Appreciation from Jon Wieringa—an email he sent to friends.

Hey all,

So I'm not usually one for the email blast. I don't forward cute internet videos, funny stories or invitations to parties. And yet here I am sending this to everyone in my address book.

Just bear with me for a minute.

Some of you may know that Laurie's brother was stuck by several cars as a pedestrian this past Christmas in Fairfax, Virginia. He suffered severe injuries to his brain, among other things, and remains in a coma. At the time Kevin, his wife, and their four children were in the process of moving home to the Chicago area. They had ended their lease, quit their jobs, enrolled the two older kids in school in Illinois, and effectively pulled up all their roots in the DC area. They were scheduled to meet the moving truck four days after Kevin was hit. While this has been a terribly difficult thing for his family, this isn't a sad email about Kevin.

What I discovered in the process of trying to help bring Kevin home to Chicago where his mother, wife, and children are is that it's nearly impossible to transport a recumbent patient more than a couple of hundred miles, and even that is difficult. Any further and it rapidly becomes so cost prohibitive that an average family could never afford it. When you combine the ground transportation costs to and from the airport with the cost of a fixed-wing air ambulance and medical crew, the total bill to move Kevin from Virginia to Illinois would easily have exceeded twenty thousand dollars. According to the air-ambulance companies we talked to this is rarely covered by insurance as it is not a medical necessity to be within driving distance of your family. You can imagine, though, how hard it was on Kevin's family to have him so far away and so critically injured.

Enter the folks at Grace on Wings. They're a Christian mission sponsored by several Midwest Churches and individuals that provides low-cost medical ambulance service to people in need. For the price of aviation fuel, landing fees, and maintenance on their aircraft, they provide air transport for Kevin and arranged for the ground transportation to be donated on the Illinois side. Four days and six hours after I first talked with their CEO, I met two pilots and a medical team at Dulles Airport in DC to go get Kevin at the hospital. Six hours later we arrived at the nursing home outside Chicago where he now resides. In a little under five days he went from a fourteen-hour drive to a 20 minute commute for his family.

The pilots, doctors and medics at Grace on Wings are volunteers who serve a need I never knew existed until we started to look for a way to bring Kevin home, and they do it with professionalism, passion, and ...well...grace. They're still a fledging non-profit - they've only been around for about a year and have flown 32 missions to date—but they're already looking at upgrading their aircraft to support missions involving more critical patients, including patients on ventilators. Their goal is to eventually raise enough foundation money to do these missions at little or no cost to the family. I wish I had the words to express the respect and admiration I have for these folks, and the gratitude I feel.

Make no mistake: they are a very Christian organization. I know that might bother a few of you—my address book includes Christians, Jews, Muslims, Catholics, agnostics, atheists, and everything in between. So here's the thing: You can look at them as Christians doing God's work and expressing their love of Christ through their ministry, or you can look at them as good, committed people choosing to spend their time, money, and effort to help people who desperately need it. It really doesn't matter. Either way they serve people in need, and they do it well. They've done Kevin's family a service beyond anything I can express. I figure the least I can do is spread the word, you know?

So if you give to charity think about including them. I can tell you from experience that they're worth it, and that they're a non-profit with very little overhead wasted. If you don't, maybe send them an email thanking them for what they do. They deserve that, too.

Or, just check out their website, keep them in mind, and talk them up to somebody else if you get a chance. They're the only charity fixed-wing air ambulance in the whole country. That's a big job for a small group of people with a little airplane.

I hope this finds you all happy and well.

Jon Wieringa, RVT, EMT-B



Volunteer Keith Mahin caring for Kevin.

Upcoming Events

June 5-7 Indianapolis Air Show
Nellie will be on display and Grace on Wings will have a booth at the show. Stop by and say "Hi". Volunteers are needed to work the booth.

Sept 19 Annual Hog Roast

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot



2009 Gala Celebration

The 1st Annual Grace on Wings Gala Celebration was held on February 27, 2009 at the University of Indianapolis. Over 120 people enjoyed good fellowship, food and celebrating what God has done through Grace on Wings this past year.

In the above picture, Hal Blank, CEO of Grace on Wings is presenting George Schulp, Director of EMS Education for Superior Ambulance Service with a "Nellie Award" for providing ground ambulance services to our patients at no cost in the Chicago, Detroit and Northern Indiana areas. They have provided thousands of dollars in-kind services to the families we serve.

Our keynote speaker was Donna Thomas the founder of Christian Vision Ministries who challenged us to see the world through the eyes of Jesus Christ and to respond to His direction.

Welcome Doug Thornton

New Director of Administration and Development

"The opportunity to use my God given gifts to serve Grace on Wings is humbling and an extreme honor for me. It is exciting to see how God has worked through this ministry to serve those in need and how this ministry is growing." -Doug Thornton

Please join the Board of Directors of Grace on Wings in welcoming Doug Thornton as the Director of Administration and Development. "This newly created part-time position is much needed as our ministry continues to grow. Doug will be responsible for financial development, communications, special events and management of the office," said Hal Blank, CEO of Grace on Wings. "The Board and I are excited to have Doug on staff."

Doug will also continue to serve as Executive Director of Methodists Sports Medicine Research and Education Foundation where he started in 1996. Prior to this work he serviced 24 years with the YMCA. He served as Executive Director of the Arthur Jordan YMCA 1991-2000 and as District Executive Director of the Fishers YMCA 2000-2006.

Doug is married and the father of 8 children. He enjoys jogging, wood working, fishing and coaching his kids. He is an active member at Faith Missionary Evangelical Free Church.



Keeping Nellie In Shape!

A Message from Hal Blank, CEO of Grace on Wings



Greetings,

As most of you know the name of our plane is "Nellie" a Mitsubishi MU-2B plane which God has graciously blessed us with to service those in need of an air ambulance. Many of you might not realize all the cost of the upkeep and required maintenance inspections of Nellie.

We are required to do an inspection every 100 hours of flight time which is a basic inspection. In addition we have another inspection for every 200 hours of flight time which is more involved, so at the least we have 3 inspections every year. Last year with the 100 / 200 hour inspections we also had a 600 hour inspection that is done every 600 hours or 3 years. In October 2008, these inspections cost us over \$20,000. In May 2008 Nellie had a 100 hour and a 10 year inspection that cost over \$38,000 and when we purchased Nellie in September 2007, she needed her 100 / 200 / 1 year and 2 year inspection along with her 7,500 hour inspection which cost us over \$54,000. As you can see, these required inspections and keeping Nellie in good shape is expensive.

The above picture is of Nellie receiving her 100 hour inspection by Intercontinental Jet Services Corporation in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This inspection kept "Nellie" out of service April 8-15, 2009. We believe that the Lord will provide for the cost of this recent inspections as He has faithfully has with all Nellie's previous inspections.

But here is what I really need you to be in prayer about, in the near future most likely Spring of 2010, Nellie is going to need her engines replaced which will cost around \$350,000. We have 530 hours of flight time until we are required to replace her engines. I encourage you to pray and search out your heart and let the Lord guide your path in helping us to continue the work that He has placed before us in serving those individuals and families who need us the most. By faith alone we all took this step that when He opened our eye's to believe and to be servants for His Kingdom and Glory .

Always your brother and servant in Christ,

Hal Blank

In support of Grace on Wings commitment to providing Charity Air Ambulance services to medical patients in financial hardships, I would like to make a contribution in the amount of:

- *A one time Gift of _____*
- **400 Ropes** - an Automatic Monthly Donation of _____
The goal of the 400 ropes is to get 400 monthly supporters to pledge \$25 or more to cover our ground costs to allow us to show Christ's love to more needy families. Every 400 Ropes member will receive flight updates and will be able to track our flights. Like the Bible story (Luke 5:18-26) where the crippled man's friends lowered him down on ropes in front of Jesus-we need you to be those ropes.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Preferred Method of Giving: _____ Check Enclosed (make payable to Grace on Wings)

_____ Credit Card (one time gift) _____ Automatic Monthly Donation on Credit Card

_____ Visa _____ Master Card _____ Discover Card

Credit Card #: _____ Exp Date: _____ / _____

_____ Automatic Monthly Checking Acct Withdrawal

Checking Act #: _____ ABA# _____ Bank Name: _____

Mail to:

Grace on Wings
 Post Office Box 455
 Plainfield, IN 46168

www.graceonwings.org

Giving Levels:

Nellie Club: \$5,000 plus
 Gold Level: \$2,500-\$4,999
 Silver Level: \$1,000-\$2,499
 Bronze Level: \$500-\$999
 Friends of Grace: \$100-\$499

**All information given will be only used by our staff, we respect you privacy. All donations are Tax Deductible.*

"Each of you has received a gift to use to serve others. Be good servants of God's various gifts of Grace." 1 Peter 4:10 NCV

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Mission Statement

Grace on Wings shares the love of Christ through the gift of aviation by providing cost-effective fixed-wing transport for medical patients in need throughout the United States.



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