

## Harrison Ford names US Airways Flt. 1549 pilots Sullenberger and Skiles as successors to lead EAA Young Eagles Program

*Program gives inspirational and educational flights to 80,000+ youth annually*

SANTA MONICA, Cal. — September 29, 2009 — Captain **Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger** and First Officer **Jeffrey Skiles**, known for their expert handling of their airliner’s emergency landing in the Hudson River in January, today took the helm as co-chairmen of the EAA Young Eagles Program. In a news conference, EAA member, pilot, and famed actor **Harrison Ford** officially passed the baton after having served for five years as the chairman of this program that uses aviation to inspire and educate youth.

EAA Chairman/President Tom Poberezny, who launched the EAA Young Eagles Program in 1992, moderated the news conference. Later this evening, Poberezny will host a special dinner recognizing Ford for his service and welcoming the program’s new co-chairs. “I’m eager to thank Harrison tonight for his engagement, dedicated leadership, and active participation,” Poberezny said.

“Harrison and I were delighted when Sully and Jeff agreed to co chair the program. They were ideal candidates not only because of the skill they demonstrated on that fateful day in January but also, and perhaps more significantly, because of the leadership they’ve shown since that time,” Poberezny added. “They’ve been excellent ambassadors on behalf of aviation.”

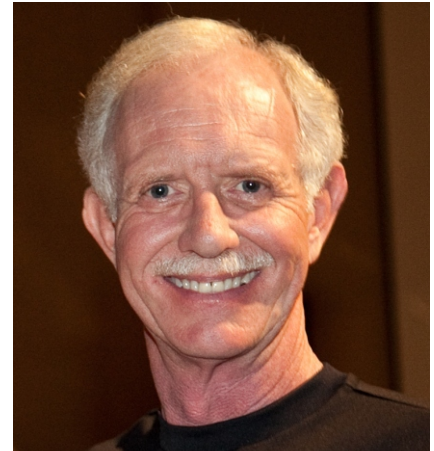
Ford agreed. “For five years as the program chair, I’ve stressed the program’s message of *earned reward*, showing young people that, by disciplining and applying themselves, they can earn marvelous rewards, such as the freedom and thrill of flight,” Ford said. “Now, Sully and Jeff will add an emphasis on the value of training, preparation, and teamwork. No one could bring more credibility in sharing these concepts with our youth,” Ford added.

Sullenberger and Skiles accepted the offer to lead the program in discussions with Poberezny and Ford that took place during this year’s EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, which is widely considered the world’s premier aviation event.

“After having the opportunity to learn more about the EAA Young Eagles Program while I was in Oshkosh, Jeff and I were inspired to get involved. Co-chairing the program is an opportunity that I welcome,” said Sullenberger. “Jeff and I are honored to take the stick from Harrison Ford, who has gracefully guided the program for the past five years.”

For Skiles, a rekindled enthusiasm for flight fueled his acceptance of the co-chair role. “I’m grateful to EAA and the AirVenture Oshkosh convention for allowing me to fall in love with aviation for a second time in my life. I’m eager to share this passion with young people and encourage their participation in aviation,” Skiles said.

The EAA Young Eagles Program, now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, has provided inspirational and educational first-flight experiences to nearly 1.5 million youth, thanks to the volunteer efforts of 42,000 EAA member pilots and countless supporters around the globe. In addition to Ford, previous EAA Young Eagles Program chairs were: Oscar-winning actor and avid pilot Cliff Robertson (1992-1993); and aviation legend Chuck Yeager (1994-2003).



“Sully” Sullenberger



Jeff Skiles



Harrison Ford



## Ford names Sullenberger and Skiles as successors

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Highlights of Harrison Ford's chairmanship of the EAA Young Eagles Program include the following:

- ▶ Nearly 500,000 young people received inspirational first-flight Young Eagles experiences while he chaired the program.
- ▶ He personally raised considerable funds for the program by donating auction items such as movie-set experiences.
- ▶ He elevated the stature of the Gathering of Eagles event, which takes place during EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, to make it a more effective fundraising vehicle for the program.
- ▶ He enhanced the program's public profile and exposure.
- ▶ He emphasized the "ambassadorship" message, underscoring the EAA Young Eagles Program's significant potential to enhance the image of general aviation among policymakers and the broad public.
- ▶ He personally provided flights to nearly 300 Young Eagles.

Sporty's Pilot Shop, in partnership with EAA, provides free online flight training to participating youth who are inspired by the Young Eagles flight experience to continue pursuing an interest in aviation. ConocoPhillips is the presenting sponsor of the EAA Young Eagles Program. Learn more at <http://www.young eagles.org>.

EAA embodies the spirit of aviation through the world's most engaged community of aviation enthusiasts. EAA's 160,000 members and 1,000 local chapters enjoy the fun and camaraderie of sharing their passion for flying, building, and restoring recreational aircraft. For more information on EAA and its activities, call 800-JOIN-EAA (800-564-6322) or go to <http://www.eaa.org>.

### **Resources for Editors:**

Clicking on the link below will take you to an online folder containing downloadable text, images, and video about the EAA Young Eagles Program.

<https://eaa.box.net/shared/91h6gfz5me>