

Contract Awarded to Commence Aerospace Flight Academy in Washington DC

Written by
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The mission of OBAP to reach youth throughout the continental United States and expose them to career possibilities in aviation reached another level in the Washington DC area this past summer. In addition to running another highly successful ACE camp in the Northern VA area of 23 highly motivated students, the OBAP ACE program in its affiliation with Jwahir Enterprises Inc received a contract from the Washington DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) to execute a six-week Aerospace Flight Academy for fifty Washington DC high school residents. The purpose of the academy is exposing students to the academic and career possibilities of aviation and aerospace. This was effectively done through a collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia Science and Engineering Center and the Kansas State University at Salina Aviation Department. Where the OBAP's Intermediate ACE Academy, held at Delaware State University, which has completed its second successful summer of execution, trains highly selected students from across the nation to successfully solo in an aircraft, the Aerospace Flight Academy focuses more on the academics associated with aviation and aerospace. The contract to execute the program was set up not only to fund the execution of the program, but each of the students participating in the program was paid an hourly wage as a part of the DOES Summer Youth Employment Program.

The program consisted of four weeks of intensive academic introduction at the University of DC and two weeks of instruction at Kansas State University at Salina. The courses the students received exposure to during the academy were introductions to Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Astronomy, Aeronautical Engineering Flight Labs, Aviation Ground and Flight Training, Air Traffic Control, Aircraft Mechanics, Airframe Manufacturing, and Material Sciences. The program transported forty of the students from Washington DC to Salina, Kansas where the students and staff stayed in the dormitory during the two weeks while they received academic instruction in aviation. Each student also received four hours at the controls of a Cessna 172 as well as four hours in the backseat totaling eight hours in the aircraft.

OBAP was intricately involved with the program as aviation professionals came to speak to the students regarding careers in aviation and other resources to ensure the success of the program. OBAP through the National ACE Camp Program sponsored OBAP T-shirts and the lunches for the academy during the course of the program. OBAP associate member, Robert Newkirk, who is the CEO and Founder of Jwahir Enterprises Inc. and the Director of the Northern Virginia OBAP ACE Camp, speaks to the need of the program particularly in the Washington DC area. "In 2004, the Census Bureau did a study in the Washington DC area. They found that of the DC students, 85% lived in poverty and only 46.3% tested proficient in math. The alarming fact is the definition of math proficiency is at grade level or a grade below. At one school in DC, only 9.8% of the students at that school tested proficient in math. We knew that there

was a major disconnect that had nothing to do with intelligence. What we found was that the correlation was associated with the career fields the students saw available to them. None of them really required math and science (barber, fireman, policeman, etc.). Our ability to execute this program allows the opportunity for the students to first hand experience a wide range of career possibilities in aviation and aerospace showing them the need for math and science so that they can be motivated to excel in these areas.”

The results of the program were astounding. The D.C. students took pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate their overall interest in the field of aviation and aerospace as well as the current preparedness to achieve pursuance effectively. They also completed an evaluation of the academy. There were five major questions asked of the students:

1. What was your interest in taking this aerospace academy before you enrolled?
Results: 68% said they were interested
2. What kind of effort did you make to learn at this academy?
Results: 84% said they made “excellent” or “very good” efforts to learn
3. How much information did you learn at this academy?
Results: 87% said they learned plenty
4. What is your level of interest in aviation after attending this academy?
Results: 82% said they were more interested than before
5. Would you be interested in attending either the University of DC or Kansas State University to pursue a career in aviation or aerospace?
Results: 82% said they were very interested.

Lieutenant Colonel Clyde Henderson, who serves as the Professor of Aerospace Studies for the JROTC unit at the Washington Math, Science, & Technology Public Charter School in Washington DC, had this to say about the outcome of the Aerospace Flight Academy. “The program is an opportunity for the kids to learn about the difference aspects of aviation and what it means to them. There is nothing greater than watching the kids, as they get ready to take their first flight and to know that they can control the airplane. That excitement can lead to exceptional achievement and moving to where they want to be in life as opposed to life moving them. That is what the program is all about.” Lt.Col Henderson served as one of the principal administrators for the Aerospace Flight Academy this summer.

One of our biggest accomplishments was one of the students who had participated in the Northern Virginia ACE Camp in 2006 and 2007 as well as the Aerospace Flight Academy received admission to the Kansas State at Salina Professional Pilot Degree Program for the fall of 2007. Ms. Andrea Taylor received an out-of-state tuition waiver from Kansas State, the Kansas State Residence Hall Scholarship of \$3000, and the Dolly Hardman Flight Scholarship for female pilots of \$3,500. Jwahir Enterprises awarded her a flight scholarship of \$5,000 being selected as one of the best students in the Aerospace Flight Academy. She has also become a student member of OBAP and received her

private pilot license in December. She is currently in her second semester working on her instrument rating. Ms. Taylor stated, “My dream is to one day own my own commercial airline and be able to just fly myself.” She is a testimony that the mission and goals of the OBAP Professional Pilot Development Program is truly having an impact on bringing our youth into the world of aviation.

Jwahir Enterprises continually strives to move forward in succinct step with OBAP in its objectives of outreach to over 100,000 youth exposing them to career possibilities in aviation and aerospace.