

# Tulsa

Premier Issue  
TulsaLifestylePubs.com

January  
2012

L I F E S T Y L E



## ANGEL FLIGHT

Making a Difference,  
One Flight at a Time

**The Parker Family**  
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A Delicious New Year's Resolution



# Angel Flight

Volunteer Pilots Provide Help and Inspiration

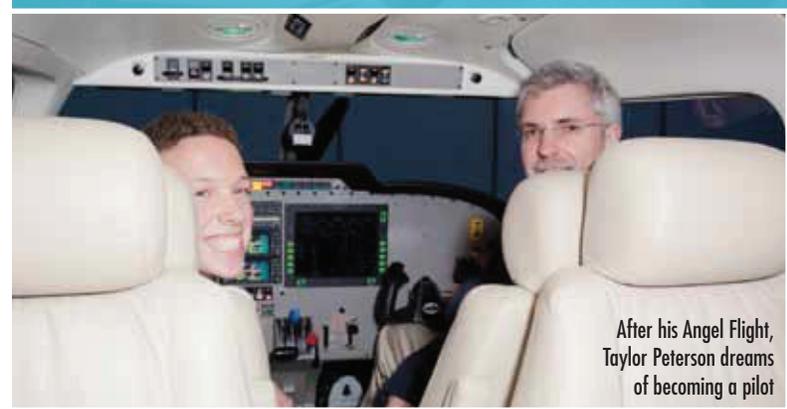
Article by Debra Laizure | Photography Ace Cuervo

**When** you first meet 15-year old Taylor Peterson, it is his smile that stands out the most. This young man lights up a room with his enthusiasm and zest for life. He literally sparkles with joy.

Taylor is a 9th grade student at Victory Christian School. He loves technology and plans to attend Oral Roberts University to be a computer tech, paramedic, and a pilot. He already has some experience with airplanes, and unfortunately, he has had his share of hospital rooms. Taylor has cerebral palsy. He was diagnosed when he was two years old and soon after was going to 11 doctor and therapy visits a week for rehabilitation.

When it came time to have surgery on his legs and knees last year, the family was confronted with a unique problem. The surgery, a double femoral osteotomy and double patella advancement, was necessary to keep Taylor walking independently. His legs would be required to stay in a straight, fixed position after surgery. The surgery would take place at Children's Hospital in Denver, CO, where Taylor's orthopedic surgeon was and where they used to live. Because he could not bend his legs, commercial airlines could not accommodate his special request, and an 11 hour car ride would have been too much for Taylor to bear after surgery.

Taylor's mother, Leanna Peterson, knew of the Air Alliance community in Colorado. She looked in the Tulsa phone book and found Angel Flight. She called and spoke to Angel Flight



After his Angel Flight, Taylor Peterson dreams of becoming a pilot

Founder and pilot, Doug Vincent, and he worked with Angel Flight Mission Coordinator, Jack Dimski, to make the flight happen. Dimski contacted Angel Flight President and volunteer pilot, Mark Haywood, about the flight (mission). After considering Taylor's weight, height and leg length, they determined Haywood's Saratoga single engine aircraft, which has club seating, would be able to accommodate him.



Taylor's first Angel Flight was with his mother and pilot Mark Haywood. Then, he and his father, Greg Peterson, made a second Angel Flight mission to Colorado with another volunteer pilot, Gene Downing. Leanna Peterson says, "Angel Flight provided a way for our son to receive the necessary medical care he needed. We are so grateful to the pilots of Angel Flight for their devotion in assisting families facing transportation challenges relating to medical needs. We are also grateful to Children's Hospital in Denver for their outstanding care, and for arranging transportation to and from the airport." Haywood says, "I enjoyed meeting Taylor's caring and dedicated mother, Leanna Peterson. Her advanced planning and advice helped me and the ground crew at Denver's Centennial Airport to transfer Taylor from the hospital van into the plane."

Haywood is also impressed with Taylor. He says, "Taylor strikes me as a young man who thinks and dreams big. His attitude and determination have taken him well beyond his doctors' predictions. A bright young man, Taylor also used this medical flight as an opportunity to learn more about his love of flying. During the flight, his knowledge and interest in flying were apparent, as he asked me intelligent questions about aircraft systems and navigation. To avoid lower level turbulence near the mountains in Colorado, Taylor and I decided to climb to smooth air at higher altitudes where he enjoyed learning to use the oxygen system."

Angel Flight pilots donate their time, aircraft, and all operating costs to provide the flights. Haywood comments, "Giving something back to the community is important to us. Giving in this way is uniquely rewarding because with each flight, I personally meet the patient and families, and see the many benefits first-hand. I enjoy the challenge of piloting, the discipline it requires, and the freedom it brings. The opportunity to share my skills and love of flying while providing humanitarian help is a great privilege. Getting to know the Peterson family has been an incredibly rewarding experience. With Taylor's big dreams and determination, I believe he will accomplish whatever he puts his mind to. I hope to fly with Taylor again, as his co-pilot."

Flying with his new friend has certainly made an impact on Taylor, too. He says, "I have a passion for flying and dream of being a pilot someday so I can go to Africa as a missionary, meeting their needs much like Angel Flight met mine. I'll need a really big plane to do that!"



L.A. GILPIN, *Adovajo Woman, Child and Lamb*, 1922  
 ©2011 The Eugene B. Adkins Collection at the Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma. ©1997 Arnon Carter, Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas

# Black <sup>on</sup> Black & White

*The Southwest of Laura Gilpin and Maria Martinez*

Feb 5 - Apr 15, 2012



MARIA & JULIAN MARTINEZ, *Storage Jar*, 1940. Gift of Clark Field, ©2011 Philbrook Museum of Art, Inc., Tulsa, OK

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Oklahoma pilots making a difference — Angel Flight Founder, Doug Vincent and President, Mark Haywood

## About Angel Flight

Angel Flight was created by a group of pilots who believe in the benefit of volunteering. They strive to keep all aspects of the organization volunteer. Angel Flight is a non-profit charitable organization of pilots, volunteers, and friends, arranging free air transportation for any legitimate, charitable, or medically related need. This service is available to individuals and health care organizations. They will also arrange transportation of those people who are financially distressed or who are in a time-critical, non-emergency situation due to their medical condition.

Each mission is different. Passengers can be of any age, and missions have to be coordinated with different pilots, airports and weather concerns. Patients may be children or adults and their moods vary. For instance, some patients may be returning from chemotherapy and not feel well at all. Or, they may be on their way to a surgery or procedure and may feel anxious or apprehensive. They may have just received good news from a successful treatment and may feel happy and hopeful.

Angel Flight primarily serves patients needing transportation to or from the heartland region. As members of the Air Care Alliance, a group of organizations providing similar services throughout the United States, Angel Flight coordinates with other organizations. Angel Flight can arrange transportation for patients on longer flights to other parts of the country outside of the Heartland region. Patients are usually traveling for surgery, chemotherapy, dialysis, and other treatments. A typical flight may carry patients

## Did you Know?

Angel Flight also delivers blood products for the Oklahoma Blood Institute and Red Cross in emergency situations. Angel Flight Founder, Doug Vincent, and President, Mark Haywood, piloted the first flight allowed in the air after the 9/11 terrorist attack to deliver blood to Ground Zero.



requiring treatment at M.D. Anderson in Houston or the Shriners Hospital in Galveston, TX.

Angel Flight is financially supported primarily by the pilots who fly the missions by donating the use of their airplanes and operating expenses, and by contributions from individuals, service clubs, social and religious groups, and corporations. Angel Flight does not participate in fundraising events and receives no financial aid from any government entity. There is never a fee of any kind, either to the patient or the health care provider for an Angel Flight mission.

Due to an increase in missions, Angel Flight is currently in need of more pilots with aircraft. Volunteer pilots fly one or more missions a year. There is never an obligation to volunteer or accept a mission. For more information about Angel Flight, or to learn about becoming a volunteer pilot, please call 918.749.8992 or visit [AngelFlight.com](http://AngelFlight.com). ↴