Frequently Asked Questions

What does Wings of Hope do?
We are an aviation nonprofit delivering humanitarian programs around the globe to lift people in need toward health and self-sufficiency. We do this by providing access – to health care, resources and support. We envision a world in which all people have access to the resources they need to create a better life.

Do all of your projects involve airplanes?
No. Our roots are in aviation. In fact, our very first project was delivering an airplane to a nun in Kenya to support her efforts providing medical care to famine-stricken tribes. Many of our projects use a plane to deliver medical care to people or to transport people to medical care. We also use planes internationally to transport people and resources in support of our humanitarian efforts. But not all of our projects involve aviation. For example, we support an education program in Cambodia and a microfinance program in Kenya.

MEDICAL RELIEF & AIR TRANSPORT (MAT) PROGRAM

Isn't the Wings of Hope MAT Program just like Angel Flight?
Not exactly. Angel Flight uses volunteer pilots to provide free flights to those who need to reach medical care – but that is where the similarity ends. At Wings of Hope, we have a team of highly trained volunteer pilots who fly our Wings of Hope-owned aircraft, specially equipped to accommodate stretchers and medical equipment. At Angel Flight and similar organizations, the volunteer pilots use their own private planes to fly patients. (In order to fly in these planes, patients must be ambulatory and able to sit upright.) Also, we are much more than a medical air transport charity. From the moment we receive a call for help, we coordinate all transportation – then we continue to transport the patient to care for as long as it takes to achieve the best possible outcome. We also provide ground transportation to and from treatment and pay to house patients’ families near the treatment facility, when necessary.

Where do you fly people in the U.S.?
When we fly a patient in one of our aircraft, we are limited to a 500-mile radius from our headquarters in St. Louis because this is the distance our planes can fly without stopping to refuel. In rare instances, we will exceed this distance by making a pit stop to refuel on the way.

What kinds of airplanes do you fly?
We have three planes dedicated to the MAT Program: one Cessna 206 and two Piper Senecas. Each is equipped to accommodate a stretcher, a wheelchair and medical equipment. We maintain these planes to strict safety standards, using a team of paid and volunteer mechanics. We can proudly state that we have a 100% safety record transporting patients to care.

Who is eligible to use your MAT Program?
Any individual who needs to reach specialized medical care, but cannot access that care – either due to financial reasons or reasons related to their illness that prevent them from traveling via car or flying in a commercial aircraft. We evaluate each request on a case-by-case basis.
Who are the most common types of patients you fly?
The majority of our MAT patients are children, but we do transport adults. Some common cases are:
- Babies with clubfeet and cleft palates
- Children with rare forms of cancer and immune disorders who cannot fly commercially due to their compromised immune systems
- Individuals with rare diseases that require specialty care not available near their homes

There is no limit to the types of conditions our patients have. The common denominator is that they lack access to the care they need to heal and to hope. We use our MAT Program to provide them that access.

Do you ever fly people to care on commercial airlines?
Yes. Sometimes, it makes more sense to fly a patient commercially. When a patient is able to fly commercially, it is almost always less expensive than using our planes. That said, many of our patients are not able to fly commercially due to their illness (i.e., cannot sit upright, immune system compromised). Also, flying patients in our MAT planes accommodates a much more flexible timetable than flying commercially would allow. This means we can fly patients to and from treatment on a shortened timetable – decreasing the time they spend traveling and the time their loved ones spend away from work and family responsibilities.

How much do patients pay to use your MAT service?
Absolutely nothing. Our MAT Program services are completely free – operating at no cost to patients, insurance companies or taxpayers.

GLOBAL PROGRAMS

Where do you work internationally?
Currently, we are active in 11 countries outside of the U.S.: Belize, Cambodia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Tanzania and Zambia. Since our founding in 1962, we have worked in 47 countries.

What kinds of projects do you support internationally?
We support programming in four areas:
- **HEALTH**: We fly volunteer doctors and dentists into communities to provide preventive and maternal care, vaccinations for children, and dental care. We also use our planes for emergency medical transports from remote areas to hospitals in nearby cities.
- **EDUCATION**: We support an after-school English language outreach program to help children from poor areas gain admittance to college.
- **FOOD SECURITY**: We provide villages the supplies and training to raise chickens as a sustainable source of protein.
- **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**: We provide microloans and training to help women start small businesses as a source of sustainable income.

How do you choose your international projects?
Every one of our international projects begins as a request for help from a poor community in some remote region of the world. We receive many requests every year, and we evaluate each as they come to us. Unfortunately, we cannot respond favorably to every request. In fact, we must decline many more than we accept. When we do partner with a community on a new program, we first make sure that the program aligns with our mission and that we have the resources to support its success. Just as important, we also make sure that the community has the in-country support (of other NGOs, government agencies, community leaders, etc.) needed to ensure its viability.

How can I volunteer for Wings of Hope?
Wings of Hope operates with a very small paid staff and a very large volunteer base. This enables us to spend at least 90 cents of every dollar directly on programming. We are always looking for volunteer pilots, nurses and medics to support our MAT Program. But you don’t have to be a pilot to help us. We use volunteers in administrative roles (answering the phone, stuffing envelopes, data entry, etc.) and to help with special events. We use volunteers with special skills like accounting, finance and marketing to support our fundraising efforts. We even use volunteers to keep our hangar and grounds looking great. If you would like to volunteer with us, just give us a call at 636-537-1302.

Where can I learn more about Wings of Hope?
Check out our website at www.wingsofhope.ngo or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wingsofhopeinc