

# 2016 National Aviation Exploring Scholarship Recipients



## **Sporty's Foundation Professional Pilot's Degree - \$10,000**



### **SKYLAR PETERSON**

*Commemorative Air Force Post 2352, Mesa, AZ, Grand Canyon Council, Phoenix, AZ  
Chandler-Gilbert Community College & Mesa Community College*

Early on, Skylar became hooked on aviation, so much so, that the local citizens nicknamed him the "Airport Bum." He is frequently seen at the local airport, where he has assisted on many projects, including crack-sealing the entire runway. In addition, Skylar has marshalled the Copperstate Fly-In and served on the staff at AirVenture in Oshkosh, WI.

Skylar has longed dreamed of pursuing a career in aviation. He is currently enrolled in Chandler-Gilbert Community College, where he will earn an Associates Degree and commercial pilot certificate. After community college, he will attend the University of North Dakota in the Aeronautics program. His goal is to become either an airline pilot or corporate pilot.

Skylar has earned several honors, including Student of the Month at the Red Mountain High School in Mesa, AZ, and a full scholarship to the Summer Aviation Academy at the University of North Dakota.

## **Avionics - \$3,000**



### **Kristian Nyman**

*Commemorative Air Force Post 2352, Mesa, AZ, Grand Canyon Council, Phoenix, AZ  
Arizona State University*

Kristian has held leadership positions with several organizations, including Vice-President of his Exploring Post. He has also served his Boy Scout Troop, as Senior Patrol Leader, Patrol Leader, and Den Chief. Also, Kristian served as the Quorum President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Counselor, Secretary, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant with Youth Program Leadership for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Kristian has devoted many hours to community service. During the last 4 years, he has tutored 20 students in math. In addition, he dedicated 300 hours of community service to the City of Mesa and was awarded the Silver Service award.

Kristian is an Eagle Scout and has earned 3 Eagle Palms. In addition, he was awarded the Math Distinction honor by his high school and the Duty to God Award by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Perhaps Kristian's goal to become a commercial airline pilot can best be captured by the comments of his high school's physics teacher, Jeff Burrell. "Not only is Kristian a hard-working, intelligent, dedicated student, but he has diligently sought after the fulfillment of his dreams. His 'drive' to get things done is exemplary."

## **Aviation/Airport Management - \$3,000**



### **Austin Thompson**

*Commemorative Air Force Post 2352, Mesa, AZ, Grand Canyon Council, Phoenix, AZ  
Arizona State University*

Austin's enthusiasm for aviation arose early in his life. His father served as pilot in the Air Force and was an Aviation Explorer in Post 2, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Austin's career goals are to become a pilot with the United States Air Force and then a commercial airline pilot.

Currently, Austin is working toward earning his instrument and commercial rating certifications. Austin attends Arizona State University, where he plans on earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Unmanned Aerial Science Aviation Management.

Austin has held several leadership positions, including serving as President and Fund Raising Chairman for his Exploring Post. Austin earned the highest rank in Boy Scouting, the Eagle Scout Award, and serves as a Patrol Leader for Troop 301.

In 2010, Austin risked his own life while saving a life and was awarded the Heroism Award by the BSA and the Young Hero Award by the City of Mesa. He has also been honored with the American Legion Award, Service Learning Award and Mesa Schools' Gold Service Award for contributing 700+ hours of community service.

## **Pilot - \$3,000**



### **Jack Cudecki**

*Windy City Flyers Post 9, Wheeling, IL, Pathway to Adventure Council, Chicago, IL  
Purdue University*

Jack has a thirst for both aviation and Exploring. He has served as President and Vice President for his Exploring Post. Several times, Jack was honored as the Explorer of the Quarter and Explorer of the Year. For 3 years, he has volunteered to serve on the Exploring Staff at EAA's AirVenture in Oshkosh, WI. His goal is to earn a Bachelors Degree in Professional Flight and fly for a major airline.

He has received several impressive academics honors, including Loyola Academy High School Scholar for achieving a 98.87% GPA, Gold Medal recipient in both 2014 and 2015 for placing in the 99th percentile in his class, and Illinois State Scholar. Jack also earned the Trustees Scholarship at Purdue University. This prestigious scholarship is awarded to 100 freshmen out of a class of 7,000 students. Purdue University also presented Jack with a Dean's Scholarship.

Jack is employed as a Beach Manager/Lifeguard for the City of Evanston and was selected as the Lifeguard of the Year for 2015. In between his shifts, Jack finds the time to volunteer at the local Farmers Market and the community soup kitchen.

## **Maintenance - \$3,000**



### **Diar “Didi” Aranki**

*AFI Flight Training Center Post 445, Yorba Linda, CA, Orange County Council, Santa Ana, CA  
Orange Coast College*

Exploring Post Advisor Timothy Lloyd, who has 30 years of experience in aviation as an Aviation Instructor, Air Force Maintenance Officer, and Manager of Airplane Maintenance Programs at Boeing Commercial Airplanes, had this to say about Didi: *“I’ve seen a lot of great young people in aviation, but Miss Aranki is definitely at the top of the list of deserving people worthy of this prestigious scholarship.”* According to Advisor Lloyd, Didi’s direct leadership is the reason the Post has grown to 29 active members.

In addition to serving as her Exploring Post’s Vice President, Didi has served as the Captain for her high school’s Track and Field Team, Director of the Photography Club, and Vice President of the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Didi has excelled in both academics and sports. From 2010 to 2014, she was recognized as a Scholar Athlete. Didi was also named an Honors Student for 5 consecutive years and earned the Laureate with Distinction from the Conservatory of Fine Arts.

Didi’s goal is to enroll in the 2-year Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics courses at Orange Coast College. After completing the A & P Mechanics certification courses, she plans on pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Aviation Maintenance.

## **Pilot - \$3,000**



### **Ryan Coats**

*Commemorative Air Force Post 2352, Mesa, AZ, Grand Canyon Council, Phoenix, AZ  
Red Mountain High School*

Ryan’s goal is to become a commercial airline pilot and to graduate from Embry Riddle University. He has maintained a 4.0 GPA in high school and inducted into the National Honor Society. He is actively involved with several school programs, including the varsity swim team and Best Buddies. Best Buddies is a mentoring program for students with special needs, and Ryan serves as a mentor.

While holding down several jobs, Ryan finds the time to be a very dedicated member of Post 2352. He was recognized by the Post for being the top fundraiser for their recent fund drive. Explorer Post Advisor Lt. Col. Paul Thompson wrote the following recommending Ryan for the scholarship. *“This young man shows determination and dedication to excel in aviation. I have taught many students in the Air Force and as a civilian pilot. Ryan shows the aptitude and passion to make flying a solid career choice.”*

Along the way, Ryan has accomplished several honors, including: Best Team Player and Most Improved Swimmer by Varsity High School’s Swim Team, Honor Roll by the Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies, and National Honor Society at Red Mountain High School.

## **Pilot - \$3,000**



### **Sara Svec**

*San Fernando Valley Chapter of 99's Inc./American Airport, Post 747, Western Los Angeles County Council, Van Nuys, CA  
Brentwood High School*

At a young age, Sara learned the importance of working hard and the value of having an education. She had a difficult life as a child, was placed in foster care, and was then adopted by a loving and supportive family. She became focused on her goals of graduating from college and becoming an airline pilot.

Sara is a very active member of Post 747. She served as a mentor at the EAA's Young Eagles flight; worked as the Aviation Explorer Counselor for the Girl Scouts Day Camp; participated at the Post's Pancake Breakfast, Car Wash, and Gala Committee Meetings; and worked at the Post's booth at the Van Nuys Airport Career Day.

She is also involved with several community and school organizations. Sara is a member of the Student Library Advisory Club, the Brentwood Dance Company, the Equestrian Team and the Volunteer for CalVet, where she documents the veterans' stories and prepares a book for each of them. Sara is on the Honor Roll at Brentwood High School and achieved the Benefacta Award for contributing 80 hours of community service in one academic year.

## **Maintenance - \$3,000**



### **Daniel Carpenter**

*Commemorative Air Force Post 2352, Mesa, AZ, Grand Canyon Council, Phoenix, AZ  
Saguaro High School*

Daniel is a sophomore at Saguaro High School, and his career plans are to complete his private pilot certification and to further his aviation education. He has been an Aviation Explorer for 2 years and actively participates with the Post's activities and events. Daniel has served as an air marshal for the Copperstate Fly-In, represented the Post at the Falcon Field Open House, and attended Post workshops and field trips. He also sold tickets and assisted at the Post Fundraising dinner.

Daniel is a robotics enthusiast. He serves as the Team Captain for the Mohave Robotics Team. His Team earned the coveted Excellence Award for finishing in First Place at the Arizona State VEX Robotics Championship. Daniel was also awarded 2 other prestigious awards from Arizona State University. In 2014, he earned the Certificate of Excellence Award and the Certificate of Achievement in Video Production Award.

He is an active member of the First Baptist Church of Scottsdale, where he serves on the Technology Team and is the Student Leader for the High School Youth Group. Daniel has volunteered on Mission trips and assisted at the Feed My Starving Children event.

## **Avionics - \$3,000**



**Kellan Bradshaw**

*Commemorative Air Force Post 2352, Mesa, AZ, Grand Canyon Council, Phoenix, AZ  
Perry High School*

Since he was nine years old, Kellan has had a passion for aviation. His long-term goal is to graduate from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University with a degree in Fixed Wing Aeronautical Science. His immediate goal is to complete the certification process for his Private Pilot's License by next year.

Kellan joined Post 2352 in September of 2014 and has been actively participating in Post events and activities. He attended the Red Bull Air Races in Las Vegas, NV, volunteered at the Copperstate Fly-In, and participated in the EAA's Young Eagle program.

Kellan has held several leadership positions, including: Sun Valley Community Youth Group Leader, DECA Marketing Class Commercial Director, Summer Camp Counselor, and Perry High School Library Teen Tech.

Kellan's drive for achieving his goal is best captured by Pilot Dennis Hines' recommendation. *"One outstanding characteristics that Kellan has shown is his interest, dedication, and love of flying. He is the only fifteen year old I know who started training to get his VRR pilot's license."*

## **Aviation/Airport Management - \$3,000**



**Monique McAnnally**

*San Fernando Valley Chapter of 99's Inc./American Airport, Post 747, Western Los Angeles  
County Council, Van Nuys, CA  
College of the Canyons*

Monique wishes to soar into the future. Her goal is to become a commercial airline pilot and attend the University of North Dakota. She plans on earning her Commercial Pilot License and a degree in Business and Public Administration.

She truly enjoys the aviation community. Monique is not only a member of the San Fernando Valley 99s Exploring Post, but she is also a student pilot with the 99s. In addition, she belongs to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and the Whitman Airport Association. With Post 747, Monique participates with the monthly car washes, pancake breakfasts, and the Girl Scouts Aviation Badge Day. Monique actively volunteers for many organizations in her local community. These include: the Drug Free Youth in Town, Girl Scouts, and the EAA's Young Eagles.

FAA Certified Flight and Ground Instructor Jackie Forsting stated in Monique's recommendation letter the following: *"Not only is Monique impressive in the aviation arena, she is also a strong, responsible and caring person. She is involved in the community and volunteers for many organizations including the women's homeless shelter, her church's confirmation program, food pantry, and Rose Bowl Parade. She has earned leadership awards along with her Girl Scout Gold Award and is currently a Girl Scout Leader. In addition, she is a full time student and works two part-time jobs. She puts 110% effort in everything she does and she is truly inspiring."*