

AN ANGEL AMONG Us

By Jeanine Chambers

Scott Kendall with angel flight passengers.



It seems that there is a lot of talk about Angels lately ... guardian angels, archangels, even garden angels. But at Angel Flight of Georgia, we have Everyday Angels. Our pilots are here to 'lift people up' during a time of emotional hardship and need, and it happens everyday.

Angel Flight provides free air transportation to individuals with a medical need that can only be met by traveling to distant treatment facilities. Our volunteer pilots fly so that no one is denied potentially lifesaving treatment simply because they could not physically get to the available services. Angel Flight pilots provide these flights from their hearts. They even personally cover the aircraft costs of these missions, and it happens everyday. At least one mission is flown each day by one of Angel Flights' Everyday Angels.

One very special angel is Scott Kendall of Newnan, Georgia. He has been a pilot with Angel Flight of Georgia since October 2000. Like many Angel Flight pilots, flying for AFGA provides Scott with a way to use his time, plane, and piloting capabilities to make a difference in the community. "It's one thing to give a person a ride somewhere in your plane, but when that person has a serious medical need, you're on a mission and it's very satisfying to help. My goal for every mission is to complete it as safely and pleasantly as possible for the patients. To make that happen, knowing the weather and your capabilities as a pilot is key."

Since joining the organization, Scott has flown many unusually long missions. One particularly memorable mission for Scott started with a phone call in the early afternoon when the weather was not looking so good. The mission was to fly from

Scott's home base at Peachtree City, GA (FFC) to Opa Locka, FL (OPF) to pick up a 10-week-old baby boy in need of a liver and intestinal transplant along with his parents and bring them to Dekalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK) in Atlanta. This was a challenge because it was such a long trip, with a late start and convective weather along the route. Moreover, it was only the second time the family had been in an airplane, the first being the "Angel" flight down to the Miami area. Scott knew the weather through Florida would be okay, but he was concerned about the patterns moving west across southern Georgia heading to the Jacksonville area and another system traveling toward the Atlanta area. However, the next day's forecast looked worse, so he didn't want to cancel and leave the family stranded. Scott told the parents on departure that he might have to put it down in Jacksonville and spend the night, by the departure time at OPF it was getting dark. An hour into the night flight the baby needed to be fed intravenously (IV) so while mom was preparing the IV solutions, Dad, sat in the co-pilot seat holding the bag behind him, and Scott was hoping for smooth air. "I got the feeling that Angels were riding on my wing because the skies parted, leaving us a safe passage through. It was a long mission, not getting back to FFC until almost midnight, but it felt great to know that I had helped them."

Born and raised in Muskegon, Michigan, Scott's first intro-

duction to airplanes was at the age of 10 in a de Havilland Beaver floatplane on a fishing trip. "It's hard not to be fascinated by floatplanes when you're a child. I will always remember that I could not tell when we landed on the water; it was so smooth." Scott was an avid wilderness canoeist in the North Country. Seeing and flying in all the floatplanes in that part of the world made a lasting impression on him.

The idea of being a pilot really got started in 1995 when Scott and his wife, Lyn, bought their first computer. He became a passionate user of flight simulation using MS Flight Simulator with a yoke and rudder pedals. This went on for a couple of years before Lyn encouraged him to try the real thing. "I think she was getting a little frustrated with me hogging the computer all the time." So in the spring of 1997, at the age of 37, Scott started flying lessons. Making it only half-way down the runway, Scott realized that flying was in his blood. "I never would have thought that a few years later, I would be a Commercial Multi-Engine rated pilot and owner of a new Cessna Skylane."

Scott has a B.S. in Biology and Chemistry, and a M.S. in Plant Pathology and most recently worked for 10 years as an environmental scientist with an environmental consulting and engineering firm. However, after being bitten by the 'flying bug', Scott is changing careers to a full-time pilot. "It's an ambitious career change, but you only have one life to live, and you owe it to yourself to follow your heart."

Thank God Scott followed his heart. He has utilized his flying expertise to support Angel Flight and has become one of our most involved pilots. At the Angel Flight office, Scott is referred to as our "on-call" pilot, for without him many mis-

sions may have not been possible. Through his dedication to our mission, Scott has been able to touch the lives of so many in our community and has given them a chance to follow their hearts as he followed his.

"It is remarkable how many babies, children, and adults need to travel far from home for specialty medical care. A 12-week-old baby boy and his mom that I transported once from Memphis to Atlanta faced quite a hardship, as they had to make the trip every week for several months. Without the services of Angel Flight, she would not have been able to get her son to the specialized care he required." Situations like this motivate Scott to help anywhere he can. Scott is the proud father of two wonderful children (daughter, Claire age 8 and son, Cole age 6), and is expecting another son at any moment. Therefore, he can certainly relate to how parents would do anything possible to care for their families. "Being a pilot is a pretty rewarding accomplishment by itself, but putting the flying skills to use helping others get medical care for themselves or their children, is the ultimate and most compassionate thing we, as pilots, can do."

Thank you Scott Kendall for all that you do to make a difference in our community and for being a True Angel Among Us! We salute you!

If you would like to become an Everyday Angel like Scott, or support the efforts of our mission, please visit the Angel Flight website at www.angelflight-ga.org, call 770-452-7958 or visit the office at Dekalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK). We are always accepting new members because our community can't ever have too many angels!

ePowering the Georgia Aviation Community

AvNews

AvServices

AvLinks

Airport Features

Georgia Aviation History

If it's
Georgia
Aviation
It's Here!

Georgiawings



Georgiawings.com

The Premier Website for Georgia Aviation

AnNews - Up Close and Personal with Georgia Aviation News

AvServices - Links to Aviation Services Statewide

Georgia Airports - Fast Facts and a Monthly Airport Feature

AvLinks - Gateways to Aviation Websites Everywhere

Way Back When - A Look at the Rich History of Georgia Aviation