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# Student brings Angel Flight Soars program to Alabama

by [Brittney Knox](http://www.cw.ua.edu/2010/10/20/student-brings-angel-flight-soars-program-to-alabama/)<http://www.cw.ua.edu/2010/10/20/student-brings-angel-flight-soars-program-to-alabama/>

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Angel Flight Soars leaders, including UA junior A. J. Ramey, cut the ribbon for Angel Flight's Tuscaloosa office. / Submitted photo

A.J. Ramey, a junior majoring in political science and business, brought the Angel Flight Soars program, based out of Atlanta, to Alabama this past June.

The program is intended to provide transportation to medical patients whose needs cannot be met in their own areas.

“There are volunteer pilots that go on family re-uniting missions, or transport patients that may have leukemia,” he said. “Most recently, we transported a patient that was receiving treatment at [Druid City Hospital] from Gulfport, Mississippi.”

Ramey is a transfer student from Georgia State University and attended a flight academy before he began work on his degree. It was at the flight academy where he met some of the other volunteer pilots and made the connections that led him to the Georgia-based Angel Flight Soars program.

“I have always had an interest in being a pilot, and I found out about the opportunity to bring Angel Flight to Alabama in December 2009,” he said.

He said that, after he found out about the opportunity and the huge need for flight services here, he received notification that he got the position, and their office was built and fully functioning in Tuscaloosa by June 2010.

Ramey is a full-time student as well as the Alabama branch director for Angel Flight, so he said any volunteer help he receives with Angel Flight is greatly appreciated.

Ramey said students who volunteer have the opportunity to learn more about grant writing, help with administrative work and aid in pilot recruitment.

“We are very excited to announce that our first branch office in Alabama will be in Tuscaloosa,” Jeanine Chambers Biron, executive director of Angel Flight, said in a press release. “And spearheading the efforts will be longtime Angel Flight pilot Sonny Deason and Branch Director Art Ramey.”

“We know their dedication to our mission will help us connect to even more people who need our services throughout the state of Alabama and beyond,” Biron said.

“There is a lot of work to be done with Angel Flight; right now, I make in-house medical facility visits to let doctors know about our philanthropy,” Ramey said.

Richard Pratt, a volunteer pilot, said he just started working with Angel Flight and he really enjoys doing the work.

“I like to have the ability to help people out, and Angel Flight is a great organization,” he said.

Ramey said that some nursing students in particular would greatly benefit from working with this program because of all the networking opportunities available.

“We make some in-house medical visits and nursing students would have the ability to meet people and make contacts,” he said. “Also, since we are working with the medical field, this experience would be great for a resume.”

Ramey is an associate member of Lambda Chi Alpha, a fraternity on campus that supports Angel Flight as philanthropy. They are currently planning a fundraising event for in late November.

“When we brought Angel Flight here to Alabama, we were really glad to have great community support behind us,” he said.

“I am very glad to be able to mix all the things I love in my involvement with the organization,” he said. “I get to do business, help people, and I get to fly.”