



Greg Poe's Elevate Your Life Program

The Ryan J. Poe Foundation's mission is to "Utilize aviation to provide a path for young people to realize their dreams". Greg Poe found early on that focus and dedication to a passion could yield incredible results, and we now share that message with America's youth.

Greg Poe was one of the nation's premiere airshow performers, thrilling millions with his original, exciting maneuvers in some of the world's most exotic aerobatic aircraft. He began the Elevate Your Life program after losing his son to heroin addiction in 2002. After Ryan's death, Poe realized that it was the distraction, not the drugs that took his son, so he took his own story of success through focus and determination, crafted it into a dynamic, multimedia thrill ride for children and parents, and began delivering his presentation at schools around the country in conjunction with his airshow appearances. His message of focusing on your dreams and shunning distraction has been a tremendous success, and since its inception in 2004, the program has reached in excess of 50,000 young people.

After Greg Poe's passing in 2011, the torch passed to his airshow announcer and close friend, Dax Wanless. A champion bodybuilder and former Mr. Wisconsin, Dax now tells his own motivational story of how a young boy from a small town overcame many challenges to realize his dreams of becoming an international competition bodybuilder. He used his formula of success to follow another passion: aviation. It was through realizing this dream that he met Greg Poe, and soon the two became great friends.

The goal of Elevate Your Life is to empower today's young people to rise above the distractions of drugs and other dangerous activities and realize that they have the ability to soar in any direction they choose. It is ***not*** a preachy "Don't Do Drugs" seminar, rather it is a fun, motivational experience designed to light the fires of ambition.

The program gives children of all ages something to take away... smiles, laughter, hope, some of life's stark realities and a lot of encouragement. Dax inspires his audiences to find something they love, to allow themselves to dream, to set goals, open up their hearts and to reach for the sky.

It is a wonderfully synergetic program for young people, teachers, parents, and the media. Most events include essay contests and aerobatic plane rides for several children, and the program also includes fundraising opportunities for the school or organization. There are also several "Pay it Forward" opportunities that our organization supports that schools get involved with.

The following pages will give you an overview of the different elements of Elevate Your Life, and the support materials needed for a successful event. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or special requests. We look forward to coming to your community!

Blue Skies,

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Before the Event

Several weeks out, one of our representatives will coordinate a fundraiser with your organization. The goal is to not only support the cost of the presentation and flight activity, but to also give your organization a fantastic tool to raise funds for your own use! We will provide all the information you need to hold a raffle, with students, teachers, and other participants selling tickets for several chances to ride with Dax Wanless in his unlimited aerobatic Elevate MX2 airplane! Tickets are \$20 apiece, and the top 4 participants who sell over 25 tickets will automatically win a ride for themselves! The next 4 runners up will earn a ride in our chase plane. The proceeds will be divided up, with 60% going to the Ryan J. Poe Foundation, and the remainder for your organization to use as you see fit!

The Essay Contest and Rides

At most events, we will incorporate an essay contest for the students, with first and second place winning rides with Dax Wanless and his team in our airshow aircraft and support plane. They will fly with the winners of the fundraiser on the same day. Participation is strictly voluntary, and we respect the limitations many schools may have about endorsing or participating in activities such as these. We have the means to conduct these essays and flights while adhering to any policy. Our effort is to encourage and motivate the students to focus on what their dreams are, and see that even a simple attention to that dream can have an immediate reward.



The Essay

Simply titled "Elevate Your Life", the essay is a free-form, 250-750 word answer to three questions:

1. What is your dream?
2. How will you achieve it?
3. What will you do with it once you have attained it?

The essays are typically judged by the teachers, with instruction being given to look for the overall character and creativity of the student. In certain cases and were appropriate, the essays can be collected and sent to Elevate Your Life staff for judging. We prefer to keep this learning and instruction environment with the teachers, however, and allow the contest to supplement their efforts as a teaching aid whenever possible.



The Rides

The winning students will be given a time and location at a local airport to arrive and take the flight. There is a waiver / permission form that is necessary to be filled out prior to the flight which will be provided well in advance. Our staff is available for any questions or discussion from parents prior to any flight.



We want this to be a fun, exciting experience for the whole family! Winners are encouraged to bring family and friends out for the flights. They will typically be in the early morning or afternoons so as not to interfere with school time.



First place will ride with Dax in our two-place show plane, second place will be in the photo / chase plane, our A-36 Bonanza, which flies alongside in tight formation. Both are specially equipped to safely carry out these rides, and have full time maintenance personnel seeing to their airworthiness. The students will receive t-shirts, autographs, and an online video record of the flight. In most cases the video link will be sent to the students in the weeks after the flight to allow time for editing and to insert images from the whole experience.



Local media reps are always invited out and encouraged to ride along, so the winners may find themselves in the news and on TV! These events are great news and almost always generate large community interest. Riders should dress seasonably in comfortable, casual clothes. Girls should wear their hair up.

All participants (and family spectators) should come prepared to adhere to airport security measures. Most of the locations we operate from are very cooperative and have a relaxed environment, but there may be some restrictions on ramp access and proximity to

the aircraft that need to be observed for safety and compliance with FAA regulations. In most cases (all so far, in fact) there have been no security screens or other items related to commercial travel, however be prepared to comply with local staff and security instructions while on the airport. The ride in the two place aircraft is basically a do-it-yourself roller coaster! The winning essay writer and ticket sellers will get to call the shots, with Dax expertly giving them a comfortable, yet memorable experience. If the world of upside-down is what they want, they can have their fill, but if gentle turns and scenery are enough, then they can get a great ride that way as well.





The ride in the A-36 is completely different and equally exciting. The second place winner will ride either in the back with our photographer and the media safety harnessed in next to the open door of the aircraft! If the open door is a bit much, they can ride up front as copilot in the right seat of the cockpit in the expert hands of our chase pilot.

The Presentation

Our primary goal is to speak to as many children as possible in a dedicated venue, such as an auditorium. Middle School age (6th-8th grade) is the target audience. It takes about an hour, and starts with a high-energy video starring Dax and a couple of surprise guests – kids from the audience! Dax then tells a very entertaining, media-accompanied account of how he became a champion bodybuilder and pilot through hard work and dedication to his dream. He then spends a few minutes describing Greg Poe's life and accomplishments with the same formula. At the height of the presentation, Dax then tells the story of how Greg's son, Ryan had similar dreams, was on the same path, and got derailed by drugs, which ultimately cost him his life.

He closes with a question and answer session, and if time and circumstances allow, he will remain for autographs as long as it accommodates the school's schedule. It is basically a normal assembly on the school's part for about an hour total.



Presentation Support Materials

- Dedicated area (auditorium, gym, etc, preferably with lighting control)
- A projector
- Screen
- Sound system
- Microphone for Dax (wireless if available)
- Input to the sound system from our laptop for the video element of our presentation

Ideally, we would like about 30 minutes prior to the presentation to set up and do a sound check before the students are allowed into the presentation area.