



# LIFELINE PILOTS

*the shortest distance between home and hope*

2020 ANNUAL REPORT (July 2020-June 2021)



## OUR MISSION

To facilitate free air transportation through volunteer pilots for financially distressed passengers with medical and humanitarian needs.



## OUR HISTORY

LifeLine Pilots was founded in 1981 by Wanda Whitsitt of Champaign, IL. LifeLine Pilots began as a small group of pilots in Illinois who envisioned using their special skill of flying to help people with emergencies reach medical centers. With only 40 pilots, all activity was limited to departing or arriving within the state.

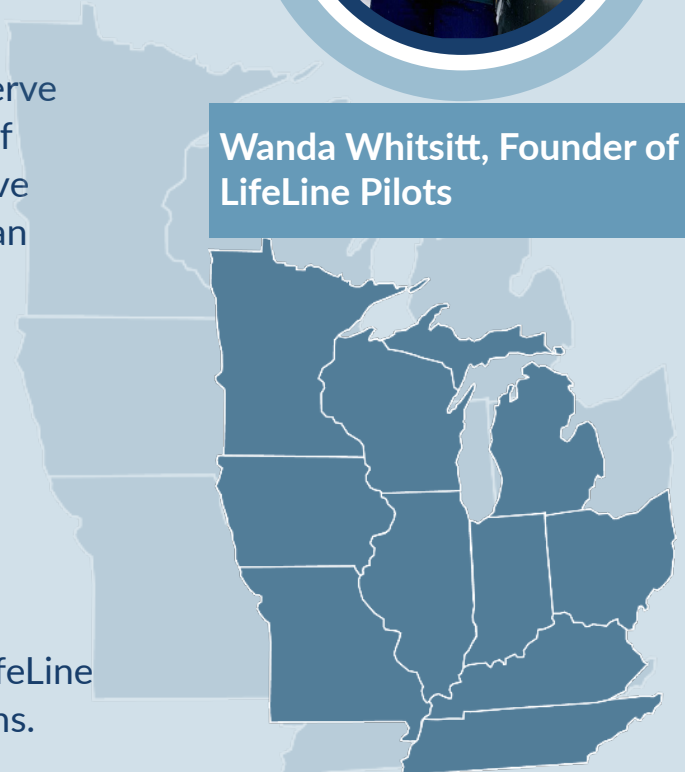
Forty years later, LifeLine Pilots continues to serve passengers in need. Thanks to the generosity of donors and almost 300 volunteer pilots, we have flown more than 6.1 million miles and more than 9,000 missions.



Wanda Whitsitt, Founder of LifeLine Pilots

## OUR IMPACT

We serve 10 states in the Midwest including: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. For distances outside our region, LifeLine Pilots links to other volunteer pilot organizations.



# VOLUNTEER PILOTS GIVE HOPE

Every flight is important. Every volunteer is vital. Every passenger deserves the safest journey with LifeLine Pilots. We have weathered the COVID-19 storm and, with the help of volunteers and donors, LifeLine Pilots continues to help the most vulnerable today and for many more tomorrows.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an increased need for our services. This past year LifeLine Pilots has had a 78% increase in flights flown over the same time last year and our volunteer pilots donated almost \$1 million in flight costs. This important work could not happen without the volunteer pilots who answer the call daily to serve others.

Our pilots are as diverse as our passengers. Some pilots own their planes while others rent aircraft to fly passengers; some are retired while others schedule flights around work schedules. Our pilots fly airplanes as different and unique as they are.

The time in the air between passenger and pilot is a gift to both. The passengers have a brief time in the air, distracted from medical appointments and fear of diagnosis or disease progression. The pilots get to do what they love while meeting new people, learning about their medical journeys, and providing a service very few people can do. Our pilots truly are *the shortest distance between home and hope*.

## OUR SUPPORT

### Revenue

Donated Aircraft &  
Pilot Services **73%**

Grants **9%**

Private Donations **4%**

Other Income **13%**

TOTAL 2020 REVENUE:

**\$1,373,404**

### Expenses

Program Services **94%**

Fundraising **4%**

Management & General **2%**

TOTAL 2020 EXPENSES:

**\$1,226,493**



## OUR NUMBERS

**40**

years of service

**10**

states we serve

**9,026**

flights since 1981

**606**

missions scheduled  
in 2020

**273**

volunteer pilots

**\$951,936**

pilot in-kind  
donations

**6,121,133**

miles flown since 1981

Giving away a free service ought to be easy, but at LifeLine Pilots, we know that's not true. Our greatest challenge is becoming well-known. LifeLine Pilots has an extremely small team, with only three staff members, but we cover more than 500,000 square miles with a population of more than 70 million people.

As we celebrate our 40th anniversary and look toward the future, we are actively working to exponentially increase our outreach. We believe that everyone, regardless of location or income, should have equal access to health care. But not all care is close to home and not all incomes are equal. There are 3.6 million people in the United States who do not receive medical care because of transportation barriers. Our goal is to serve more people. Our capacity to help people in need continues to grow with every pilot who volunteers to fly for LifeLine Pilots.

Wanda has so much to teach us about using your skill to help others. As a pilot, she not only looked for a way to help others, she started a movement. Her perseverance is why LifeLine Pilots continues its mission today and why there are so many volunteer pilot organizations throughout the United States. I feel honored to carry on her legacy and work every day to make her proud of the work we do. The world is a better place because of people like our volunteer pilots and because of people like Wanda, whose passion, vision, and tenacity will help LifeLine Pilots outlive us all.



**-Lindsey Kerr, LifeLine Pilots  
Executive Director**



**Passengers.**



**Supporters.**



**Pilots.**

Forty years is a long time for a business to exist. In fact, just 11.9% of businesses exist after 26 years. Wanda Whitsitt started LifeLine pilots 40 years ago with a vision to freely help everyone in need using her newly acquired skill as a pilot and passion for flying.

Throughout the years, the LifeLine Pilots staff has always been a small team. While the number of staff, pilots, and volunteers within LifeLine Pilots has ebbed and flowed over the years, the passion to help others has never waned. Every day, we chip away at reaching over 70 million people to provide a much-needed service. Every day, we strive to do better than the day before; to reach more people than we previous had and get them to the care they need. Every day, we do meaningful work that has a profound positive effect on someone's life.

Determination and perseverance to make a difference drives the success and longevity of LifeLine Pilots. The past year has been incredibly difficult, and it has taught us a lot. We hunkered down, reevaluated processes and procedures, and reconfirmed through an outstanding year of helping others that there is an absolute need for what we do. We served our community for 40 years and look forward to decades more with the help and support of our pilots, staff, and volunteers!



**-Bryon Griffin,  
LifeLine Pilots Chairman**

**Board of Directors**  
Wanda Whitsitt, IL (Founder)  
Bryon Griffin, IL (Chairman)  
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Anaise Berry, IL  
Crystal Garrett, IL  
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## Stories From Our Passengers



Flights with LifeLine Pilots happen throughout our 10-state region...even a stone's throw from the Canadian border! Eighty-year-old passenger Bill needed to travel over 900 miles for cancer treatment at Philadelphia's Cancer Treatment Centers of America. His limited resources made it difficult to get to the treatment he needed. Bill is legally deaf, so Gary, a volunteer caregiver, went on the trip to aid in his travel and listen to the doctors.

Gary wrote to us after the trip saying "These pilots didn't know us and they were not compensated by anyone. They did this out of the kindness of their hearts because there were people in need."

"Even if through all the therapies he does not live, he still had the hours of pure happiness as a 3-year-old on his private plane, among the fluffy white clouds, where cancer couldn't touch him."

- Sarah, Aiden's Mom



For more stories and information, visit [Lifeline Pilots.org](https://LifelinePilots.org)