



LIFELINE PILOTS
the shortest distance between home and hope

2025 Impact Report

Fiscal Year 2025
July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026





Karen is battling cancer a third time.

In a quiet town along the shores of Lake Michigan lives Karen, a mother, retired educator, artist, former agent in the United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and LifeLine Pilots passenger. Karen has already faced breast cancer twice. Twice, she endured treatment. Twice, she achieved remission.

Between treatments, she filled her life with service and purpose — leading an art museum, serving as a County Commissioner, and bringing smiles to local senior citizens with her emotional support rescue dog, Blossom.

Then, her cancer returned a third time.

Karen knew something was wrong and sought a diagnosis, but in her small town — a healthcare desert — she had to wait more than a week for an appointment. In that short amount of time, her cancer grew rapidly and became inoperable. Nevertheless, Karen was determined to beat cancer again.

This time, however, getting to treatment would be part of the battle.

Mission

To coordinate free air transportation, through volunteer pilots, for passengers with medical or humanitarian needs far from home.

Vision

A world where every person has equal access to transportation for healthcare and humanitarian needs.



10-state service region



Miles Creating Barriers

Karen's story is not an isolated instance of cancer returning, but it does illustrate the challenges that arise when treatment is far from home.

For many people who reach remission, the possibility of recurrence means the fight isn't over. And for those living in remote areas, that fight can come with another burden: the cost and complexity of getting to care.

Transportation, lodging, time away from work, and childcare can turn a treatment plan into a financial and logistical crisis.

National health surveys have found that people with cancer are disproportionately affected by transportation barriers. That's why when cancer returns, access to treatment can make all the difference for patients like Karen.

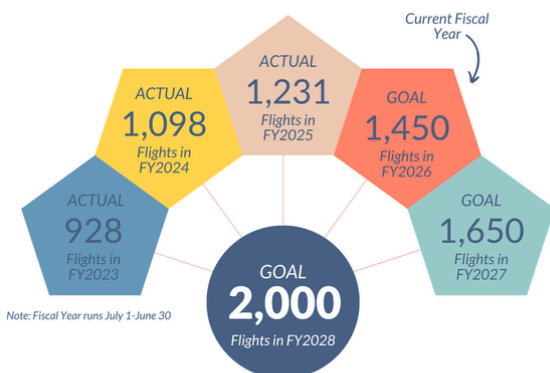
For Karen, the specialized cancer care she needed at City of Hope in Zion, Illinois, was far from home. The miles between her small town and the treatment that could give her hope created both geographic and financial barriers. Karen needed another way to reach treatment, one that was safe, affordable, and reliable.



"After the first couple of times I flew and the flights cost more than \$1,000, I knew I couldn't do it anymore."

Flights of Hope

Strategic Goals 2023-2028



In 2022, LifeLine Pilots launched a strategic plan to meet growing demand for our services and expand our impact.

The plan guides our mission-driven growth, helping us safely and sustainably scale to 2,000 annual flights by 2028, broaden outreach and fundraising efforts, strengthen our volunteer pilot network, and invest in staff and board leadership.



Karen's Flights to Hope

Accessing critical treatment is often more than a one-time occurrence; for Karen, it has meant traveling thousands of miles.

12,431
miles traveled

22
command pilots

46
flights to care



Then, almost by chance, Karen remembered seeing information about compassion flights at an airport where she and her son had once explored a vocational program. It was the kind of memory a mother would hold onto — a place connected to her son's growth and the everyday life she was fighting so hard to keep.

She started making calls. She searched online.

And then, she found LifeLine Pilots.



Karen's first flight was in April 2025. One flight became another, and then another, and now Karen flies to treatment every three weeks. Altogether, she has flown more than 40 times with LifeLine Pilots... more than 40 journeys that have helped bridge the distance between her home and the care she needs.

Those flights represent more than miles traveled; they represent the possibility of returning to the life Karen is fighting for: walking Blossom along the lakeshore, biking to her favorite coffee shop, and playing dominoes with her neighbors.

Every flight carries Karen toward treatment — and toward home, hope, and the future she wants to live.



The Power of Volunteer Pilots

Volunteer Pilot John Olson

For 22 years, John has shared more than his love of flying with LifeLine Pilots' passengers — he has shared hope, comfort, and the promise of getting one step closer to healing. Since joining us, John has flown 12,244 miles. He flies a Cessna 421, a small, private jet that offers passengers a fast and comfortable experience.

Based in Northern Illinois, he often flies patients to City of Hope Cancer Center. One of those flights was with Karen, who became more than a mission. John and his wife formed a friendship with Karen, and they are now deeply invested in her journey.

John says he has been fortunate to pursue his passion for aviation. Through LifeLine Pilots, he has found a way to give that passion back — one flight, one patient, and one act of kindness at a time. His many years of service and thousands of donated miles reflect the impact one pilot can make.



Last Year



1,231
flights flown



318
passengers served

Lifetime
Impact



6.3M
miles traveled



\$22.5M
pilot in-kind donations



Volunteer Pilot Chris Fillar

Chris is a founding member of Wings4Vets, which partners with LifeLine Pilots to connect veterans with medical care. Together, we have flown veterans thousands of miles — helping them take the next step toward healing, stability, and fuller lives after service.

This partnership has allowed both of our organizations to serve more people than we could alone, extending compassion farther than we once imagined possible. Chris and the pilots of Wings4Vets are grateful to know that, through this strong partnership, they are helping more veterans get access to critical medical care.



Every Mile Matters

There is no limit to the number of flights a passenger can fly with LifeLine Pilots. As long as Karen needs us, we will continue flying her to care.

And Karen is one of many.

Across our ten-state region, 318 passengers relied on LifeLine Pilots to fly 1,231 flights to care last year. For every passenger, there is a story behind the flight. A diagnosis. A treatment plan. A family waiting and hoping. A future that depends, in part, on being able to get through the door at a specialized medical center.



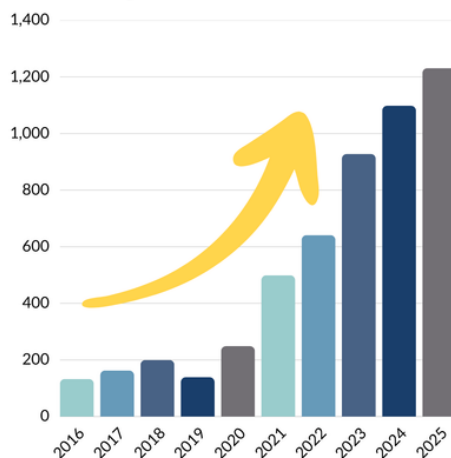
***“They take away so much stress.
And when you take away stress, you can heal.”***

Access to transportation means one less impossible decision for a patient already carrying so much. It means a safe journey instead of an unaffordable ticket, and a kind pilot instead of an empty passenger seat.

Chances are, you have seen firsthand the impact of access, or the devastating consequences when critical care is out of reach. Luckily, your support has — and will continue to — help make sure distance never gets the final say in who gets access to care.

For many patients, getting to treatment is part of the fight. And many times, a flight is the shortest distance between home and hope.

Flights Flown 2016-2025



Your Support Expands Access to Care

LifeLine Pilots relies on donations, grants, and sponsorships to give hundreds of people access to care each year. Donations allow us to expand our programming across our ten-state region, at no cost to passengers.

With transportation barriers to medical care persisting, your support remains as important as ever.



You Make Hope Possible

Lindsey Kerr, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

We provide more than a seat on the plane. Every LifeLine Pilots flight provides access to care, hope for healing, financial relief, and support during one of the most challenging times in a person's life.

"The shortest distance between home and hope," isn't just our tag line; it is what we work towards every day. Every supporter, donor, and volunteer pilot has a hand in providing hope for passengers who fly with LifeLine Pilots.

The person who shares a social media post helps others discover our unique service. The donor who makes a gift helps fund flight coordination for a passenger in need. And the volunteer pilot who picks up a flight is giving so much more than they could ever imagine.

On behalf of LifeLine Pilots, I thank each of these supporters for helping passengers find and use LifeLine Pilots. Whether we help someone fly once for a second opinion, a few times a year for follow-up care, or every week for cancer treatment, it's about removing barriers, connecting passengers to care, and providing hope for a healthier tomorrow.

Every supporter of LifeLine Pilots has a hand in being, "the shortest distance between home and hope." Thank you for partnering with us to help people in their time of need.

With heartfelt gratitude,




Turning Generosity into Access

Based on audited financials

Donated Pilot & Aircraft
Services 79%

Individual Donations 11%

Grants 10%

Revenue
\$3,062,784

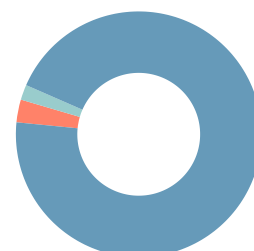


Program Services 95%

Management & General 2%

Fundraising 3%

Expenses
\$3,200,783



Keep Hope Flying

Help Someone Get Where Care Is Waiting



Be part of LifeLine Pilots' life-saving work today by making a donation at LifeLinePilots.org/Donate or scanning the QR code below.



Remembering Our Founder

Wanda Whitsitt

December 13, 1931 - June 4, 2023

Founded in 1981 by Wanda Whitsitt, LifeLine Pilots began as a small group of volunteer pilots to help others access necessary medical care.

"Pilots have a special skill, and my hope is that they will use this skill outside the limits of their life and make a difference in somebody else's life."



LifeLinePilots

LifeLinePilotsUSA

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