



Powder Puff Pilot Press Release

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For immediate release

## **Women's Air Race Draws Local Pilots** ***Denver Start Marks 80<sup>th</sup> Year of Women's Air Racing***

June 11, 2009, Aurora, Colorado – A couple of Denver-area pilots are preparing to compete in their first air race as the 2009 women's transcontinental Air Race Classic comes to Denver. Marijke (*Mar-aye-ka*) Unger of Longmont and Kara Pruitt of Broomfield will taxi up to the hold line at Centennial Airport on June 23 for this year's competition, which marks the 80th anniversary of women's air racing. The two will compete in Unger's 1976 Bellanca Citabria—a two-seat, aerobatic, fabric-covered aircraft with a 150-hp engine. They'll join 33 other teams scheduled to fly the 2715-mile route over 4 days, with Atlantic, Iowa as their final destination.

Unger is looking forward to a great experience in terms of flying and mingling with other racers, but stressed, "I was looking for something that would live on after I've crossed the finish line, something that would have a long-term, beneficial impact." To that end, she has transformed the competition into a fundraising venture for Wings of Hope, an international organization dedicated to fighting poverty.

Wings of Hope, whose missions utilize volunteer pilots and flight nurses to provide air ambulance service in the U.S., as well as medical care and transportation to impoverished corners of the world, fulfilled the criteria that Unger insisted on for a charity to support. "I was looking for an organization that did solid, good work and had a connection to aviation. It also had to be international," said Unger, who was born in the U.S. of a Dutch father and Argentinean mother. She also sought an organization that allocates a large percentage of funds to programs, rather than administrative costs. Unger reported, "Wings of Hope is highly rated by Charity Navigator," which shows that 87% of their funds go to program expenses.

In addition to fighting poverty, Unger, who works for the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, and Pruitt, a fixed-wing instructor for Rotors of the Rockies in Broomfield, will also fly the race carbon-neutral. Partnering with TerraPass—a sponsor of clean energy and carbon-reduction projects that result in a verified, measurable reduction in carbon emissions—the flight team has already reduced their carbon dioxide emissions by 2 metric tons in 2009.

Unger and Pruitt will report their racing and fund-raising progress on their website [www.myfirstairrace.com](http://www.myfirstairrace.com). They are also soliciting donors to join their four-tiered sponsor list which includes: Platinum – Zelkova Brewing, USI, ADVrider.com, and Data Network Group; Gold – PE & KS Menchen; Silver - Lucile's Creole Café, Suits USA, IAC Chapter 12; and Bronze – RA Young, M Mantei, LD Felix & Olathe Spray Service, J Cain, J Stella, C Irvin, R & M James, Air West Flight Center, New Attitude Aerobatics, E Buckley, and Powder Puff Pilot.

Powder Puff Pilot was founded in 2008 by Sue Hughes of Aurora, Colorado. She has authored *This Day in Women's Aviation*, a page-a-day calendar, and a series of children's picture books featuring Claire Bear, a pink-clad aviatrix. Her first two titles, *The Pilot Alphabet* and *Claire Bear's First Solo*, are currently on sale with a third, *Claire Bear Explains... What Pilots Fly*, in development. She also writes a column, "Airlooms," soon to be published regularly in *Aviation for Women* magazine. For further information or to order Powder Puff Pilot products, visit [www.PowderPuffPilot.com](http://www.PowderPuffPilot.com) or call toll free at 888-801-6628.