Young Eagles Rally brings much to the community

We were pleased to see the local Young Eagles Rally program continue in Mount Vernon last Saturday, as more than 100 area children got the chance to take to the skies in a free airplane ride.

The day proved to be one of joy and discovery for these 118 kids as they paired up with professional pilots to ride in a plane, taking off from Mount Vernon Outland Airport. The program is organized by the airport's Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 1155 group in Mount Vernon. The rally was open to youth ages 8 to 17.

SENTINEL EDITORIAL

EAA Chapter 1155 typically hosts events like this twice a year, one in late May or early June and another one in the fall. The goal of the program is to expose youth to the joys of aviation and to hopefully spark within them an interest in aviation as a career or even just a hobby. We would definitely like to see this program continue because it provides local youth with a fun free activity that also has educational value, and there aren't a lot of opportunities like that available to kids in Jefferson County.

Maybe some of the kids who flew in an airplane Saturday will decide to become pilots later in life. One of the kids, 16-year-old Daniel Lovelock of St. Louis, called his flying experience "amazing" and "calming," and also said he's always wanted to get his pilot's license.

The local Young Eagles program is part of a larger national effort to introduce and inspire kids in the world of aviation. The national Young Eagles program was first launched in 1992 and since its inception, more than 2.3 million young people have enjoyed a free introductory flight. These flights are made possible through the generosity of EAA member volunteers and we commend them for providing this wonderful service to the community.

The local EAA Chapter 1155 in Mount Vernon is planning its next Young Eagles Rally for Oct. 12, weather permitting. We would encourage all young people in this region to get involved with the program as it could prove to be life-changing. 6/22/24