

CIVIL AIR PATROL

January-February 2008



# Volunteer

*Everyday Heroes of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary*



## Launching Dreams

National Program  
Nurtures  
Junior Cadets

### ■ FLAME TAMERS

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State Fight Wildfires

### ■ BRAVING THE COLD

U.S. Lawmakers Boost  
Alaska SAR Capabilities

# 3-2-1

# Lift Off!

Junior Cadet Program  
Poised to Elevate  
New Generation



A U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter flies overhead as part of the Junior Cadet Program liftoff celebration.

## *By Kimberly L. Wright*

In Boaz, Ala., a throng of children of all ages buzzed with anticipation at the biggest thing to hit this small northern Alabama town of more than 7,000 in a while — the liftoff celebration of the national Junior Cadet Program. The roar of an Army Black Hawk helicopter and the buzz of a CAP Cessna overhead, as well as the much quieter launch of student-propelled paper airplanes and boomerangs, added to the excitement.

The event was attended by the 2,500-strong student body of Boaz City Schools, proud parents and faculty and a host of local and national dignitaries.

In addition to Boaz, the program is being field-tested this year in public, private and parochial schools in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico as well as other selected schools in Alabama. Modeled after an extremely successful K-5 CAP School Enrichment Program at Creighton School in

Philadelphia, the Junior Cadet Program is now taught by some 300 teachers to 7,000 K-5 students. The curriculum emphasizes vital life skills — character education, academics with an aerospace emphasis, leadership opportunities and physical fitness.

"We view Boaz as a visionary community dedicated to addressing the workforce development needs for the future," said Susan Mallett, program manager for CAP's School Enrichment Program. "If the inner-city schools in Philadelphia and the rural schools in Boaz, Ala., can successfully integrate our Junior Cadet youth develop-

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During the playing of the Junior Cadet Program's theme song, "Boomerang" by Charlotte Ritchie, participants were allowed to throw boomerangs in support of the larger message — "Like the flight of the boomerang, the choices made today will come back to you tomorrow."



Photos by James F. Tyran, CAP National Headquarters

ment program into the school day, we feel any school or school system across America can glean the same benefits."

All those assembled in Boaz for the national Junior Cadet Liftoff Celebration had plenty of reason to celebrate.

Boaz was introduced to the Junior Cadet Program's predecessor — the middle and high school enrichment

of behavioral problems. With the addition of this Junior Cadet Program, the benefits will begin at earlier ages and will help build better youth for tomorrow."

The SEP also has expanded students' career horizons.

"These kids have never had the opportunity to be exposed to aviation the way they have since implementation of the CAP youth program," said Dr. Randall Haney, Boaz's assistant superintendent. "These young

people now have an expectation to be involved in the aerospace developments of the future."

Though in a rural setting, Boaz is actually only 50 miles south of two premier aviation and space facilities — Marshall Space Flight Center, one of NASA's largest and most diversified installations, and Redstone Arsenal, which has been the heartbeat of the Army's rocket and missile programs for more than 40 years. And, with a new helicopter plant



Showing off the banner for the Junior Cadet Program liftoff are, from left, first row, Cadet Airman 1st Class Katie Young; Maj. John Burgin; Cappy, the Junior Cadet Program mascot; CAP School Enrichment Program manager Susan Mallett; Cadet Airman Morgan Barefoot; and Honorary Junior Cadet poster student, Myia, who attends Head Elementary School in Montgomery, Ala. Back row, National Chief of Staff Col. Reggie Chitwood; Alabama Wing Commander Col. Michael Oakman; Southeast Region Commander Col. James Rushing; SEP National Director Col. Al Applebaum; Boaz City Schools Assistant Superintendent Dr. Randall Haney; and Jim Mallett, director of CAP National Headquarters' Educational Programs Directorate.

program — three years ago. That program has paid big dividends by teaching students valuable leadership, teamwork and work-study skills, and it has instilled in them the desire to set clear goals.

"The CAP SEP for America's middle and high schools is playing a major role in improving student opportunity and responsibility nationwide," said Col. Al Applebaum, SEP team leader. "Teachers report better attendance, better test scores and a lower incidence

nearing completion in neighboring Albertville, aviation may play an even larger role in north Alabama's future.

Cadet Staff Sgt. Adam Smith, 14, who credits the program with helping him learn teamwork and work-study habits, knows what he wants to do with his life. "I'm working to get my pilot's license when I turn 18, and I'm hoping to go to college at Auburn, get an electrical engineering degree and go to work in Huntsville (Ala.)," he said.

"I learned a lot about search and rescue, and I learned about aerospace education," said Cadet Staff Sgt. Ryan Erskine, 13, who has participated in the Boaz SEP since its inception. "I learned about leadership, and I learned a lot from other cadets. I loved going to the National Emergency Services Academy and the field-training exercise at Maxwell Air Force Base (site of CAP National Headquarters). I feel I've gained a lot from the program."

Sonya Erskine, Ryan's mother, said the program has prompted noticeable changes in her son: "He's more mature and respectful," she said. "He takes it real seriously. When he's in uniform, he's like a different person."

Sonya Erskine is proud Boaz is associated with the national launch of the Junior Cadet Program. "I tell everyone I work with they need to enroll in Boaz's CAP program," she said. "The support of the staff and faculty is immense."

Other field-testing sites across the nation have energized their schools with their own liftoff celebrations that featured airplane and helicopter flyovers; rocket and hot-air balloon launches; student essay, art and flight contests; and motivational speakers who lifted students' hopes and dreams.

Community support is helping ensure the program's success.

"It is anticipated that Air Force Association chapters across the nation will see the potential benefits of this program in their communities and will follow the Montgomery Chapter's efforts by providing similar partnerships for the future," said Tom Gwaltney, Montgomery (Ala.) Air Force Association Chapter president. The chapter currently sponsors five

Montgomery Junior Cadet programs.

Other supporters include inspirational singer Charlotte Ritchie, whose song "Boomerang" is the Junior Cadet Program theme song. Also, CAP's Drug Demand Reduction program has provided boomerangs and posters to enhance the message shared with all junior cadets: "Like the flight of the boomerang, the choices you make today will come back to you tomorrow. Make good choices for a healthy and drug-free lifestyle."

Fourth-grade student Dexton Lee Bowdoin of Kinston Elementary School in Coffee County, Ala., eloquently expressed the program's primary goal — to expose young people to aerospace careers for the future: "I've always wanted to be a baseball player but now I want to be a flier," he said. "Now I know what my dream is." ▲

## Junior Cadet School Enrichment Program

**Stats:** 20 schools, 300 teachers, 7,000 students

**Target group:** Kindergarten through fifth grade

**Began:** Field testing in fall 2007

**Focus:** Academics with an aerospace emphasis, character education, leadership, physical fitness and drug-free lifestyle.

**Curriculum:** Designed by educators, the program incorporates fun, hands-on activities with 24 national standards-based lesson plans per grade level, which are divided into six lessons for each topic — character education, leadership development, physical fitness and aerospace education. Each lesson is designed to fit in 30-minute blocks to supplement any area of the curriculum. A school or community service project option is also included.

**Theme song:** "Boomerang," by Charlotte Ritchie

**Message:** "Like the flight of the boomerang, the choices made today will come back to you tomorrow."

**Mascot:** Cappy the Eaglet

**Expected national launch:** Fall 2008, with availability to any elementary school.

## Middle and High School Enrichment Program

**Stats:** 69 schools, 265 teachers, 2,100 students

**Target group:** Sixth through 12th grade

**Began:** 1997

**Focus:** Aviation and space, leadership, physical fitness, citizenship, drug-free lifestyle

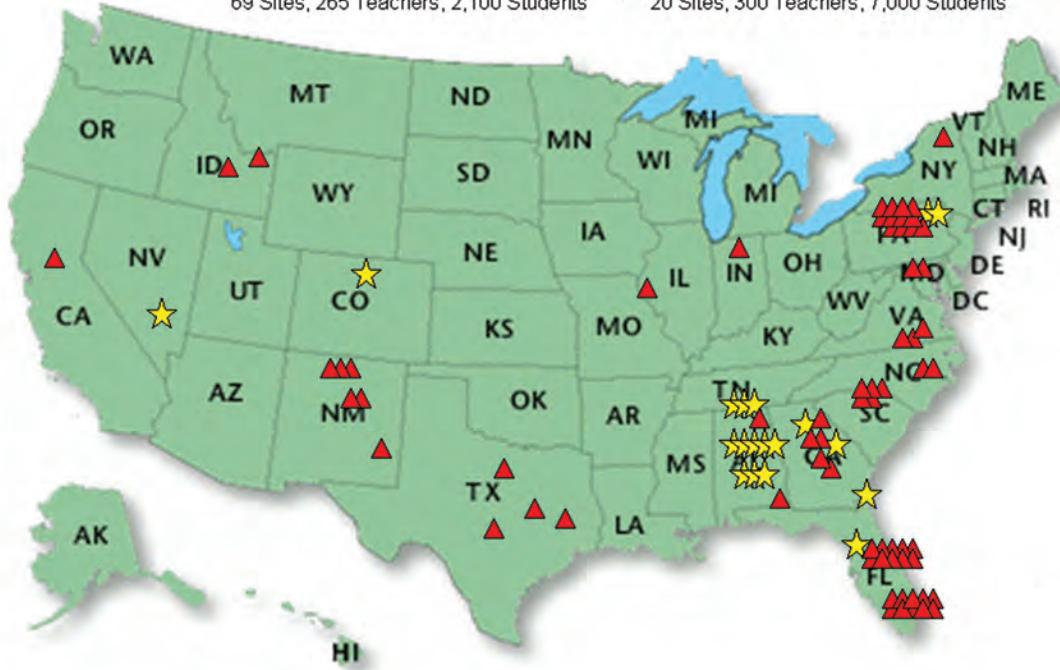
**Motto:** "Building a better tomorrow one student at a time"

**Mascot:** Cadet Ken

# Civil Air Patrol's School Enrichment Program

Current School Enrichment Program  
for Middle and High Schools  
69 Sites, 265 Teachers, 2,100 Students

Prototype SEP Jr. Cadet Program  
for Elementary Schools  
20 Sites, 300 Teachers, 7,000 Students



## How has the School Enrichment Program helped you?

*"It has helped me out academically. It has helped me to learn how to study better and get better test grades."*

— Cadet Staff Sgt. Adam Smith

*"I've had to really learn to pore myself over my work and strive to succeed. And that has helped me in a lot of these harder eighth-grade classes."*

— Cadet Senior Airman Sam Gore

*"It has really taught me to be open-minded toward other people's ideas and what they have to say. It really helped me learn to focus more and taught me humility."*

— Cadet Airman 1st Class Wade Benefield

## What are your goals?

*"I'm going to be an Air Force pilot, either Air Force or Navy, as long as I get to fly and do what I love. I hope I can either be a Blue Angel or a Thunderbird pilot. That would be the best thing ever, doing tricks in front of spectators and making them happy."*

— Cadet Staff Sgt. Ryan Erskine

*"I'm working to get my pilot's license when I turn 18 and I'm hoping to go to college at Auburn, get an electrical engineering degree and go to work in Huntsville."*

— Cadet Staff Sgt. Adam Smith

*"I really think I may make a career of the Air Force and serve our country. And then I actually plan on getting into architecture."*

— Cadet Senior Airman Sam Gore