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Pilots Inspire Girl Scouts To Fly

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IOWA CITY, IA (CBS 2/FOX 28)—A group of women that make up only six percent of their profession, made a special trip to Iowa City in hopes of inspiring young girls to help balance the numbers.

Pilots are overwhelmingly men but some women pilots in Iowa said they believe that can change. All they had to do is show young girls what a joy flying can be.

“We’ve been learning about planes and we’re going to go up in one,” Girl Scout Samantha Mostaert said.

For Girl Scouts, getting a chance to fly is something that the pilots who are taking them up hope will be a memory that’ll last a lifetime.

“We got up in the plane and helicopter and got to see how it looks like inside,” Girl Scout Ashley Zuber said.

These “Young Eagle Flyers” learned what pilots said in the cockpit, what it takes to fly and what a pilot’s preference on weather conditions is.

“They usually count on air and gravity,” Samantha said.

The pilots happily answered questions, “instead of the gas being store in the back of the plane it’s stored in the wing,” Ashely said she learned on Saturday.

The pilots said they hope the girls will continue to ask even more questions as they get ready to decide what they want to do when they grow up.

“Women in aviation are actually the most underrepresented group,” a pilot and Governor of Iowa 99’s Pilot Club, Minnetta Gardinier said.

So that’s the reason, different kinds of pilots from all over the state took time Saturday to land in Iowa City and take the girls for a ride.

“There’s more in life than being a princess and there are many opportunities for them. They can be a pilot,” private pilot Jeneanne Visser said. Visser said is also a member of Iowa 99’s Pilot Club.

The latest studies show the average woman still earns 22% less than a man and some of the highest paying careers include very few women.

“Just for them to see these opportunities that when they think about careers it’s something they can see them doing,” Gardinier said.

“It’s great to introduce the girls to the fact that aviation exists and that female pilots do exist its kind of fun for us. When I was a kid there weren’t any women pilots. I didn’t see any so that role model wasn’t there for me and that’s what we are trying to do today,” Visser said.

“There are a lot of things I want to be but pilot is now on my list I want to be one of them,” Samantha said.

The Experimental Aircraft Association and women from Iowa 99's Pilot Club offer free flights for girls between the ages of eight and 17 to promote more women in aviation.