

# UNCOMMON FRIENDS FOUNDATION SUMMER CAMP

## Community Based Life Skills Program

### Taking Flight with Dr. Clare Careers in Aviation



## THE PROGRAM

Time: 9:30 AM – 1 PM

Introductions: 10:10 AM – 11:00 AM

Panel Discussion: 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Lunch: 12 PM – 1 PM

Career Possibilities: 1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

## THE ADDRESS

Langford Kingston Home

2500 First St, Fort Myers, FL 33901

(239) 334-2550

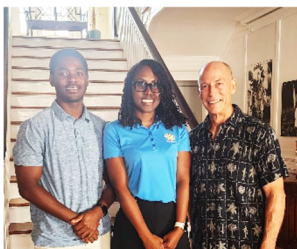
# Taking Flight with Dr. Clare Uncommon Friends Summer Camp Careers in Aviation Panel Discussion Community Based Youth Development Program

- ✦ Goal: to Teach, Expose, and Inspire future careers in aviation and other possibilities.
- ✦ Students ages: 12 years old through 16 years old participated in the “Taking Flight with Dr. Clare, Uncommon Friends Summer Camp”
- ✦ Where: Langford Kingston Home, 2500 First St, Fort Myers, FL 33901
- ✦ When: June 25, 2026, at 10:00 AM

Taking Flight with Dr. Clare, in partnership with the Uncommon Friends Summer Camp, intentionally selected a welcoming community-based location to introduce Lee County youth to the wide range of career pathways available within the aviation industry. The program created an engaging, structured, and supportive learning environment where future job seekers and career-minded students could explore opportunities beyond the familiar image of pilots and airplanes. Through guided discussion, direct interaction with aviation professionals, and exposure to real-world career stories, students gained a broader understanding of the aviation ecosystem, including technical, operational, engineering, safety, maintenance, aerospace, and leadership roles. This experience helped students see that aviation careers are accessible, diverse, and achievable with preparation, education, mentoring, and sustained encouragement.

The need for skilled aviation professionals is both urgent and growing. Across the industry, employers continue to report significant workforce shortages in high-demand specialties such as pilots, air traffic controllers, aviation maintenance inspectors, certified aircraft mechanics, avionics technicians, engineers, aerospace professionals, robotics specialists, and aviation operations personnel. These careers offer strong long-term employment prospects, competitive wages, opportunities for advancement, and meaningful pathways into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. By introducing students to these careers early, the program helps build awareness, confidence, and motivation among young people who may not otherwise see themselves represented in aviation or understand the steps required to enter the field.

This transformative event educated, informed, and inspired a diverse group of Lee County students by connecting them with aviation professionals, career information, training pathways, scholarship opportunities, and job-ready programs. The panel discussion provided a meaningful opportunity for students to ask questions, hear personal success stories, and learn how education, persistence, discipline, and mentorship can support their future goals. For many participants, the event opened new possibilities by revealing career options they may not have known existed. As a grant-supported youth development initiative, the program is designed to increase career awareness, strengthen student aspirations, expand access to aviation-related learning, and encourage students to pursue educational and workforce pathways that can lead to long-term self-sufficiency.



## Honored Panelists and Program Leadership:



The honored panelists included Michael Green, a Fort Myers Certified Private Pilot; Ravel Savage, an air traffic control director and professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; and Major Dan “Doc” Severson, a former Navy Top Gun pilot. Each panelist brought a unique professional background and personal story that helped students better understand the skills, training, discipline, and perseverance required to succeed in

aviation-related careers.

The program was led by Dr. Clare, CEO of the nonprofit Community Connection Services, whose work focuses on helping youth identify future career pathways while developing the life skills, confidence, and work-readiness competencies needed to succeed in school, employment, and community life. Under Dr. Clare's leadership, the program combined career exploration, positive youth development, mentoring, and practical exposure to workforce opportunities in a format that was both educational and motivating.

The Aviation Camp followed an action-oriented agenda designed to keep students actively engaged throughout the session. Students interacted directly with panelists, prepared written questions, participated in group discussion, and listened to presentations that connected personal experience with practical career guidance. The camp opened with a positive pep rally centered on the affirmation that students can accomplish meaningful goals when they work with focus, discipline, and determination. This opening activity helped establish a strong sense of team spirit, confidence, and enthusiasm. Ravel Savage then shared her career transition from schoolteacher to air traffic controller, a story that captured the students' attention and encouraged thoughtful questions about training, travel, salary, workplace responsibility, and the future of aviation. The discussion reinforced the value of providing young people with specific information about how to prepare for career areas of interest, including volunteering, job shadowing, community college programs, technical training, college majors, and mentorship opportunities.

Another student asked about the link between youth risky behavior and the family. Michael Green referred to his childhood and that young people growing up in a family with both a mother and father are less engaged in risky behavior and do better in school. However, Mr. Green shared his personal mistake that almost ruined his future. Mr. Green responded that it is important to look at how the family can be involved in youth development, no matter how it is composed. Mr. Green added that family structures are helpful, but it is up to the individual to do the disciplined work to become successful.



Major Dan "Doc" Severson shared his journey to becoming a Top Gun pilot and how he was told at an early age that he would never reach his dream. Dan made a connection between what is being learned in school and the tools they will need for success in the world of work. His exciting stories about flight while listening and responding to each student's question made each student remain riveted. The Speakers' personal stories of their own school and career challenges give students hope.

Students were also offered information about the EAA Young Eagles Program. EAA, an aviation program for young people, encourages students to learn more about flying.

Goals achieved in order of importance were:

1. Students realize that, when the mystery is removed, more careers become a real option.
2. STEM is not about what the smartest kids have access to but what the most motivated students can achieve. And for good reasons; it's fun.
3. The students were exposed to a roomful of successful people, who were also teenagers once, talking about subjects and careers, face to face, with great one-on-one interaction.
4. Interest in aviation is encouraged. Career paths are outlined.

# THE AVIATION CAREER SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Needed funds raised for these and other events through your sponsorship will support various aviation scholarship funds. These scholarships help keep aviation education within reach by providing financial support to students and aviation-related programs.

Scholarships are awarded to students currently enrolled in an accredited aviation program or those who are in an aviation-related program.

Our scholarship fund aids those students who may find it difficult to enter the aviation industry due to financial barriers. Many of these students have complex schedules and dynamic personal situations, yet they strive to continue their education, maintain a successful academic track record and advance their professional ambition.

Attendance at the EAA is a requirement to receive a scholarship, in addition to providing a unique networking opportunity.

## **Sponsorship Opportunities**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ambassador Elite Sponsor	\$50,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	VIP Sponsor	\$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Premium Sponsor	\$10,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business+ Sponsor	\$5,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Sponsor	\$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Economy Sponsor	\$300

