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**AVIATION ICON GEN. CHUCK YEAGER HELPS EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION
INTRODUCE ONE MILLION YOUNG EAGLES TO FLYING**

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**950,000 Children Flown Over Past 11 Years;
Gen. Yeager to Fly One Millionth on 100th Anniversary of Flight**

OSHKOSH, Wis. – (July 31, 2003) – The first man to fly faster than the speed of sound is about to break another record. **Gen. Chuck Yeager**, chairman of the Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) Young Eagles program today announced the organization has **introduced nearly 950,000 children** to the wonders of flight since the program began in 1992.

Thanks to the efforts of more than 34,000 EAA member-pilots like Gen. Yeager, the organization is on target to reach the one millionth Young Eagle flight near Kitty Hawk, N.C., on or before the 100th anniversary of flight on Dec. 17, 2003. As the chairman of EAA's Young Eagles, Gen. Yeager personally has flown more than 200 young people since he began flying with the Young Eagles' program in 1993.

In addition to becoming the first supersonic pilot, Gen. Yeager, who flew combat missions in World War II and the Vietnam War, holds numerous other aviation records and military honors. He has flown 201 different types of military aircraft and has more than 14,000 flying hours, with more than 13,000 of those in fighter aircraft.

"Nearly one million children have benefited from EAA's Young Eagles program," Gen. Yeager said. "The power of the program is its ability to connect with young people, educate and inspire them to discover more about aviation. Through EAA's leadership and the support of its members who implement this program around the world, we are ensuring that future generations of aviators can fulfill their dreams just like Orville and Wilbur Wright did 100 years ago."

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“The thousands of dedicated EAA members who have participated have enabled Young Eagles to reach this milestone,” said Tom Poberezny, EAA president. “Likewise, aviation icons, like Chuck Yeager, Gen. Joe Engel and the Tuskegee Airmen, and celebrities like Cliff Robertson and Harrison Ford have all shared their passion for flying with young people. Many former Young Eagles have gone on to pursue careers as pilots, air traffic controllers and aircraft mechanics or have returned to participate in the program as adult pilots.”

One such example is **Karrie Shank**, a 19-year-old instrument-rated pilot, who currently is studying aviation at Ohio University. Shank, who took her Young Eagles’ flight in May 2001, now is working to obtain her commercial pilots license and is volunteering during EAA AirVenture for Young Eagles.

“EAA’s Young Eagles program opened my eyes to flying,” said Shank. “After my first flight with Al Moyer, an EAA member, I was hooked. I hope to work in corporate aviation or with an airline one day. I’m also interested in learning aerobatics and would like to build my own airplane someday. Thanks to EAA and Young Eagles, I’ve still got the flying bug.”

“Success stories like Karrie’s are due in large part to EAA members like Al Moyer, (who has flown more than 330 Young Eagles)” Poberezny added. “Also, organizations like **Jaguar, (a division of Ford Motor Company)** have provided the **financial support** necessary for Young Eagles to continue its mission by reaching across all racial and socio-economical lines to offer a safe, fun and memorable first-flight experience. It’s a true team approach and combination of corporate and private resources that allows EAA to fulfill this youth educational mission.”

About EAA’s Countdown to Kitty Hawk Presented by Ford Motor Company

EAA’s Countdown to Kitty Hawk is a centennial celebration of the Wright brothers’ first powered flight — an innovation that forever changed our world. Led by EAA, presented by Ford Motor Company and supported by “Microsoft Flight Simulator” and Eclipse Aviation, this yearlong series of inspirational events honors the innovation and determination it takes to make world-changing dreams a reality. Countdown to Kitty Hawk features an interactive touring pavilion and the world’s most-accurate 1903 Wright Flyer reproduction that will exclusively re-enact the Wright brothers’ first flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C., on Dec. 17, 2003 — exactly 100 years later. www.countdowntokittyhawk.org

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