

Pilot Takes Off in Kid-Built Plane



Pilot Barrington Irving loves flying, so he started an organization called Experience Aviation to inspire kids to learn about aviation, math, and science. He also has a lot of faith in kids' abilities. To prove that, Irving told a group of 60 teens from Miami that if they built a plane, he would fly it.

The kids, who were part of an Experience Aviation summer program, had ten weeks to build a plane. None of them had any experience building planes. But they finished the plane, named *Inspiration II*, by the deadline. On October 15, 2008, the students and a crowd of others held their breath as Irving fired up the plane's engine. Then he soared into the sky. After about ten minutes, Irving landed the plane safely as people on the ground cheered. Some of the kids could hardly believe what they had done -- they had learned to measure and cut metal, drill holes, use a rivet gun, and work together to create an airplane that could really fly!

NEWS WORD BOX

aviation experience
organization inspiration
rivet supervise cockpit

Some people might think Irving was very brave to fly the plane. But Irving, 24, already had shown how brave he is. In 2007, he became the first black pilot and the youngest person (at age 23) to fly around the world by himself. It took him 96 days. Irving's plane was called *Inspiration* because he said he wants to inspire young people.

Irving grew up in a poor Miami neighborhood, where he didn't think he had much of a future. But when he was 15, he saw a 747 jet's cockpit and decided he wanted to be a pilot. He worked several jobs to pay for flying lessons. Irving enjoys aviation so much that he wants other young people to learn about aviation and follow their own dreams.

MORE FACTS ABOUT FLYING

- It usually takes more than a year to build a single-engine plane.
- Experienced aviation teachers supervised students as they built the plane.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Think of a person who has inspired you in the past.
Explain how that person was an inspiration to you.