

“Aviation Offers Something for Everyone”

Growing up in the small town of Gwinn on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Brandi Flinn was never interested in a desk job. Instead, she spent her free time fixing cars with her dad in their garage. She knew she wanted a career where she could work with tools.

At 15, Brandi flew in a two-seat helicopter at the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base air show in Michigan. Like so many others, one ride was all it took. After that first flight, she began to pursue a career in aviation.

“With my talent for working with tools and my passion for aviation, it was kind of a no-brainer,” Flinn says.

After high school, Flinn enrolled in the Aviation Maintenance Program at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, earning an associate’s degree in applied sciences in 2012. She was the first female president of the Aviation Maintenance Club and was named Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) Student of the Year for 2011–12.

Hoping to use the money for additional helicopter training, in 2015 Flinn applied for a Bill Sanderson Aviation Maintenance Technician Scholarship from Helicopter



HFI scholarship recipient Brandi Flinn is preparing for her position as the mechanic at Brainerd Helicopter Service, a Minnesota air charter operator.

Foundation International (HFI). The scholarship enabled her to pay for attending the Airbus AS350 B3 Airframe Field Maintenance Certification class.

Created to encourage the choice of

helicopter maintenance as a career, the Bill Sanderson AMT scholarship offers tuition grants for eight courses offered by airframe and powerplant manufacturers. The top student selected — in this case, Flinn — gets first choice of the offered courses; the second-place winner gets the next choice, and so on.

Flinn is currently working on her new-hire training at ABTEC Helicopters in St. Paul, Michigan, working with Bell 206 JetRanger and LongRanger aircraft as well as an Airbus AS350 AStar. After her training is complete, she will be the sole mechanic at Brainerd Helicopter Service, a Minnesota air-charter operator.

Flinn plans to continue to stay active in aviation and is pursuing her private pilot’s license. She is also looking forward to attending HAI HELI-EXPO 2016 in Louisville, Kentucky.

You Can Make a Difference: Support HFI DONATE AT HELICOPTERFOUNDATION.ORG

Founded in 1983, Helicopter Foundation International (HFI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping to educate future generations of helicopter professionals while preserving the rich heritage of vertical flight.

Giving to HFI is a tangible way to show your support for the helicopter industry and will help HFI offer scholarships and mentoring programs to pilot and maintenance students, as well as to document the helicopter industry’s founding pioneers.

Make a donation today at helicopterfoundation.org. Your gift to HFI is tax deductible as far as federal law permits, and HFI will ensure that all donors receive a receipt.

Questions? Contact Allison McKay, HFI vice president, at allison.mckay@rotor.org or 703-302-8476.



“Whether it’s a career or a secret passion, aviation is incredibly rewarding. There is such a wide variety of fields that aviation has to offer, with something for everyone,” Flinn says.

2017 HFI Scholarships

Each year, HFI offers as many as 19 scholarships for students pursuing careers as pilots or aviation maintenance technicians. If you or someone you know would qualify for an HFI scholarship, visit the HFI website at helicopterfoundation.org/scholarships to learn more or apply. Applications are accepted beginning June 2017. 

Allison McKay is vice president of Helicopter Foundation International.



Upcoming HFI Events

SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

All proceeds will fund scholarships for future pilots and mechanics

- ▶ Fuzzy Zoeller’s Covered Bridge Golf Club
Sellersburg, IN • Sun., Feb. 28
Check-in 10 AM
Shotgun start 12:00 PM
Register at rotor.org/golf

HERITAGE OF HELICOPTERS

Take a break from aviation’s latest on the HAI HELI-EXPO show floor and visit this display of vintage rotorcraft

- ▶ South Wing B Lobby, Kentucky Exposition Center
March 1–3

ONLINE SILENT AUCTION

Support HFI’s missions of preserving the past, ensuring the future

- ▶ Bid 24/7 at www.biddingforgood.com/HFI
Mon., Feb. 22, 12:00 PM EST
Thu., Mar. 3, 4:00 PM EST

MENTORING PANELS

Receive career insight from helicopter industry professionals

- Tue., Mar. 1
Kentucky Exposition Center
- ▶ Maintenance Tech Mentoring Panel, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM, B104
- ▶ Pilot Mentoring Panel, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM, W Hall 5 & 8
- ▶ Industry Outreach to Students, 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM, W Hall 5 & 8

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