

Maria Faith Weybrecht

A Profile



Maria Weybrecht is the founder and president of Kids in Flight, a non-profit organization that lets critically ill children and their families experience the joy of flight.

Weybrecht created Kids in Flight in 2003. Through the organization's annual "Wings of Wonder" event and Co-Pilot program, Weybrecht's team of volunteer pilots provide free airplane rides around Cleveland, Ohio. Over the years, Weybrecht has led the organization through several transformations with the ultimate goal of making Kids in Flight a national organization.

"In flight, objects below appear smaller," says Weybrecht. "For children fighting serious illnesses, the escape and excitement of flying can give them a new perspective on their struggles. Through Kids in Flight programs, children are encouraged to have a positive attitude and reach for their dreams."

The inspiration for the organization came after Weybrecht was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of cancer at the age of 19, just one month after obtaining her private pilot license. Weybrecht's dream since early childhood was to become a pilot, but since the diagnoses, she has not been able to pursue that goal. Kids in Flight has become her way of sharing the inspiration, joy and hope of flight with children and families who need it most while giving back to those who helped her along her road to recovery.

Weybrecht earned her Master's degree in business administration and a graduate certificate in non-profit management from Cleveland State University in 2007. In 2005 she was valedictorian and graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in journalism and promotional communication with an emphasis in public relations from CSU.

While at CSU, she co-founded and served as vice president for the Student Association for Professional Communication. She was also instrumental in the formation of the university's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter. She is a member of many professional organizations, including the Airplane Owner's and Pilot's Association, Ninety-Nines, Public Relations Society of America and Women in Aviation, International.

Weybrecht's notable achievements include being recognized as one of the Top 10 College Women in America by Glamour Magazine, one of Cleveland Magazine's Most Interesting People and one of Crain's Cleveland Business' Twenty in their 20s. She also received the Beauty of Giving Award presented by L'Oreal Paris, the Airbus Leadership Award, the Rainmaker of Tomorrow Scholar Award from Northern Ohio Live Magazine, the School of Communication Academic Excellence Award, and the Cleveland Rotary Award for Excellence in Community Service.

In addition to serving as president of Kids in Flight, Weybrecht is the marketing manager for Workflow.com, a leader in health information technology.

Weybrecht was born March 13, 1983 in Cleveland, Ohio.

* * *