



Transforming Lives in the Caribbean for Over 40 Years

ARTICLE & PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AGAPE FLIGHTS
VENICE GULF COAST LIVING MAGAZINE



Pilots Greg Hamon and Kenneth Gingerich pose for a Pie in the Sky promotional photo.

What do pizza, pie, and airplanes have in common? On Saturday, March 4, they'll all be in abundant supply at the Agape Flights open hangar event, "Pie in the Sky." The event is free and open to the public.

"Pie in the Sky is our way of making new friends and catching up with old friends we haven't seen in a while," says Agape Flights CEO Allen Speer. "And who doesn't like pizza, pie, and airplanes?"

Agape Flights recently marked its 42nd anniversary of providing weekly missionary supply flights to Haiti. The organization also provides cargo and mail service to missionaries in the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas—and provides emergency relief flights following disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. As regulations permit, Agape Flights makes humanitarian aid flights to Cuba as well.

This year's open hangar theme is "A Pilot's View." Visitors will have the opportunity to meet and interact with Agape's pilots and see



Agape volunteer pilot Doug Gruber is interviewed for "A Pilot's View." The video will debut at the organization's open hangar event March 4.



Pie in the Sky guests can sit in the captain's chair and 'fly' Agape Flights' Embraer 110 turboprop plane.



Hundreds of people enjoy free pizza and pie at Agape Flights' 2022 open hangar event.



Agape Flights CEO Allen Speer in Haiti.



March 29, 2022: Agape Flights' Navajo Chieftain aircraft is destroyed by rioters in Haiti.

the debut of Agape's new video production of the same name.

"Somebody took me for an airplane ride when I was five years old and I thought that was just the coolest thing," says Agape volunteer pilot Steve Koch. "I didn't care about driving cars when I was a kid," he adds. "All I wanted to do was fly airplanes." It's a common theme among Agape's pilots.

"Being a pilot is the only thing I've ever wanted to do," says Greg Haman, Agape Flights' chief pilot and director of aircraft operations. "Whether I was working on planes or flying them, it was always going to be aviation," Haman says of his career calling. In Haman's case, he does both things, wearing another hat as Agape Flights' director of maintenance.

That's the sort of all-in commitment that defines the Agape Flights culture.

"Agape is a Greek word meaning 'God's unconditional love,'" Allen Speer, a former pastor, explains. "It's the purest form of love—a love that expects absolutely nothing in return. And that's the love that we want to share with the people of the Caribbean."

2022 was a challenging year for the troubled nation of Haiti, with ongoing gang violence causing major disruptions to the fuel supply and impacting nearly every aspect of life on that island nation. The violence hit close to home on March 29 when one of Agape's two aircraft was commandeered by rioters and destroyed. Images of the burning aircraft were seen around the world.

How did Agape Flights respond? In love, of course. It's not just in its name; it's a part of its DNA.

"Let me show you something," Speer says. Reaching for his phone, he retrieves pictures of himself holding a newborn whose mother was helped by one of the missionaries served by Agape. "We *love* the people of Haiti."

Agape Flights relies on donations to cover its nearly \$2 million operating budget. "Aviation is expensive," Speers says, "but if you ask any missionary, they'll tell you it's priceless."

Interacting with donors is a big part of every year's Pie in the Sky open hangar, but Speer is quick to point out you don't have to be an Agape Flights supporter to attend. "We want everyone in the area to come by, enjoy a slice of pizza, a piece of pie, and get to know Agape Flights."

For more information about this advertorial, log on to AgapeFlights.com or call 941.488.0990. Located at 100 Airport Avenue E., Agape Flights is open for guests and interested volunteers 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

YOU'RE INVITED!
Saturday, March 4, 2023 11:30am-2pm
Pie in the Sky Open Hangar
A PILOT'S VIEW
Enjoy pizza pie, dessert pie & learn how & why we fly!
AGAPE FLIGHTS
100 AIRPORT AVE E., VENICE, FL 34285 | 941.488.0990 | AGAPEFLIGHTS.COM