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What Soaring Means to Me

Glider flying is one of the most extraordinary experiences a person can challenge themselves with. From walking out to the glider field for the first time, to being splashed with water after soloing, a tradition at my club, the journey to becoming a glider pilot is filled with a unique culture, strong community, and positive experiences that are unlike anything else. My personal experience has been a fantastic one. The great attention to details with instruction in ground school and applying skills in all of the facets of flying have been tremendous. This comes from the skilled pilots who obtain the desire, patience, and passion to share the wonder of Glider flying with their students. I've learned that Glider Flying has many incredible attributes with some of the best being strength in resilience, integrity, and focus. My instructor has taken much of his own time to educate with ground school and in my inflight Glider learning journey. I have learned so much from this type of dedicated mentorship. Glider flying is an unparalleled activity that I am so thankful to be a part of.

Although I have only been glider flying since 2022, the world of aviation has been a big part of my life for as far back as I can remember. My grandpa was a private pilot and a mechanic for TWA, and my mom, who knew the aviation industry was for her since she was young, became a flight attendant. These two people propelled my brother's interest in flying, as he is now graduated with a degree in aviation technology. The inspiration I feel from all these people is immense, and I hope that soon I can follow my brother's path by earning a degree in aviation.

I completed my goal of soloing in August of 2024. My goal this spring is to earn my private pilot license so I can introduce friends, family, and others to the unique experience of glider flying. Everyone should take part in soaring at least once in their life, and many would realize the activity is not as frightening as they may think. In 2024 I was awarded the SSA Discover Soaring Scholarship and in 2025 the Chicago Land Glider Council Youth Soaring Grant. I'm extremely grateful for the tremendous support. To have the opportunity to continue in this dream means so much. My brother and I are both pursuing aviation goals and this helps my family significantly by supporting the financial requirements.

Over the years I have contributed to the glider port by helping with many routine operations that ensure flying runs smoothly. I have assisted with wing running during launches, towing gliders back into position with the golf cart, logging flight times, performing careful preflight inspections, and helping with cleanup at the end of the day. I also carry myself with a positive attitude and confidence to tackle any problem at the field. Over the next year, plan to keep building and improving my knowledge of glider

procedures, welcoming and encouraging newcomers to learn about soaring, and lending a hand wherever needed during busy days. I would also like to help with field organization, equipment care, and maintaining a safe environment for everyone at the glider port.

In the future I see myself graduated from college, starting my aviation career, and still staying connected to the glider community. I hope to visit the glider port whenever I can, fly when possible, and continue to help out with operations when I'm there. I also strongly have it on my heart to encourage new students or visitors to give glider flying a try. I would not have found my love for flying without others encouraging and inspiring me, so I would like to do the same for others. Looking even farther into the future, I hope to be even more involved and able to give back to the soaring community in more ways. I'm interested in helping with youth programs, supporting scholarships, and assisting with glider maintenance or club operations so that future pilots can have the same opportunities I have had. The world of glider flying is truly incredible, and I’m so grateful to be a part of it.