

The Flight Program – who we are:

We are the Flight Program. We are a group of young men who made poor choices when we were younger and ended up getting sent to placement at the Diakon Wilderness Center. Most of us have been in and out of the system, placements, and detention centers. That was the past.

Today is the future. Today we are voluntarily participating in the Flight Program and we're taking new and challenging steps in our lives to change and become successful. We rely on one another for support. We attempt to do what is right, not what is easy. We now look towards the future and our goals instead of living "in the moment." We want the best that this world has to offer and we're now ready to go after



it—the honorable way. We are separating from our old friends—they don't know what to think of us anymore. Our families don't know us anymore... they're impressed. Our old teachers, probation officers, and everyone else in our communities that we struggled to understand will soon see that we're going to make it.

We now have positive dreams and goals. We believe in helping others along the path to success: as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. We are discovering and using the tools and resources in our communities to achieve our goals. We are breaking free from our comfort zones and Soaring to New Heights.

We sacrifice our weekends to be with our brothers. We let go of the old Friday night parties; now we spend that time helping each other and the community. We're not afraid to cry in front of each other. We're not afraid to ask for help. We dropped that front. Fridays and Saturdays are now about positive people, places, and things. We're on the move—in and out of state, going to new events, eating new foods, meeting new people, hiking new trails, and always... telling our story.

Soaring to New Heights!

Flight Program



SPRING 2015

Jesse's Reflections on the Flight Program's Visit to Haiti



Jesse K. holding a sleeping child in Petionville, Haiti.

"It's hard for me to put my experience in Haiti into words. It has affected me in a lot of ways. I think about the smiles on the kids' faces and the experiences I had there every single day. In fact, I know I will for months to come; I plan to save money so that I can go back and help out again.

Waking up every morning for work is easier now because I remember seeing the hard work that parents and kids have to go through in Haiti just to make it through each day. They have given me the motivation I need to move forward with my life. This trip has changed my life and I can't thank FGO, Diakon and everyone who helped make this trip possible for us.

(See more photos from Flights Haiti trip on page 2.)

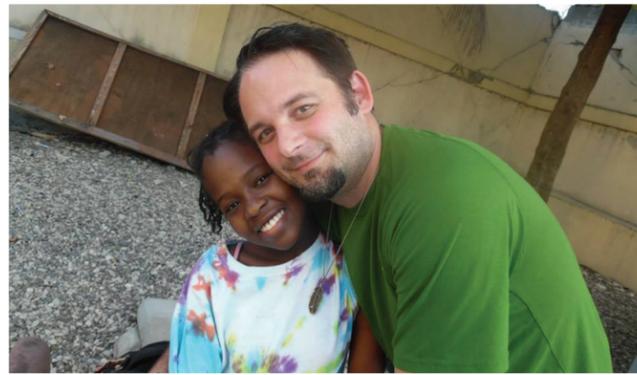


Flight Program Assistant Jon with Dofline in Jacmel, Haiti.



The Flight group in Jacmel, Haiti with several kids from the orphanage.

More Haiti Trip Photos...



Flight Program Manager Matt with Micheca in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



Keith and Fabiola in Jacmel, Haiti.



Mike L. with a little boy at the orphanage in Petionville, Haiti.

Foundations award more than \$50k in grants to The Diakon Wilderness Center's Flight Program

The Flight Program depends on grants and contributions to provide its mentoring and related services to at-risk young adults who have aged out of traditional county-funded programs. Important grantors to the Flight Program include the Julius & Kathryn Hommer Foundation (which for the period Nov. 1, 2014, through Oct. 31 of this year awarded a \$20,000 grant), the Donald B. & Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation, (a \$25,000 grant for 2015), and the Alexander Stewart, M.D. Foundation (a \$9,000 grant award for the period July 2014 through June 2015). We deeply appreciate the foundations' support, as we do all contributions to Flight and our youth programs.

THE FLIGHT PROGRAM is currently accepting applications. For more information, contact Matt Reichard at the Diakon Wilderness Center.

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"Interested in donating to Flight? Simply visit us on the web at:

<https://www.diakon.org/DonationForm.asp>, and select "Flight Program."

Jordan's Story

I grew up without a dad in a really tough neighborhood. My mom did a great job taking care of me, but there were too many negative influences in my neighborhood. I fell in with a bad crowd and got into some trouble. I ended up being put under house arrest, then in an after-school program, and finally the Weekend Alternative Program at the Diakon Wilderness Center.

When I finished the weekend program I decided I wanted to join Flight, hoping for help in finding a job. When I started with Flight I realized it was much more than a program to help me find a job. Flight members quickly became my family and supported me through everything in my life. They helped me stay out of trouble, gave me positive friends, helped me prioritize my life and showed me that I could be a good member of the community.

When my girlfriend and I faced her pregnancy, Flight didn't give up on me. They stood by my side and helped me to put my life together so that I could be a good dad. They encouraged me to do cyber-school so that I could be home and help take care of my daughter. They helped me learn the work ethic I need for my job. They taught me all about being a dad and how to be responsible for my family.

Today, I am up early every morning taking care of my daughter and doing my cyber-school. When my girlfriend gets home from work, I go to my job for five or six hours and come home late at night. I wake up the next day and do it all again. It isn't a perfect life and it isn't easy, but Flight taught me that we have to take responsibility for our actions and, sometimes, that makes our lives hard.



Jordan with daughter Niya.

Without Flight, I do not think I would be the person I am today; a teenage father who is doing the right thing, working hard and taking care of my daughter.

