

Organizational Goals:

Successful Attitude and Aviation Camps of the Carolinas Inc.

Background: Brenda E Robinson is the First African American Female Navy Pilot. A 43-year aviation veteran whose list of accomplishments includes Navy carrier pilot, Lieutenant Commander, airline pilot, motivational speaker, diversity trainer for businesses and organizations, and currently a flight instructor for advanced twin engine pilots, she works with students to instill self-confidence, goal achievement, and leadership qualities. She also promotes STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) programs while supporting the theory, “Career success is achievable by every student regardless of circumstances.”

Brenda went on to fly 12 unique airplanes in her overlapping 40-year career. Retired from the Navy in 2001 and retired from American Airlines in 2008, she devotes her time to educating and motivating young people to find their way in life in the face of all obstacles. Brenda **motivates students to WANT TO LEARN.**

Young minds consider their career paths differently than most adults. Young people, teenagers especially, are more concerned about life and daily struggles than they are about goal achievement and their future job prospects. What gets through? All things shiny. The lifestyles of the music stars, the sports stars, and the Hollywood stars are available through media, peer approval, and escapism, on a day by day, minute by minute repetitive cycle. Emphasis is on lifestyles and not job descriptions. Fun, excitement, and intrigue will satisfy the hunger of our future leaders, as money does the more practical thinking, bill-paying adult. Brenda adds one more ingredient; visible diversity, where it is not known to exist. Visible diversity alone will allow a young person to add, rather than limit, career options from future consideration.

How does Brenda do this differently? She is very interested in the students who are uninspired by the world and their future. Yet these same students spend enormous amount of energy and attention observing their surroundings, and the situations they must deal with on a daily basis. She welcomes all young people who, not unlike her at the age of 13 or 14, struggle with fitting in, letting them know that there is now something worth striving for. She likes to impress upon adults that if you want to get a student’s attention, **you must indicate how a great skill, talent, or hobby could manifest its energy into an impressive living.**

At every career day experience, Brenda asks all airport presenters to stick to describing what they love about their jobs. She asks them to share the most exciting thing that has happened to them. Storytelling (but not complaining) is encouraged. They may share where they trained for such a cool position. The goal is to give students something to focus their unseen talents on, not to discourage them with “but” statements focusing on difficulties, discouragement, or the condescending notion what may simply be too confusing at this stage of their lives. Brenda is very good at living up to her own mission,

to “make students want to learn.” She teaches them to ignore the whispers of the uninformed, thus allowing them to bring on their A game. Isn’t that what we all want?

Once the students realize that a career in this field is interesting, fun, and cool, they will become self-motivated to seek out the steps to begin the process. They’ll want to know what they need to do now to understand and excel in middle school and high school. A student who clearly sees the end results will be infinitely more interested and animated about wanting to be a part of that. You no longer need to push and prod them to do what they need to do to reach that end result. Instead, once they understand what the process is, if that’s what they want to do, you cannot un-ring that bell.

Brenda uses her aviation specialty as the door opener to their future. Brenda entered aviation unsure of her future but selected the fun career of Air Traffic Controller (ATC). She still believes Air Traffic Control would have been a wonderful career. With the proper guidance she chose Aeronautics as the pathway to all things aviation, which then led to her private pilot’s license. This pathway took her in a different direction than ATC, but it was still a great decision. It was just a journey, a steep upward climb worth doing.

Brenda likes to talk to students about **three other very important life issues:**

1. Confidence is the number one attribute that makes all things happen in our lives, yet children and most adults believe confidence is slowly grown, not orchestrated. Brenda teaches kids to Walk Tall by showing them all the ramifications and benefits that result. She teaches them tips and tricks they can use immediately.
2. How to recognize and get rid of the negative people and other influences they surround themselves with in their personal lives.
3. The miracle of compounded interest, and other important financial matters. Young people usually never hear about this until they are in their 20s or 30s, so they lose 10-15 years of gains.

Informing young people about these three issues is just as important as career planning. Without them, the path is eminently more difficult.

Confidence: Teenagers are surprised to know that they can learn to read minds. In a group challenge, Brenda will hold up a mirror and ask, “What are people reading when they look at you? What is that book they use to judge YOU by? What do you want your outward book to actually imply?” This is her favorite opportunity to teach how to survive a shy, introverted, sometimes fearful existence by telling the world otherwise, by showing them a different book. Adults benefit from this same briefing, which comes from Brenda’s own life.

Negativity: The people who surround you, and the kind of person that you are, should be evaluated to remove limitations you did not know you had. Negative people try to pull you down by discrediting your abilities or by creating peer pressure to keep you dependent on them or their lost causes. Brenda demonstrates this to pull students out of that downward spiral. Excuses, whining, complaining, gossip, dealing with bullies, and

dealing with issues that are here and now are quite correctable. She explains that these daily dramas, happening right this minute, have nothing to do with their future. It is necessary to get to the positive side, the right side of these issues that, left unattended, could carry into adulthood. Once students understand that they are not alone in this, they will learn that they don't need to re-invent the wheel. This is not the first time this has ever happened to anybody. Students listen intently when she tells them that this is what weak and insecure people are doing to hold them back. Young people need to see this so as not to be surprised by it. They can't be manipulated at the whims of another. A solid education will also avert the whims of obstruction.

Saving money: Students should read the right kind of books to understand why setting aside just a little money now goes a long way in the future. How money works. How the financial systems work. What capitalism is and what it means to our future. How companies and financial institutions think. Children of the wealthy get this kind of age-appropriate exposure throughout their lives. We need to pass this same information on to everyone else, early, when it can have a real impact. Save a dollar a week. Save five dollars a week. Save twenty-five dollars a month, or a week.

These three issues have nothing to do with aviation but everything to do with life. Brenda's lecture motivates her audience to want to do those things in order to make a better life for themselves. Diversity, confidence, and nontraditional jobs must all work hand in hand for a student to believe it is their right to pursue ANY career. They make these their ideals. She tells them about typical mind-controlling road blocks, why they are happening, and how to get around them. Once a destination is identified, the student on autopilot (with some mentorship) will figure out how to get there. Now they are open to hear her goal achievement steps and to map out everything they need to know to progress forward, including any anticipated setbacks. They are ready to apply the right process to get to the destination they have chosen.

Brenda brings all these together through the non-profit organization "Aviation Camps of the Carolinas Inc." Students first see that she just happens to love flying airplanes and thinks aviation is a cool experience. But then they see that there are many other jobs and aspects in the other 700 aviation-related fields. They include aircraft design, air traffic control, flight instruction, ground instruction, helicopters, maintenance, police aviation, firefighting, commercial flight, private flights, and executive flights. Brenda discusses pipelines; pathways to career aviation, civilian and military. What does she want students to know in the end? **Aviation is cool.**

When she asks them if they want to be involved in aviation, not every student will raise their hand, but it doesn't matter. They've seen aviation, and the comprehensible STEM process that will get them there, and that a non-traditional person can also succeed in that field. What does an aviator look like? They look like you and me. This career is not out of reach. There are also many other opportunities out there that the student may have once thought was too difficult for them to achieve. Even if the day was only a fun experience, **they learn that there are other fun compelling careers out there that are just as exciting.**

Brenda speaks with young people in their schools. The auditorium setting, classroom setting, and round table settings are all ways for her to bring this information and program to them. The aviation camps allow her to introduce the students to airport personnel who brief them directly on three facts:

1. Why they love their job
2. Their typical experiences
3. The missions and adventures they have had because of this field

What is fun and interesting does not have to be accompanied by tedious drawbacks and small print. Everyone has issues, everyone has difficulties. How you handle these difficulties is not unique. But if you know and prepare yourself for roadblocks, you can't be surprised by them. Also, there are people standing by to reach out to help you achieve your goal. They are called mentors. If it's traditional or non-traditional, there is someone to turn to; even if it is the book they wrote."

Once students start to believe that they deserve a great future, there are many boys' and girls' organizations reaching out to continue this path toward success which is offered at the conclusion of a camp day. These organizations include free orientation flights, self-respect for ladies and gentleman, local college prep opportunities, STEM programs, and more as they become available.

The Boy Scouts of America has credited the Aviation Camps of the Carolinas' full curriculum as the certified authority to teach and sign off the "blue cards" of the Aviation Merit Badge. As an expert in her field, her Aviation camps already incorporated the same curriculum specifications the Boy Scout leadership required.

Brenda's goal is to enlighten everyone she comes in contact with, and the Aviation camp is a jam packed experience. With energy and a good pair of sneakers, there is a lot to learn in one day, as they too can do anything they set their minds to. And they do not have to do it alone.

"If I can do this, you absolutely can do this."

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