



**FLYING SCHOLARSHIPS  
FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

# Changing Lives

NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2019



**“ I’VE COMPLETELY  
SURPRISED MYSELF  
BY WHAT I’M  
STILL CAPABLE OF  
AND THAT’S ALL DOWN TO FSDP ”**

Read Sean Love’s story inside

**“ I REALISE THAT  
IF I CAN FLY  
I CAN PROBABLY  
DO ANYTHING ”**

Read Charlotte Storey’s story inside

**“ IN THAT MOMENT  
I COULD LITERALLY FEEL  
MY SUPERHERO CAPE  
BLOWING IN THE WIND! ”**

Read Alvin Sephton’s story inside

**“ AS A RESULT I HAVE  
SECURED A JOB  
IN THE AVIATION INDUSTRY  
WHICH I LOVE ”**

Read Bethany Colburn’s story inside

# A few words from our Chairman

**NIGEL J SAMUELS**



I am pleased that this year our charity has been able to help change the lives of another eleven disabled people by providing them with a FSDP scholarship.

In this edition of our newsletter we will see how a scholarship has changed the lives of four of our scholars; Charlotte, Sean, Bethany and Alvin. In their stories you will see that not only do we provide an opportunity to 'Reach for the Sky' but that being part of the FSDP family provides an environment of understanding, friendship and fun!

FSDP has now supported over 500 disabled people since its inception with many going on to achieve great success both in and out of aviation. Many of these scholars still engage with our charity by attending family events and supporting us by volunteering and fundraising.



For those of you who attended the 2019 Presentation Ceremony at RIAT, I am sure you would agree that once again it showed the power of our scholarships. Not only did our 2019 scholars receive their certificates and our 2018 scholars receive their wings, but we had the privilege of hearing scholar Amanda Worne tell her life-changing story – leaving hardly a dry eye in the house!

I am delighted to announce that we have appointed our second scholar Trustee, Rebecca Giddings, who will have specific responsibility for fundraising. In addition to Rebecca we have appointed another new Trustee, Ian Revell. Ian has been known to RIAT for over 30 years as the head of the Air Traffic Control team for the show.

I would personally like to thank my fellow Trustees and our Vice Patrons and Presidents for their professionalism, dedication and generosity with their time.

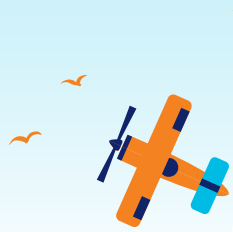
I would also like to recognise and thank the professionalism and commitment of our flying schools who are integral to our success. The flying instructors go above and beyond their core responsibility of teaching our scholars to fly; they often become counsellors, confidants, social secretaries and in many cases long-term mentors to our scholars.

But of course, FSDP are only able to offer our life-changing scholarships as a result of the generous donations we receive, and the continued support of our sponsors to whom we are incredibly grateful.

To make a donation, either complete the enclosed form or go to [virginmoneygiving.com/charities/reach4thesky](http://virginmoneygiving.com/charities/reach4thesky)

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS





# MY DISABLED FLYING JOURNEY

Charlotte Storey



In 2008, the Ehlers-Danlos Hypermobility Syndrome that had affected Charlotte's joints since childhood had become very debilitating, and she was given innovative shoulder replacement surgery. Unfortunately, the poly-ether shoulder caused a catastrophic systemic failure and was removed and two further total shoulder replacements were inserted in close succession. Both subsequent implants caused severe allergic responses and in March 2018, all the bones in her upper arm were removed and she was given an exo-skeletal brace that allows her to set her arm in a number of positions.

**“ SINCE RECEIVING THE SCHOLARSHIP,  
AND LEARNING TO FLY, I HAVE ONCE AGAIN BECOME  
THE VIBRANT, ENERGETIC PERSON I WAS ”**

Following that devastating surgery, she lost her job as a professional actor and musician, her home, her partner and had no choice other than to return home to be looked after by her parents. Her confidence was shattered and her mental health was very poor towards the end of 2018. At her lowest point she made an application to FSDP for a flying scholarship and was utterly overwhelmed to be selected.



“ Since receiving the scholarship and learning to fly, I have once again become the vibrant, energetic person I was prior to surgery. This is largely due to my instructors, who have all in their own way, provided not only the highest level of flight training, but given me wise and well-timed counsel. Instructor Raymond Proost has been working with me on developing a bungee-saxophone-support-frame that allows the weight of the instrument to be supported, thus making it possible for me to reach the keys without bearing the instrument's weight. I had not played my saxophone for five years, but thanks to these incredible aviators sharing their problem-solving skills, I have every hope of performing once again.

Through the life-affirming experience of flying, I have fulfilled my ambition of learning to accept my disability and to take pride in it. I cannot thank FSDP enough for this incredible experience. I have met a whole new group of friends who have all played a part in helping me to accept my new disabled self. I realise that if I can fly, I can probably do anything and it's a message I am keen to share with other disabled people. ”

## MY SUPERHERO DAD EXPERIENCE

Alvin Sephton

In 2002, Alvin suffered a compound fracture of his left femur and right fibula and tibia as a result of a motorcycle accident, which resulted in the amputation of his right leg. He is in constant pain and suffers with phantom pains at night but has accepted the person that he is and is grateful to have the limited mobility available to him.

“ HAVING A DISABILITY

DID NOT STOP ME

FROM LEARNING

HOW TO FLY ”

“ I wanted to be considered for a scholarship as I have always wanted to learn to fly but thought that it was beyond me. The time I spent at my flying club was incredible – I made lifetime friendships with my flying buddy Jonny and the flying instructors. I can now say to someone who is in the same position as me, that having a disability did not stop me from learning to fly. It has really been a massive thing in my life.



I have always wanted to be seen as a strong dad by my children. My eight year old daughter used to introduce me to her friends as ‘...my Dad.... he’s got a stump leg.’ However, recently she befriended a little girl on a camping holiday and said ‘My dad is learning to fly an aeroplane’. In that moment I grew four inches taller and could literally feel my superhero cape blowing in the wind! Thank you FSDP. ”

## THE ART OF ENJOYING LIFE

Bethany Colburn

Bethany was born with cerebral palsy affecting her mobility so she knew all about the constrictions which her condition imposed. Throughout her life she always tried to hide her disability and it was a constant battle to prove herself. A trial flight made her realise how much she wanted to learn to fly so she applied for a FSDP scholarship. She set out to show she was capable of doing anything and to make everyone proud of her.

“ Yes, I struggled. However, my scholarship was incredibly valuable to me and my personal development. Flying provided me with the opportunity to understand myself and my disability better; I learnt how to manage it and my frustration. I have learnt that the art of enjoying life is to recognise your achievements and accredit yourself to them. I now, in times of difficulty, reflect on my progress and take the time to be proud of myself; something I had never done before. I am now happier within myself and with managing my limitations. Furthermore, as a result I have secured a job in the aviation industry which I love, where I can continue to challenge myself and overcome perceived boundaries with time and patience. ”

“ I AM NOW  
HAPPIER  
WITHIN MYSELF ”



In October, Bethany decided to show her thanks to FSDP by doing two wing-walks to raise funds for the charity that has ‘changed her life’ so much.

# A REAL FEELING OF SUCCESS

Sean Love



One day in the summer of 2011, Sean was out for a ride on his beloved motorcycle, lost control and crashed into a dry-stone road at speed. He knew instantly that he had broken his back but he also punctured both lungs and had life-threatening internal bleeding. Fortunately for Sean the Great North Air Ambulance was called and the crew saved his life.

The accident resulted in him becoming a T11 complete paraplegic and confined to a wheelchair. After intensive care he underwent six months of rehabilitation.



“ ...A FEELING OF

**FREEDOM, EXCITEMENT  
AND MENTAL CHALLENGE**

THAT I THOUGHT I HAD  
**LOST FOREVER** ”



Adapting to his new life was a real challenge for Sean and his family as his disability affected every part of his daily life. He tried many sports and activities to distract himself from the chronic pain he was in but it wasn't until he found out about FSDP that he realised that learning to fly could be the answer. He applied for a scholarship in 2013 and was offered a place on the selection weekend but his health problems prevented him from attending.



“ I had always been interested in flying and have had several opportunities to fly in flexi and fixed wing aircraft as a passenger. Going through the selection process and being awarded a scholarship gave me a real feeling of success that I hadn't felt since my accident. It was the much sought after life changing challenge I really needed.

Learning to fly was everything I hoped it would be and more. It provided a feeling of freedom, excitement and mental challenge that I thought I had lost forever. My flying instructors' passion for flying was addictive and was passed onto me as soon as I was in the aircraft. The scholarship has given me the thrill I used to get from motorcycling but more importantly it has given me something that I wasn't expecting: that is the ability to learn, concentrate and give myself to something one hundred percent. I thoroughly enjoyed studying for the exams; I passed 4 of the ground school exams. I've completely surprised myself by what I'm still capable of and that's all down to FSDP. ”



## HOW YOUR DONATION HELPS



**£15**

Will buy a baseball cap and a hi-vis vest



**£30**

Will pay for a scholar's flying jacket



**£10 PER MONTH**

Will pay for one night's hotel and food



**£20 PER MONTH**

Will put a candidate through the RAF Cranwell Selection Centre



**£50**

Will provide three hours of ground school



**£180**

Will provide an hour's flying lesson



**£500**

Will pay for a FSDP family event



**£12,000**

Pays for a full scholarship including selection, subsistence, flying training, ground school, safety clothing & ongoing FSDP family support.

## DONATE ONLINE

[virginmoneygiving.com/charities/reach4thesky](https://virginmoneygiving.com/charities/reach4thesky)

Or complete the enclosed donation form



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FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

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