

# WEST MICHIGAN AVIATION ACADEMY

FOUNDATION



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **West Michigan Aviation Academy Goes “Above & Beyond” With 2024 Gala**

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – February 1, 2024 - West Michigan Aviation Academy Foundation is pleased to announce its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual *Leaders of Tomorrow Gala* will be held on Thursday, May 9, 2024.

This signature annual event engages a broad spectrum of the community in support of West Michigan Aviation Academy, a public high school with a focus on aviation and STEM. As a public charter high school, West Michigan Aviation Academy receives a per-pupil stipend from the state, which covers the traditional courses. However, the Academy provides educational opportunities above and beyond what can be found in other high schools. This event yields tremendous support for WMAA students and programs, allowing the school to provide an education that is second to none in terms of quality and variety of experiences. The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the significant support of Gulfstream Aerospace, title sponsor; Embraer, VIP Reception sponsor; along with numerous event sponsors and partners.

WMAA is a tuition-free public charter high school, and noteworthy because students can earn a private pilot license as part of the high school curriculum. Since 2010, 146 have graduated with a private pilot license. Countless more have cultivated an interest in flight science, aerospace engineering, and aviation maintenance. WMAA builds career pathways with active, hands-on, skill-based learning that prepares students for high-growth, high-demand fields in the real world. This better equips them to pursue higher education or technical degrees, and find employment in their chosen field.

This year’s theme, *Above & Beyond*, shines a spotlight on the many ways in which WMAA staff and students set and then reach extraordinary heights of excellence. Attendees will enjoy browsing through the stunning collection of corporate and private aircraft at the Amway hangar, and also participate in the silent auction, with a chance to win unique and highly desirable experiences. The keynote portion of the program will feature former NASA astronaut Mike Massimino. Mike uses humor and his unique storytelling ability as he inspires audiences to identify the passion in their work, use teamwork and innovation to solve problems, provide leadership in the face of adversity and crisis, and never give up when pursuing a goal. A brief but compelling program including segments with founder Dick DeVos, school leadership and staff, community partners, and some of the amazing WMAA students, will round out the evening.

For more information about event sponsorship or registration, visit [www.wmaafoundation.org](http://www.wmaafoundation.org).

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