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## Vintage planes highlight Community Days

[By Harry Hitzeman](#)

Daily Herald Staff Writer

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Swing by the DuPage Airport in West Chicago this weekend, and you might see a few interesting things. Like real World War II bombers.

Or teams of people armed with nothing more than gloves and a rope trying to pull a 6-ton jet 15 feet to raise money for the Illinois Special Olympics. The charity jet pull and a stop from the Wings of Freedom tour are two of the highlights for the West Chicago airport's Community Days.

The jet pull event has been held in other states, but this is the first time it will be in Illinois. Organizers had scheduled a plane pull at O'Hare International Airport for late September 2001, but it was canceled after the terror attacks.

Jeff Henson, director of special events for Special Olympics Illinois, said the race to pull a jet a distance of 15 feet in the fastest time is a great team-building experience.

"Once they get the initial roll of the plane, it makes it a little easier," he said, adding registration will be taken up to Saturday morning and costs \$50 per participant.

Participants are still sought, and individuals are welcome to enter by themselves and will be placed on a team. Registration begins at 8 a.m., with the first pulls starting at 9 a.m.

Oak Brook's Ty Warner, chairman and CEO of Ty Inc., which makes Beanie Babies, agreed to lend his Boeing business jet for the event.

"We're very grateful to the people of Ty Warner," said Tom Reasoner, Illinois Special Olympics assistant torch run director. "It's been a combined effort with the people at the airport. They've been awesome in helping us."

Organizers estimate the 737-sized aircraft weighs 120,000 pounds.

Mike Masciola, the airport's director of business development, hopes the jet pull will be an annual event. "It's really a good event to partner up with Community Days, and it's an aviation event for a good cause," he said.

The Collings Foundation's Wings of Freedom Tour will land at the airport Friday afternoon.

Among the notable passengers Juliette Jenner Stege, Ann Russell Darr and Jane Page Hlavacek. They were accepted into the Women Airforce Service Pilots program in World War II, the first women in history trained to fly American military aircraft.

People can see the Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress, a World War II heavy bomber built in 1944 and one of five flying in the U.S., along with the Consolidated B-24J Liberator, another bomber built in 1944 and only one still flying in the world.



The foundation, which visits 120 cities per year, also will take people up for 30-minute B-17 and B-24 flights around the suburbs for \$425 per person. The fee includes access to the entire aircraft, from nose to tail, including the bomb bay.

For more information or to reserve a seat, call (978) 562-9182.

Also over the weekend will be a static display of aircraft, include a piston, turbo prop, and corporate jet, along with military vehicles.

Merchandise will also be available, as well as food and refreshments from DuPage's own Kitty Hawk Cafe.

[hhitzeman@dailyherald.com](mailto:hhitzeman@dailyherald.com)