

Juliette Watt Airplanes for animals

Most flight instructors won't let you horse around, so Juliette Watt had to wait until she got her pilot license. Then she loaded Luna, a miniature horse, into her Mooney and flew it across country, one of countless flights this animal rescuer has donated to the animal kingdom and the work of BestFriends.org.

BestFriends.org is driven by the simple philosophy that kindness to animals helps build a better world for all of us. On any given day, you can find about 1,500 dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, birds and other animals living happily at the organization's headquarters in Southern Utah. Juliette Watt is the power behind the organization's amazing successes, and her airplane is a key to her successes. She has used the Mooney to rescue pets from hurricane-ravaged Louisiana, as well as to deliver hundreds of tough-to-place animals annually to new homes in towns across the country.

Like the 1,600 rabbits she rescued from a rancher in Nevada. Of course, one of the advantages of flying a planeload of rabbits is that you don't have to give a passenger briefing or worry about seat belts. No bathroom stops along the way, just a growing mound of pellets. Weight and balance can be tricky, especially if the bunnies keep hopping around. But for passionate pilot Juliette Watt, it's all in a day's work, and a wonderful opportunity to use her skills and her airplane to make the world a better place. For more, go to bestfriends.org.



Kenny Robinson He saw an opportunity



Above: Ken Robinson and the Super Decathlon
Below: Juliette Watt and colt.

When the International Aerobatics Club developed a collegiate program, there was a team of college pilots at Southern Illinois University who very much wanted to participate. But they didn't have an airplane.

In 2002, Ken Robinson bought them a red, white and blue Super Decathlon. Quietly, he also bought the team their insurance, paid for the hangar... There was no funding available from the college, and it was the only way these kids were going to get to fly. Robinson would go on to fund the program from 2002 through 2007, even with substantial financial sacrifice to his family.

The result? Over the years, the young SUI team has won countless aerobatic competitions around the country, including the EAA's Eagle Collegiate National Championship Award Program in 2004, 2005 and 2006. And starting in 2008, Southern Illinois University will begin to fund their college aerobatics program, leaving Ken Robinson with some extra money now. His plans? Finally, Ken can finally afford to learn to fly.

