

GIRLS IN AVIATION DAY HOSTED IN ST BARTHS BY NEW CARIB SKIES WAI CHAPTER

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A closing highlight of CARIBAVIA 2025 on St. Barths was the return of Girls in Aviation Day on Friday, 13 June. Fifteen girls aged 14-15 (Grade 9) from local school College Mireille Choisy travelled to the airport for a full morning's educational session. This year GIAD was co-organised between Women in Aviation International's Kelly Murphy; new WAI Carib Skies Chapter President Ludmila de Weever, St. Maarten Member of Parliament and Carib Skies' Chapter member Melissa Lake, Territorial Councillor, S Barths. Ludmila had been so impressed with the previous GIAD, held at St. Martin Airport in 2022, generously hosted by Heli Riviera at Grand Case Airport, she pledged to support the next one, wherever it may land in the Caribbean. Good to her word she not only did that, but she also helped to create a brand-new WAI Carib Skies Chapter. And volunteered to lead the newly established Chapter.

Covering the Caribbean Islands, Carib Skies is now available for individuals and corporates based there via Chapter President Ludmila de Weever. Contact www.WAI.org/chapters for more details.



Ludmila commented: “As the newly formed Carib Skies Chapter there is a lot of work ahead – to build our membership and raise awareness throughout the Caribbean. Happy events like this remind we why we started. Each and every Girls in Aviation Day opens new doors for young girls and helps us share the incredible missions of Women in Aviation International – one Island, one classroom: one future aviator at a time. I couldn’t be more excited.”

Speaking in St Barth’s Ludmila also thanked Cdr Bud Slabbaert for his willing acceptance for GIAD to co-locate with CARIBAVIA 2025 in St Barth’s and his help publicising the event. She presented him with a framed plaque – recognising and appreciating his efforts in bringing aviation enthusiasts together “in such a unique and refreshing format. The WAI Carib Skies Chapter would not be there without you,” she said.

During the day, kindly supported by St Barths Commuter’s Managing Partners Bertrand and Stephanie Magras, the girls visited eleven hands-on activity stations including: Fun with Drones; Aviation Jewellery; Dress Like A Pilot Photo Booth; Learn about Air Traffic Control; Read A Sectional Chart; Aircraft Marshalling; Colouring Corner of Aviation Puzzles; Speak Like An Aviator; Race Your Glider Aircraft; Dream Board-What’s your Dream Job?; and Make a Helicopter. Several were interested in working in aviation and said they hadn’t realised there were so many roles available! Others wanted to know more about aviation and aircraft to further their love of travel.

The morning started with a visit to an aircraft hangar to see St Barths Commuter’s Cessna Grand Caravan. They also saw several aircraft take off and land from St Barths’ iconic runway, including the Tecnam Traveller P2012, newly introduced on 50-minute services to Guadeloupe by St Barths Executive and already wowing passengers.

Each girl received a free GIAD activity kit, T-shirt, as well as a GIAD Passport, an Aviation for Girls magazine, career guide, sectional chart worksheet, GIAD bandana, stickers and pens. Three girls, quickest to answer an aviation quiz about what they learned on the day, were rewarded with some aviation themed jewellery, make up pouches and key chains.

Senior volunteers generously gave their time to support, joining the girls' teachers, coming from St Maarten and St Barths. They were joined by several international CARIBAVIA speakers / guests including Dorin Ivascu, executive and general aviation handling professional, from Romania, Enriqueta Zambonini, Embraer 190 pilot and air accident investigator from Argentina and Tatjana Obrazcova,

Editor of *Fifty SkyShades* from Strasbourg. Special guest was Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transport and Investment for Antigua and Barbuda, Charles 'Max' Fernandez. He was a stellar guest at CARIBAVIA, attending every session of the full three-day event. He praised the GIAD event and commented he'd be delighted to continue the tradition should CARIBAVIA move to Antigua next year, or 2027.

Kelly Murphy, Director of Communications at WAI commented: "WAI is grateful to Ludmila and Bud for sharing our vision in the Caribbean and embracing this initiative to educate youth about all the career possibilities in aviation/aerospace, so enthusiastically. Girls in Aviation Day is an integral part of our overall Aviation for Girls year-round program at WAI. and we were so pleased to see it take place in St Barth's."

The annual GIAD, which is embraced by many of WAI's 160 chapters and corporate members around the world, will this year be held on September 20th. Supported by positive female role models, it seeks to inspire girls to pursue careers in aviation and STEM.

Find a local GIAD event near you at www.wai.org/giad2025-events.



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