

DISPATCHES



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Cover Photo by LifeFlight Paramedic Adam Caftro



L to R: Paramedic Dave Rudolph, Emerson Blake, and Nurse Josh Gibbs.

EMERSON BLAKE MEETS HIS CREW

LifeFlight of Maine is known for its iconic helicopters, but at the heart of the organization is the capable and compassionate crew who make second chances possible for our families, friends, and neighbors across the state. It is the LifeFlight crew that Megan Blake remembers most clearly from that terrifying day when her 3-year-old son Emerson became critically ill. Emerson was experiencing a complex febrile seizure and was brought to the emergency department of the local hospital. The physicians there recognized that Emerson urgently needed more advanced care than they could provide, and needing ICU care for transport, called LifeFlight to transport Blake to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Maine Medical Center.

Today, Emerson is a happy and healthy 5-year-old. He still doesn't believe it when his mom tells him that he once rode in a helicopter. Recently, the Blake family came back to meet some of Emerson's clinical crew, including flight paramedic Dave Rudolph and flight nurse Josh Gibbs. In stark contrast to his previous experience with a helicopter, Emerson and his family enjoyed an afternoon filled with questions about how fast helicopters can fly, what kind of patients the crew cares for, and, most importantly, what all those buttons in the cockpit do.

To read more about Emerson's story, please visit:

lifeflightmaine.org/donate



LEAVING A LEGACY OF CARE

With strong ties to the Maine coast, the Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation (CCRF) understands the critical role LifeFlight plays in their communities and throughout the state. The Foundation has been a loyal supporter of LifeFlight of Maine for 13 years, honoring the memory of Dr. Joseph and Connie Rossi by helping those in need.

In the summer of 2021, Laurie Warren, a Director of the Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation, met with Development Director Anna Dugal from the LifeFlight Foundation to explore ways for CCRF to design a meaningful grant to honor the Rossis' legacy. Several conversations ensued, to better understand who the Rossis were, what was most important to the Trustees, and what would make a significant impact to LifeFlight. **The culmination was an incredibly generous gift of \$1 million, establishing LifeFlight's first named, endowed fund.**



CCRF Director Laurie Warren

The Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation Medical Equipment Fund will support the ongoing purchase of specialized medical equipment used onboard LifeFlight of Maine helicopters, airplane, and ground support vehicles.

“We are extremely pleased to honor the Rossis with a significant grant to LifeFlight to care for the people of Maine. LifeFlight is prepared each and every day to provide critical care no matter when or where it is needed in our vast state,” said CCRF Director Laurie Warren. “The LifeFlight mission is more evident now than ever before, and we know the Rossis would be proud knowing their legacy lives on, helping to care for those who most need it.”

The Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation carries on the philanthropic vision of Dr. Joseph and Connie Rossi, a couple with a strong love of Maine, and especially the MDI region where LifeFlight continues to answer challenging scene calls in Acadia National Park as needed and provide support to MDI Hospital.

This significant grant will honor the Rossis well into the future, perpetuate the care that Dr. Rossi provided in his career as a physician, and positively impact generations who live in and love Maine.

“Another lesson made clear by the pandemic is the value an endowment provides to a nonprofit organization such as the LifeFlight Foundation,” shared Executive Director Kate O’Halloran. “Enabling funds to be drawn annually, and in perpetuity, to meet one of the organization’s greatest needs is extremely powerful. Just as the people of Maine depend on LifeFlight to answer the call for help 24/7/365, we can now depend on our endowment to help purchase the advanced medical equipment our crews need. Just think about how many lives will benefit from the generosity of this one gift.”

Each LifeFlight aircraft and ground vehicle has more than \$500,000 in advanced medical equipment that the skilled clinical crew uses to provide ICU-level care as patients are transported to a major medical center in Maine or beyond. These highly mobile and specialized tools range from isolettes used to safely transport premature and newborn infants who require thermal support and appropriately sized monitors/pumps; to cardiac balloon pumps that keep patients experiencing heart failure alive; to the latest ventilators that can provide specialized care to COVID-19 patients and those experiencing other respiratory illnesses.

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By the Numbers:

Cost of LifeFlight Medical Equipment Packages

CMAC Airway Management System

\$37,306

Intubating a patient, or placing a breathing tube, to take over breathing for a critically ill patient unable to maintain their airway is essential for some LifeFlight patients. Video laryngoscopes help LifeFlight provide emergency intubation for patients who are breathing, but unable to maintain their own airway due to injury, illness, or respiratory failure.

Hamilton Ventilator

\$30,083

Managing acute respiratory failure in COVID-19 patients required LifeFlight to replace all ventilators with a state-of-the-art mobile ventilator. This hospital respiratory therapy-quality, critical care ventilator meets the airway needs of literally any patient, whether using noninvasive continuous and bi-level positive airway pressure support or for volume and pressure ventilation for intubated patients.

Sapphire Infusion Pumps

\$20,800

LifeFlight’s critically ill patients often require four or more intravenous (IV) lines for fluids and medications. A few short years ago, these patients would have been considered too sick to transport. But with these state-of-the-art pumps, the LifeFlight crew can manage up to six different IV lines.

ISTAT Bedside Laboratory

\$19,766

The i-STAT is an advanced, handheld portable laboratory providing real-time hospital lab blood gas reports within minutes. This allows the crew to perform blood tests while in flight and use the results to adjust the treatment therapies and care given to the patient.

Continued from page 3

LifeFlight of Maine aircraft see much more demanding use than most air medical assets. The ever-increasing number of transports—including patients with acute illnesses related to the COVID-19 pandemic—presents an increased and more frequent need to purchase, upgrade, repair, and eventually replace the advanced medical equipment onboard.

LifeFlight has always been designed to leverage emerging medical and aviation technology. Tools that only 15 years ago were limited to emergency rooms in larger hospitals have been miniaturized and are now available for use in mobile critical care settings like LifeFlight’s aircraft and ground vehicles. These constant advances in medical technology mean greater levels and more immediate care for patients, but the ability to provide these new kinds of care comes at a cost.

“We are extremely grateful for the generous support from the Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation. Our medical equipment must always remain as contemporary as our training and knowledge,” says LifeFlight of Maine Medical Director Norm Dinerman, MD. “This endowment helps us achieve that goal and provides the power and means for the air medical crew to apply their gift of affection with which they are naturally endowed.”

The generous grant from the Cornelia Cogswell Rossi Foundation significantly increases LifeFlight’s general endowment and provides financial security and sustainability well into the future for LifeFlight of Maine as it prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary. If you are interested in learning more about how you can how you can design a legacy gift to support LifeFlight of Maine, please contact Executive Director Kate O’Halloran at 207-314-5230 or mohalloran@lifeflightmaine.org.

“This gift is incredibly special for many reasons. We love how well it reflects both the Rossi family’s interests and values and meets an important annual need for LifeFlight of Maine. Finding that intersection is philanthropy at its best.”

- Kate O’Halloran
Executive Director, LifeFlight Foundation

THE 2022 CROSS FOR LIFEFLIGHT

Cross on your own, or join us for a paddle or hike!

The Cross For LifeFlight is our largest fundraising event, as each summer, 200 participants from all over Maine spend the month of August hiking, biking, swimming, paddling, walking, or running to help us meet our goal of \$400,000. Regardless of how, where, and when they do these activities, one thing unites them—a commitment to the LifeFlight mission.

New this year, in addition to the monthlong, self-led format from August 1-31, participants have the option to join one of two in-person events, either a family-friendly hike in the midcoast or a guided sea-kayak tour in Portland.

Register now and take advantage of the early bird registration rate of just \$75 through June 30. Each registrant will receive a Participant Kit filled with quality gear, valued at \$100. The Cross for LifeFlight is proud to have partnered with many strong Maine brands, such as Liberty Graphics, L.L.Bean, Rogue Wear Maine, Maine Magazine, Sea Dog Brewing Company, Viking Lumber, and more.

To register today or for more information, please visit crossforlifeflight.org, or contact Ashley MacMillan at 207-357-5508 or amacmillan@lifeflightmaine.org.



X-ray Mike prepares for departure as Lima Mike stands ready. Photo by Flight Nurse Tom Gutow.



A LifeFlight orientee reviews a checklist during a simulation training.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A MEMBER OF LIFEFLIGHT’S CLINICAL CREW?

As you might imagine, joining Maine’s elite flying clinical crew requires significant previous experience—candidates must have been either a Registered Nurse or a Paramedic for a minimum of three years. Applicants are often a preceptor at their current employer and have shown expertise in their discipline. Given its international reputation for quality and safety, **LifeFlight of Maine attracts candidates from around the country, although 75-80% are “homegrown” here in Maine.**

The recruitment and hiring process at LifeFlight of Maine is extensive and multifaceted. Applicants often visit with LifeFlight leaders on several occasions, undergoing an evaluation that provides the hiring manager with a strong sense of the candidate, and provides the applicant with an opportunity to experience the unique LifeFlight environment. Qualified candidates have an opportunity to meet crew members and managers as well as LifeFlight Medical Directors. The hiring process continues to evaluate both the candidate’s ability to demonstrate critical thinking and their clinical care acumen.

Chuck Hogan, LifeFlight’s Director of Clinical Operations, shared that it can be challenging, even for experienced clinicians, to adjust to this type of transport environment. Practicing emergency medicine remotely and in a moving vehicle requires a different skillset and mindset than working in a stationary facility.

“The job is fast-paced and often requires a very different thought process. The crew needs to make decisions and prioritize triage and treatment. Clear communication is essential. No two days are the same.”

Once an applicant is hired, they enter orientation which **typically takes four to six months and is carefully designed to get each orientee into a LifeFlight aircraft where they can work with the crew on actual patient transports.** For the safety of all involved, this is done in a phased manner. To assist with the orientation process, an experienced LifeFlight crew member provides precepting (or mentoring) for each new orientee. LifeFlight typically onboards between two and six new orientees each year. The phases of the Clinical Crew Orientation Program include:

- **The Observer Phase** focuses on building an understanding of transport environment knowledge and the validation of patient situational assessment.
- **The Assessor Phase** begins to more actively involve the orientee, having them perform the assessment with the crew and develop the plan for transitioning the patient for transport. This also includes verifying new information that the crew observes on the scene.
- **The Primary Phase** involves the orientee functioning as an active crew member with a partner, with a preceptor available as a backup if needed.

To progress to each next phase, the orientee needs to complete a high-fidelity simulation designed to test and build their ability to diagnose and perform specific protocols and interventions. The process ensures a solid foundation of skills and knowledge before adding the responsibilities of the next level.

CREW PROFILE: MADELINE DOUGHERTY



Madeline Dougherty recently was part of LifeFlight of Maine’s first all-female helicopter crew! From left to right: NICU nurse Michelle Hamor, pilot Madeline Dougherty, flight nurse Lorry Taylor-Sheasgreen, and NICU Nurse Laura Woodbury.

In March 2022, LifeFlight of Maine welcomed Madeline Dougherty to the crew as the first female rotor wing (helicopter) pilot. Here’s a bit of information about this fantastic, groundbreaking crew member. For nine years, Madeline served as an active-duty pilot with the United States Marine Corps, stationed in San Diego, CA, and Pensacola, FL. After leaving active duty, she joined the Reserves and is currently a part-time flight instructor for Advanced Helicopter Training in Pensacola. Madeline has also worked as a regional airline pilot.

Before joining LifeFlight, Madeline had not worked in the field of medical air transport but shared that she has always had a keen interest in the profession. Originally from Oregon, she has lived in six other states, including California, but is delighted to now call Maine home. When she is not in the skies above Maine, Madeline enjoys outdoor adventures such as hiking, backpacking, and camping with her husband.

CREW PROFILE: JEFF HAMMERSMITH

Jeff Hammersmith recently completed orientation and officially joined the LifeFlight team as a paramedic. As a young child, he met the pilot from the 1992 Life Star crash. He listened in awe as the pilot described what he did for work, and credits this for putting him on this path. He was introduced to EMS through a first responder class at his high school, and then started as a volunteer on his town’s ambulance service as soon as they let him on a truck. He has worked in EMS ever since.

Jeff earned a degree in biology from the University of Vermont. Following college, he was a medic in the army. After active duty, he attended paramedic school at Southern Maine Community College, during which Jeff had the opportunity to attend a LifeFlight Critical Care Academy. He was impressed by the knowledge, skill, and professionalism of the group teaching. Several LifeFlight crew members took the time to give some advice on how to best prepare to work at LifeFlight. Jeff jokes, “I guess it was good advice, because here I am!”

Jeff lives in Lebanon (just outside Sanford) on a small hobby farm with his wife and whatever animals she comes home with that day. When not working, Jeff enjoys hiking with their dogs and getting outdoors.



Photo courtesy of Jeff Hammersmith.

All orientees also partake in a formal education curriculum through the LifeFlight Critical Care Academy. This hands-on learning includes 14 days of didactic, skills training, and simulation. Topics include disease process related to the heart, lungs, and other body systems; laboratory and X-ray review; procedures such as intubation and arterial line placement; specialty care such as obstetrics and pediatrics; pharmacology; and specialty equipment such as ventilators and heart assistive devices. There is also emphasis placed on learning key concepts of aviation safety.

Once the orientation is complete, the crew member works primarily with crew members who have at least a full year of LifeFlight experience. **The training time required to become an active crew member is approximately 700-1200 hours;** the intensity of the orientation program reflects the commitment and expectations of the LifeFlight of Maine crew.

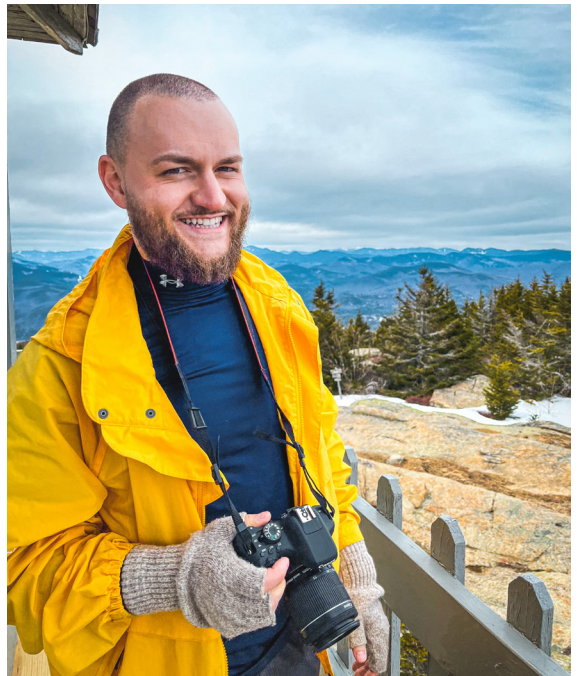


One Step Too Many: Matt Kopyt's LifeFlight Story

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, 25-year-old Matt Kopyt moved to South Portland, Maine, with his girlfriend Ryan to take advantage of the amazing outdoor recreation that the state has to offer. After meeting at Drexel University and then working in Philadelphia for several years, they had decided that Maine was where they would start the next chapter of their lives together. Like so many others during the pandemic, Matt opted to work remotely as a marketing team lead for a startup company based in Philadelphia.

In April of this year, Matt and Ryan set out to climb Mount Kearsarge North, a 3,200-foot peak near North Conway, New Hampshire. It was a bright, cool day, with the perfect conditions for spectacular views of the White Mountains and a refreshing hike. That particular weekend, there was ice near the top of the mountain, but both were equipped with the proper footwear and gear, and they made the ascent safely.

The mountain's summit includes a publicly accessible fire tower that rises another 15 feet from the peak. After enjoying lunch, they started taking some photos of the spectacular landscape from the deck atop the tower. As Matt moved to gain a new angle for a photo, he took one too many steps backward and fell 25 steps down from the tower to the rocky mountain below, severely injuring his head when he landed.



Matt Kopyt pictured at the summit of Mount Kearsarge North just prior to his accident. Photo by Ryan Chiasson.

Matt doesn't remember falling or hitting his head but was conscious as he lay on the ground. Luckily, Ryan is a nurse at Intermed in Portland and immediately started providing care using the first-aid kit they had brought along. Another hiker reached 911 dispatchers, and communication with first responders was established. "I always try to overprepare and expect the unexpected," Matt shared.

“In this case, we were lucky to have some medical supplies, but I really wish I had brought warmer clothes and a thermal blanket. I’ll definitely be packing those in the future.”

While Matt remained conscious and could move his limbs, he and Ryan decided that the descent would be too treacherous in his current state. After more than two hours of waiting on the mountain, Matt’s condition was beginning to deteriorate. First responders were concerned with the time it was taking them to reach Matt, so they determined the best course of action was to extricate him from the summit. Since LifeFlight aircraft are not equipped to hoist patients, a Maine Army National Guard team in a Blackhawk helicopter with this capability was dispatched to retrieve Matt from the mountain’s summit.

Matt was transported to Memorial Hospital in North Conway, New Hampshire, where he started to receive treatment in the Emergency Department. Based on imaging, his physicians determined that Matt needed rapid transport to a trauma center to address the multiple areas of brain bleeds and bilateral occipital fractures. The LifeFlight 4 helicopter, based in Sanford, was dispatched immediately with Pilot TJ Wesoloski, nurse Kayla Jones, and paramedic Adam Cafo onboard.

Upon arrival, the LifeFlight crew started providing advanced care and neurological trauma services that were not available at Memorial Hospital, then quickly transported Matt to Maine Medical Center in Portland. Even on one of the worst days of his life, Matt recalls the crew’s kindness and reassurance during the flight. He noted, “I know that every second counts in a situation like this, and I am extremely grateful that LifeFlight was there to transport me to a facility that could provide the care I needed.”

After a stay in the hospital, Matt’s brain bleeds and skull fractures were healing, and he returned home. He continued to experience concussion symptoms for the following month, but those have also continued to diminish. Today, Matt and Ryan are slowly starting long walks and light hikes on some of the urban trails in the Portland area as they work their way back toward more strenuous outings. Matt commented, “I don’t intend to allow this experience to hold me back from my future adventures. I will learn from it and live every day like it’s my last!”

LifeFlight of Maine provides a critically important invisible safety net for all those who love to explore Maine’s rugged and remote wilderness. For more information on LifeFlight’s Remote Landing Zone network, please visit lifeflightmaine.org.

Matt Kopyt and Ryan Chiasson on a different hiking trip to Cathedral Ledge.



Representatives from LifeFlight Aviation Services, LifeFlight of Maine, and the FAA joined together to celebrate the completion of the third and final base transition in Sanford. Photo by Greg Rec.



AFTER YEARS OF PLANNING & WORK, LIFEFLIGHT AVIATION SERVICES BECOMES A REALITY

On March 31, 2022, LifeFlight of Maine completed a significant organizational milestone: bringing aviation services in-house under the operational control of a new subsidiary, LifeFlight Aviation Services (LFAS). This event marked the culmination of a multi-year process that will allow LifeFlight to continue providing the highest quality care for the people of Maine.

Over the past three years, creating LFAS has included roughly 16,000 hours, more than 1,000 written pages for five manuals, 358 multipart regulations reviewed for compliance, and 951 multi-part questions to answer from the FAA. And much of this work was accomplished within the course of the pandemic.

LifeFlight has always operated as a lean organization and takes pride in having some of the lowest costs and charges in the country while performing at the highest clinical and aviation performance levels. Since being founded in 1998, LifeFlight has outsourced the management of aviation operations and valued the high-quality partners with whom we have worked. With increasing consolidation in the air medical industry, LifeFlight has prioritized ensuring organizational investments in our aviation program benefit Maine today and in the future.

This also means the addition of seven new jobs for people who live in Maine, know the medical needs of the state, and are committed to LifeFlight’s shared values. The cost savings from managing our own aviation services will be reinvested in LifeFlight.

While many people are working on the frontlines and behind the scenes of LifeFlight Aviation Services, five of those team members have worked tirelessly for the past three years to bring make this happen.

Josh Dickson is the Director of Aviation Services. Josh comes from a long-time EMS family and has held front-line and leadership positions in air and ground EMS systems in Oregon, California, and Arizona before coming to LifeFlight in 2007. Creating LFAS has been one of Josh’s long-standing goals. Josh is a visible figure in Maine aviation circles through his work on the Maine DOT Aviation Advisory Board and has been heavily involved in the development of rural aviation infrastructure.



Dave Burr is the Director of Aviation Operations.

Dave has served as a LifeFlight rotor wing pilot for more than 15 years. He is also a former Navy pilot who grew up on Matinicus Island, so he has a deep appreciation for the crucial role that LifeFlight plays for island and rural communities in Maine. Dave is also the project lead for LifeFlight's (instrument flight rules) IFR navigation project, currently underway with the FAA.



Brian Burt is the Chief Inspector.

In addition to working with LifeFlight's previous contractor, SevenBar Aviation, as an Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT), Brian has several decades of experience working for commercial airlines and maintenance, repair, and overhaul facilities in Maine and beyond. Brian brings an immense knowledge of process and safety-based operations to the organization.



Pete Cartmell is the Chief Pilot.

In addition to being a LifeFlight rotor wing pilot for 7 years, Pete has served in the US Army and Army National Guard for 30 years, retiring in 2018. He led the process of training all LifeFlight pilots to work under the new FAA certificate.



Randy Collins is the Director of Maintenance.

Randy worked with LifeFlight's previous contractor, SevenBar Aviation, as an AMT. He leads the team of technicians across three locations, ensuring LifeFlight's aircraft are safely ready to transport crew and patients at a moment's notice.



INTRODUCING LIFEFLIGHT'S LOYAL DONOR CLUBS

Spring 2022 brought the creation and implementation of LifeFlight Foundation's newest donor program, the **Loyal Giving Clubs**, recognizing our most steadfast supporters. The Loyal Giving Clubs celebrate those donors who make a gift for three, five, and ten or more consecutive years.

Incredibly, together 549 donors have contributed nearly \$10 million to ensure that their families, friends, and neighbors across Maine have access to advanced ICU level care, where and when they need it. The Foundation is fortunate to have a robust community of donors who care so deeply about the mission and is immensely grateful for their loyal and generous support.

3-Year Club

200 Donors
\$1.4 million in lifetime giving

5-Year Club

245 Donors
\$5.8 million in lifetime giving

10-Year Club

104 Donors
\$2.7 million in lifetime giving

3 year

5 year

10 year

Donors in each club received recognition gifts such as journals, water bottles, and a custom cutting board.

Along with pilots and AMTs, the administrative team at LifeFlight Aviation services is helping the entire organization to continue to be a safe, sustainable, and locally accountable organization.

LIFEFLIGHT FOUNDATION

Dispatches is a publication of The LifeFlight Foundation, which provides fundraising and public relations support to LifeFlight of Maine, the state's only medical helicopter service.

The LifeFlight Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code. It is governed by an elected board of trustees who represent medical, business, legal, and educational fields throughout the state. The Foundation also supports the development and funding of Maine's major air medical needs, such as trauma training statewide; construction of hospital helipads; and installation of weather reporting, navigational, and communications systems.

The Foundation's office is located in the town of Camden at 13 Main Street, 2nd floor. You can reach us at 207-230-7092 or by email at ffoundation@lifeflightmaine.org.

Donations are tax-deductible.

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LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE

LifeFlight of Maine is a nonprofit statewide critical care medical helicopter service jointly owned by Northern Light Health and Central Maine Healthcare Corporation. LifeFlight's airplane and three helicopters are based in Bangor, Lewiston, and Sanford, and are operated by LifeFlight Aviation Services. Along with dedicated ground ambulances, these vehicles cover the entire state and offshore islands. LifeFlight complements and supports the work of local EMS and hospital personnel in caring for the critically ill or injured. Each base is staffed by a highly qualified team of pilots, mechanics, flight nurses, and paramedics. More than 33,000 patients have been safely transported since LifeFlight's founding in 1998. LifeFlight was fully re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems in 2019.



THE LIFEFLIGHT FOUNDATION
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