

Aidan Charles

BCGA Scholarship Essay

My name is Aidan Charles. Born and raised in North Vancouver, British Columbia, I am a first generation pilot. Since as long as I can remember during my childhood, I had an interest in aviation, and a desire to fly. However, when I realized I wouldn't be able to finance my training, and while still too young to start working, much of my experience prior to beginning my training was involved with a flight simulator on my computer. I would spend hours daily on these simulators, accumulating over 500 hours on the outdated Microsoft Flight Simulator. It's strange to think something that was merely an interest developed into something much more all through just a computer game,

To me, aviation seemed like an exciting world filled with opportunity. At 14 years old when I was finally old enough to start working I applied everywhere I could. Many potential employers thought I was too young and wouldn't be able to handle the job. However, one did not. I started working in a kitchen, first as a dishwasher then as a line cook, where I still work today. This job would subsequently allow me to get my foot in the door of the aviation world and finance my flight training. Once I had saved up enough to start my training I did, and I enjoyed every second of it. After only a few months, a mere 10.2 hours under my belt, and while I was only 15 years old my first instructor and current mentor decided I was ready to solo. After that moment I took to the skies alone, I was hooked. Somehow even more than I initially was. I continued to work, often many days a week, while going to school, studying for my flight training as well as ground school. A challenge nonetheless, but fueled by my determination to become a pilot.

Shortly after my 16th birthday, after completing and passing my private pilot's license written exam and flight test I was issued my recreational pilot permit, due to Transport Canada's minimum age requirement of 17 for this license. Receiving this permit has given me the ability to take one passenger with me. The way I see this is that I am increasing my friends and family's exposure to general aviation in BC. One person at a time.

Recently I have completed my seaplane single-engine ground school with Fort Langley Air, as well as my mountain training through Pacific Flying Club.

I believe I should be considered as a candidate for one of these scholarships due to my continued dedication to aviation, as well as my interest in aviation as a career.

Personal achievements include:

- Youngest pilot to solo at Canadian Flight Centre (shortly after 15th birthday)
- Least amount of hours to solo at Canadian Flight Centre (10.2)
- PPL flight test score of 110 with Pacific Flying Club
- Receiving Recreational Licence at 16 years old

After completing high school next year, I plan to apply to BCIT for their Airline and Flight Operations program to receive my Commercial Pilot Licence, Multi-Engine Rating, Instrument Flight Rating, and a Diploma. At BCIT I plan to use the experience I possess to my advantage and strive to be one of the top students in the program. Some of my career orientated goals include, start working on the ramp or dock at a small airline or charter company to begin my career as early as possible. I have been in contact with the dock operations manager at Harbour Air and currently on the hiring roster to be considered within the next month.

I am in the planning stages of a flight across Canada and back (Tofino- St. Johns) this summer 2017 in an effort to raise money for Hope Air. I will be completing the flight in an advanced ultralight I am currently rebuilding with the help of King George Aviation. I have set a fundraising goal of \$10,400, or the distance of the trip both ways. While doing this I hope to set the record for being the youngest pilot to complete the journey in an advanced ultralight. This idea stemmed from my passion for volunteering. From a young age, I have loved to help people and see the positive results of my actions. Some examples of this include volunteering 10 days in Ecuador in the remote community of Mondana nestled within the Amazon rainforest rebuilding a primary school. I have also been involved in volunteering my summers or around 200 hours teaching children aged 4-14 how to sail.

I also plan to receive my seaplane single engine rating. After completing the program of my choice I hope to either start working at a small charter airline in British Columbia or directly into a major airline.

The bursary would be used to continue and further my education as a pilot. Either being used for my seaplane rating or my education at BCIT. As the program I am currently considering is very expensive, having the financial assistance of a bursary would be incredibly useful.

Thank you for taking the time to read my essay,

Sincerely,

Aidan Charles