



ACE Program School of the Year Nomination Form



THRIVE nomination, submitted by Lt Col Brian Schmuck, ACE Teacher and CAP Sr Member:

1. Explain why your school is deserving of the ACE School of the Year. Use as much space as is needed. Be sure to include the following in your answer:
 - a. Description of school's ACE "Liftoff" or ACE culminating event (if applicable)
 - b. Information regarding guest speakers or parent involvement specifically related to the ACE Program (if applicable)
 - c. Student success stories related to the ACE Program (if applicable)
 - d. Details of how aerospace education was promoted at the school aside from teaching ACE lessons (if applicable)
 - e. Details of how aerospace was used to promote good character and/or physical fitness beyond presenting the ACE lessons (if applicable)
 - f. Efforts to promote the ACE program to the community (if applicable)
 - g. A list of participating teachers and the number of ACE lessons they each personally presented to their class (include PE & counselor if applicable)

Thrive is a non-profit, after-school enrichment program that provides care, education, and tutoring to students in grades K-8 in Mt. Vernon, IN. Thrive is free to attend for students, enabling Thrive to reach students of all socio-economic backgrounds. Thrive embraced the CAP Aerospace Connections in Education program as a method to further enrich the opportunities for learning provided to their students. Students enrolled in Thrive's program participants are bussed from all district schools at the conclusion of the school day.

Thrive coordinated a life-off celebration to both excite the students and staff about the ACE program as well as display the partnership between Thrive, CAP, and the AFA by inviting the local CAP squadron and AFA Chapter to participate. The local AFA donated ACE shirts to all the students and had an officer present to deliver a shirt to each student. The local CAP squadron provided 2 adults and 3 cadets in addition to 2 STEM kits and Drug-Demand Reduction program Fatal Vision goggles as activities for the ACE students. The program began with a welcome by Thrive's Executive Director and CAP AEM, Joy Millay and CAP Lt Col Brian Schmuck and then the presentation of the shirts by AFA Treasurer Col (Ret) Mark Brugh. Then students were split into three groups and rotated through the STEM and DDR stations where they experienced a flight simulator led by a CAP pilot and retired USAF pilot, the Bee-Bot led by a CAP Cadet, and a DDR Obstacle Course and lesson led by a CAP Cadet. All 28 students left the lift-off excited about the ACE program.

Thrive originally began with 1-2 ACE Days per month but that quickly increased, due to the request of the students. Due to the wide range of ages of students, they were split into two ACE curriculum levels, 1st grade and 4th grade. Students were regularly provided instruction by CAP senior members and cadets in addition to a few visits from AFA members. Parents commented on Thrive's facebook posts thanking the staff for bringing these opportunities to their students, and parents regularly would thank the staff and ACE teachers for exciting their students when they arrived to pick them up. Lt Col and C/CMSgt Rylee Schmuck were regularly greeted with excitement and hugs upon arrival to teach ACE lessons. The first grade ACE students regularly had C/CMSgt Rylee Schmuck as an instructor, giving them great exposure to the cadet program as well as allowing them to better engage with and relate to their instructor.

Lt Col Schmuck used incentives to both motivate student participation in lessons and as rewards for displaying good character. Due to his position in CAP he had “coins” that he carried with him used to reward and incentivize showing good character. During a lesson on the “Candy Bomber,” Lt Col Schmuck passed out candy to students for answering questions and engaging in the lesson. At one point a student received a sucker that wasn’t a flavor that she liked. A boy sitting next to her noticed her unhappiness and asked what was wrong, then offered to switch suckers with her. This display of caring allowed Lt Col Schmuck a real-life and immediate example for the class to discuss. The discussion resulted in more students coming forward and suggesting that since they didn’t really *need* a second piece of candy (after having earned it through participation) that they could give it to someone like a sibling or parent, to make them have a better day. This shows that the students truly understood the lesson provided by Col Halvorsen and what selfless giving means. Other students expressed an interest in becoming an astronaut or pilot and during the lesson “Good Enough to Eat” students remarked about enjoying healthy foods and Lt Col Schmuck commented his surprise that so many had a knowledge of the space shuttle prior to the lesson. Lt Col Schmuck later interviewed a former cadet who works for NASA via a zoom meeting, and provided the recording for the students to watch (remotely due to COVID-19 shut downs).

Thrive leadership regularly interacts with the community by getting volunteers from the local university, local businesses, local schools, as well as police and fire fighters. It wasn’t uncommon for local firemen or others from the community to be present during ACE lessons, helping the ACE instructor by providing additional supervision for the students or assistance to the teacher explaining concepts and how they relate to life. During an ACE PE activity we played kick ball with the city firefighters, another volunteer who is a former F-4 Pilot helped Lt Col Schmuck teach about Bernoulli’s Principal. Thrive’s executive director contacted local print media about reporting on the ACE program at Thrive although we never heard back about publishing. RiverCity Cadet Squadron regularly posted on its social media (facebook, Instagram, and twitter) stories about the ACE program at Thrive. This information reached educators in the community and garnered interest in future ACE programs in the surrounding area – with plans to offer the ACE program at a school in a near-by city next fall.

For a first-year ACE Program, Thrive had set the bar high with expectations (based on scheduling) that 17 lessons would be delivered before the end of the year celebration. However, the COVID-19 crisis forced an adjustment to those plans. Thrive ended the didactic year early due to the pandemic, having only been able to deliver 11 lessons. However, the students typically were so excited about the ACE lessons they asked to share their lessons with the other group. So for the shorter lessons, or when it could be accommodated, the classes would switch upon completion and the 4th graders would get the 1st grade lesson in addition, and visa-versa. Based on the lessons that were conducted this way, each grade level received 15 lessons, even though only 11 were for their assigned curriculum. ACE students also got to participate in an AEX lesson on hovercrafts, provided by the local CAP Commander and the AFA – using balloons and compact discs to demonstrate the concepts of a hovercraft.

ACE Teachers:

All three staff-members of Thrive (Joy, Jessica, and Eily) are CAP AEMs and acted as instructors for ACE lessons and all three were involved in every lesson, often splitting themselves between the classrooms.

Lt Col Brian Schmuck – 11 Lessons

C/CMSgt Rylee Schmuck – 5 Lessons

Joy Millay – 2 Lessons (plus assisted C/CMSgt Schmuck with her 5 lessons)

Jessica Seskey – 2 Lessons

Eily Toon – 2 Lessons

C/Amn Ethan Schneider – Assisted Lt Col Schmuck with 2 lessons

Capt Michael Schultheis – 1 lesson as a guest

AFA Mark Brugh, Col (Ret), USAF – 1 lesson as a guest





