



## Press Release

### Plans for Balloons Over Vermillion 2017 Taking Shape

**For Immediate Release**

**February 20, 2017**

**Contact: Pat O'Shaughnessy 217-260-6716; Jim Anderson, 217-304-3032**

**IT'S FOR THE KIDS!** That is what Balloons Over Vermillion is all about. Kids of all ages will experience the wonder and excitement of seeing over 30 hot air balloons in one location.

With that in mind Ms. Jessica Alyea's 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade class from Northeast Elementary Magnet School has been selected as the student ambassador class for the 2017 Balloons Over Vermillion festival. Co-chairs Pat O'Shaughnessy and Jim Anderson surprised Ms. Alyea's class by inviting them in person. The children enthusiastically accepted even after being informed that there was homework that went along with the privilege; the fun kind of homework. They learned about ballooning from pilots Dean Carlton and Larry Owen, who treated them to trading cards that showed off each of their balloons. And the class has already jumped into their role as student ambassadors by brainstorming what kids like best and what they want to see in the Kids Zone with area co-chairs Jaclyn Vinson and Samantha McCoy.

New for the 2017 event will be two performances by the Jesse White Tumbling Team on Saturday, July 15. Founded by Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White and Zach Mitchell, the team consists of youth acrobats who must maintain certain academic standards in order to qualify and be a part of the high flying troop. The Jesse White Tumbling Team makes over 1500 performances a year, has been in several movies and can be frequently seen during half-time shows for the National Basketball Association, the National Football League and Major League Baseball games. "We are really excited to welcome the Jesse White Tumbling Team.", stated co-chair Jim Anderson. "Their youth oriented program is a great fit for our event," he added.

Also new to the 2017 line up, a Bell 47 Helicopter similar to the one seen in the popular hit TV series M\*A\*S\*H will be offering paid rides. "Flying in a Bell 47 means you can see just about everything around you" says Jaime Samuel who operates Sierra Aeronautics. "The safety of our passengers will always be our priority," he added

Returning for a second year will be the tethered hot air balloon rides. A second handicap accessible balloon will be added this year to accommodate more rides. "We knew there was a pent up demand for balloons and rides but clearly we underestimated that desire," stated Pat O'Shaughnessy, event co-chair. "Tony Sandlin, pilot of the handicap accessible balloon was one of the hardest working guys at the event last year. He and his team did their best and flew extended hours to get everyone in who wanted a ride." This year plans are underway to develop a signage system to number rides purchased and show what ride is flying, so the wait in line is drastically reduced.

The event is also adding additional food vendors, and the band line up is currently being finalized. Information about participating in either capacity is available on Balloons Over Vermillion's Facebook site [www.facebook.com/BalloonsOverVermillion](http://www.facebook.com/BalloonsOverVermillion).

Balloons Over Vermillion 2017 promises to be the outstanding highlight of your summer. We invite you to make plans now for July 14 and 15, 2017 to be a part of the excitement at the Vermillion Regional Airport in Danville, IL.

For more information contact event co-chairs Pat O'Shaughnessy at 217-260-6716 or 217-442-0510; or Jim Anderson at 217-304-3032 or go to [Balloonsoververmilion.com](http://Balloonsoververmilion.com)



JULIUS W. HEGELER II  
FOUNDATION

*Title Sponsor*