

Hot Air Balloon Ride Winners Announced

The 2019 Celebration Committee announces that the winners of its Hot Air Balloon rides on July 12 and 13 are Taylor Klopfenstein and Kaylee Peterman. The countywide contest was conducted in conjunction with the Apollo 11 Anniversary Hot Air Balloon Rally, which will be held at the Auglaize County Fairgrounds, Wapakoneta, on July 12 and 13.



Taylor just completed 5th grade at New Knoxville School, while Kaylee just completed 7th grade at Wapakoneta Middle School. In May the 2019 Committee distributed fliers to all schools in Auglaize County, inviting students to write brief essays about why riding in a hot air balloon would be inspiring to them. Community Events Committee member and contest judge Judy Walter selected Taylor and Kaylee's essays from those submitted.

Taylor wrote: A ride in a hot air balloon would be inspiring to be because it could change my future. Flying hot air balloons could become a fun tradition for communities. When I learned that I had a chance to ride in a hot air balloon I was so excited. If I ever become a person who creates things that fly or even designs it, I would try to create amazing hot air balloons. I have always enjoyed the colors of hot air balloons. I have always wondered why the balloons have color. I think it is because everyone can see the sight of colors. I have always been scared of heights, but if I win the contest it would change my life.

Kaylee wrote: A hot air balloon gives you a freedom to see the sky and all below. The world we live in, Wapakoneta, Ohio. A wonderful small town. The world in my eyes is like art. A ride in a hot air balloon would be a dream come true. The town would be so small from up high. The sight would be beautiful. It would be a once in a life time feeling to me. I hope to ride in the hot air balloon so I can see the sight. As I think about it, the sky would be like a painting. The blending of the sky and clouds. The surreal moment would change the way I see my world now. It would probably open my eyes. I hope I get to live in that moment.

States 2019 Committee member Rachel Barber, "We were so happy to provide this contest opportunity to all our students in Auglaize County. Hot air balloons were one of the earliest ways that human beings attempted flight, so the rally is part of the great timeline leading toward Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon."

Organized by John Zvez, the Hot Air Balloon Rally at the Auglaize County Fairgrounds will include balloon launches on July 12 and July 13 at 6:30 pm and a night glow event at 8:45 pm on July 13. Eleven balloons will participate in the rally, in honor of the Apollo 11 mission. The event is free and open to the public. Taylor and her accompanying adult will take their ride on July 12 (weather permitting), while Kaylee and her accompanying adult will take their ride on July 13.

The 2019 Committee's mission is to develop and implement public programs, events, and legacy efforts that reflect the many themes associated with the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon walk, and to ensure that Wapakoneta and Auglaize County are at the forefront of this worldwide commemoration.