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Making Science Take Flight

Want to show young people that learning science is fun? Show them fun ways to learn it. That's the reasoning behind iPRAXIS' initiative with the Black Pilots of America (BPA), Roscoe Draper Chapter, announced by iPRAXIS Executive Director Dr. Darryl Williams and Draper Chapter President Derrick Grier.

Everyone knows how exciting it is to dream of being a flying ace, and everyone who ever made a paper airplane knows the basic mechanics, but stepping into a real-life cockpit is another whole ballgame. Students in iPRAXIS partner schools will be encouraged to learn about the range of skills and the plethora of science and technology products that make modern flight safe and enjoyable, in a series of fun demonstrations, field trips and cockpit rides with participating BPA volunteers. They also will have opportunities to develop their own flying skills, using of Microsoft Flight Simulator© in after-class sessions, on Flight School instrument simulators and, if they join the BPA Youth Group, at the controls of real airplanes.

They'll also get to learn history, through the people they'll get to meet: actual members of the famed World War II Tuskegee Airmen. "Coach" Roscoe Draper, the Philly BPA chapter's namesake, taught the Tuskegee Airmen to fly, and he and other Tuskegee Airmen still fly with BPA.

Under the iPRAXIS-BPA partnership, students will join after-school activities in which they learn about aviation careers, hear from BPA members who've won jobs in the air transportation industry, and hone their own skills on simulators. Field trips and tours will take them behind the scenes at airport sites, aviation museums and FAA centers, where they will learn about the gamut of jobs and careers in the aviation field.

Youths who join the BPA Youth Group, which meets once a month at Northeast Airport, can qualify for a special treat: enrollment in the National BPA Summer Flight Academy at Texas Southern University, where two weeks of intensive Ground School and flight instruction can lead to opportunities to solo. Off they go....