



# THE WONDER WOMEN



PARTNER CONTENT

SUPER WOMEN

## DEL SOL AVIATION



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At Del Sol Aviation, we've been training pilots since 2008. We do it all—from private pilot certificates to instrument ratings, and commercial, airline transport pilot certifications to drone pilot certificates. But beyond the licenses, we create a safe, supportive environment where students build not just hours, but confidence and real-world experience. Our goal is to see them take the next step into professional aviation careers.

We are also strong advocates for Women in Aviation International. In fact, we earned the title of "Women's Friendliest Flight School" in 2015 and 2017. Del Sol Aviation was also named "Top Flight Training Company in 2024" by Aerospace and Defense Review. To date, we have trained over 7,000 students to be fixed wing pilots and drone pilots. We've sponsored over 1,400 free discovery flights to young girls and aspiring female aviators, opening doors to dreams of flight. Here are just a few of the success stories of the Wonder Women who have passed through or are currently training at our flight center in Albuquerque.

### **Kirstin Bowman, Certified Flight Instructor**

I was hooked on aviation the day I took my Discovery Flight. I enrolled in flight training the same day. I work with students at all stages of training—from discovery flights to more advanced ratings. A big part of my teaching is focused on real-world flying and decision-making, so students feel confident not just during a lesson, but when they're out there on their own.

I believe in being patient and meeting people where they are. Flying can be overwhelming at first, so I try to create an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and learning at their own pace.

### **Lauren K. Hollingsworth Chavez, Chief Flight Instructor for Albuquerque Aviation Academy**

I earned my CFI (Certified Flight Instructor) certificate from Del Sol several years ago, and I now perform many checkrides (as an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner/DPE) and airman medical exams (as an AME) for Del Sol. I'm proud and appreciative that my flight instructor foundation was at Del Sol Aviation.

As an AME, I conduct medical exams on pilots and Air Traffic Controllers for the safety of the National Airspace System. As a DPE, I conduct practical/flight exams on student pilots and pilots who are advancing in their aviation pursuits. After I started instructing at ABQ Aviation Academy and realized the impact I could make in teenagers lives and careers, I was hooked! I became an AME and then a DPE in large part to continue helping them.

### **Althea Thompson, Office Manager, Drone Instructor, Student**

I had always wanted to become a pilot and was lucky enough to start working for Del Sol Aviation upon arriving in New Mexico. I first became a certified drone instructor and began teaching our knowledge course with an excellent pass rate. I have continued teaching while pursuing flight training and consider myself to be very fortunate to have my learning and teaching go hand-in-hand.

Earning my private pilot certificate is a great source of pride for me. All the men in my family have had some level of flying experience—grandfathers, father, husband, and brother—but I am the first to earn a pilot certificate. I think my grandfathers would be quite proud of me.

### **Alison Martin, Aviation Instructor**

I developed and currently teach a drone course at Del Sol Aviation with the aim of helping others earn their FAA Commercial Drone Certificate. This allows them to operate drones for compensation, fulfilling requirements for a job or creating entrepreneurship opportunities.

One of my favorite groups of classes each year are the ones where we host high schoolers from northeastern New Mexico. With the help of a grant, the kids can come to Albuquerque for three days to earn their drone licenses, practice flying and creating orthomosaics, and learn how to integrate their products into Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Many of those students have gone back to become entrepreneurs in their own communities.