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SHAESTA WAIZ SELECTED AS RECIPIENT OF 2017 STINSON TROPHY

Washington, DC, February 6, 2018 – The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is pleased to announce that Shaesta Waiz, Founder of Dreams Soar, Inc. has been named the recipient of the 2017 Katherine and Marjorie Stinson Trophy.

The Stinson Trophy was created in 1997 by NAA to honor the accomplishments of two sisters - Katherine and Marjorie Stinson. These sisters were among the first 11 American women to be certified as airplane pilots through the Aero Club of America (the predecessor of NAA). Their flying school helped numerous U.S. and foreign pilots to earn their Aero Club licenses, the precursor to FAA pilot certificates. The trophy recognizes a living person for "...an outstanding and enduring contribution to the role of women in the field of aviation, aeronautics, space, or related sciences."

Shaesta is being recognized for "...utilizing her solo around the world flight to inspire and encourage girls and young women to pursue careers in aviation and STEM."

Born in a refugee camp in Afghanistan in 1987, Shaesta and her family traveled to America when she was very young to escape the Soviet-Afghan war. One of six sisters, Shaesta grew up in Richmond, California and attended school in an underprivileged school district. Her passion for aviation stemmed from her first commercial airline flight from California to Florida at the age of 18. That experience proved to be life-changing, as she fell in love with aviation and realized she could become a professional pilot.

Shaesta became the first in her family to receive college and post-graduate degrees, earning both a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. She obtained her private and commercial pilot ratings and became the first certified civilian female pilot from Afghanistan.

Shaesta dreamed of sharing her story with hopes of inspiring girls and young women to achieve their goals regardless of the challenges and traditions they face. She boldly decided to try to become the youngest woman to circumnavigate the world, solo, in a single engine airplane, hosting outreach events along her journey to engage, empower, inspire and motivate youth to explore STEM related fields and aviation education. In order to make her vision a reality, Shaesta founded Dreams Soar, Inc. in 2014. She assembled her "Dream Team," comprised of collegiate students and seasoned industry professionals, who

would support numerous facets of the global flight program including outreach, logistics, fund raising, and daily operations.

After years of planning, on May 13, 2017, Shaesta launched her around-the-world flight from Daytona Beach, Florida. Her leased Beechcraft A36 Bonanza was specially modified to support the long legs and open water flights, with a fuel capacity of 300 gallons giving her an extended range of 2800 nautical miles.

Shaesta's journey took her to 22 countries, including Afghanistan, the country of her birth. She held 32 outreach events over the course of her flight, inspiring over 3,000 youth to pursue careers in STEM and aviation. Four and a half months after her trip began, Shaesta accomplished her mission, landing back at Daytona Beach on October 4, 2017.

Shaesta and the Dreams Soar team continue to work to advance their objectives and programs beyond the momentous flight through continued outreach and a scholarship program, which will empower the young children that were inspired by Shaesta during her global flight.

"I am truly humbled and honored to receive this special award. I remember when I was first introduced to aviation, I was instantly inspired by the bravery and ambition of Katherine and Marjorie Stinson. This trophy will serve as a beacon to me, to always remind me of the importance of inspiring young woman around the world, similar to how the Stinson sisters inspired me."

Members of the Selection Committee were Joni Kelsey, 2015 Stinson Trophy Recipient; Krisstie Kondrotis, Spirit Aerosystems, NAA Board of Directors; Clay McConnell, Airbus, NAA Board of Directors; and Kelly Murphy, Women in Aviation International.

The Stinson Trophy will be presented on a date and location to be determined. For more information, please visit www.naa.aero.

The National Aeronautic Association is a non-profit membership organization devoted to fostering opportunities to participate fully in aviation activities and to promoting public understanding of the importance of aviation and space flight to the United States. NAA is the caretaker of some of the most important aviation awards in the world and certifies all national aviation records set in the United States. For information, visit www.naa.aero.

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