

GREEN EAGLES

by Bill Anderes

On May 3, 2003, nine intrepid Young Eagles took to the skies over Greenwood Lake airport in West Milford, NJ, courtesy of Chapter 501. Not unusual one might say, since Chapter 501 flies Young Eagles twice a year at its home base at Lincoln Park, NJ. But these youngsters were special in that they were residents of Green Residential Community Home in Ringwood, NJ.

Green RCH is one of 21 homes administered by the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission throughout the State. Located in rural Passaic County on the grounds of Ringwood State Park, Green RCH is a facility for younger male juvenile offenders between the ages of 13 and 16.



Y.E. Coordinator Bill Anderes runs ground school at Green Residential Home the day before the flights.

Jim Doone, Superintendent of the facility explains, "the program's goal is to provide a safe, secure, and structured environment where program participants can learn to modify their behaviors and reactions. The staff, acting as role models, instill a sense of esprit de corps, teach realistic goal setting and promote responsible decision making. The kids learn to adapt to change, accept accountability and develop self-discipline. In addition to attending formal school classes every day, the youngsters perform community service work on the grounds of Ringwood State Park, Ringwood Manor and Skylands Manor. They also provide assistance to the municipal government, ambulance corps, fire department, a local battered women's shelter and maintain one of the town's main roads through the Adopt-A-Road Program. Through a contract with the Playwright's Theater of New Jersey, the youngsters are instructed in the writing and performance of one-act plays which are presented at the Playwright's Theater in Madison, NJ."

Last fall, Doone and 501 Secretary Dick Wedemeyer crossed paths at a social function. After hearing Wedemeyer's Young Eagles sales pitch, Doone was eager to find a way to participate in the program. Not only would the youngsters be introduced to the thrill of flying, but Doone envisioned using the program as



Newly minted Young Eagles show off certificates.

an incentive for self-improvement and to enhance goal accomplishment. Working through the Juvenile Justice Commission, Doone was able to obtain State acceptance of Young Eagles as an approved activity. Planning continued



Y.E. pilot Dick Wedemeyer signs off 9 new Young Eagles at Greenwood Lake Airport.

with Chapter 501 throughout the winter, culminating in the May 3rd event. The Greenwood Lake airport provided a convenient location in that it is only 5 miles from the Green RCH facility. The day before, Bill Anderes, Chapter 501 Young Eagles Coordinator, conducted a ground school session for the enthusiastic participants. Anderes said, "When one of the kids is able to explain Bernouli's Principle to the other kids, you know you have an enthusiastic bunch.!"

Wedemeyer, Chapter 501 Treasurer, provided the rides in his C-172 the next day. Chapter members Linda Giordano, Gene Friedemann, Don Provost and Howie Burch also graciously helped out.

With the average residency of the youngsters being between 6 to 12 months, it is expected that Green RCH will participate in Chapter 501's Young Eagles Program on a regular basis in the future. To further enhance cooperation between Young Eagles and the Juvenile facilities, contact information for the other 20 facilities has been sent to the appropriate EAA Chapters throughout the State and visa-versa.

The lesson learned---there are Young Eagles out there in those nooks and crannies, especially youths who may need a helping hand. As far as nine eager boys in Ringwood, NJ go, color them GREEN!