



**Eastern Suffolk BOCES provides educational services that transform lives...  
- Ronald DeFilippo, Aviation student, Career and Technical Education**

Mr. Ronald DeFilippo, found his calling when he visited the ESBOCES vendor table during the Air Balloon Show at the Brookhaven Calabro Airport where he met Mr. Greg Karp, ESBOCES instructor for Airframe Maintenance. Ron, a student in the Miller Place UFSD, was struggling to find a clear career path. He told his father, "I met Mr. Karp and he's a pilot and has flown all over the world and is a FAA Certified Maintenance Technician and he can fix airplanes...and I want to be just like Mr. Karp."

At an early age, the DeFilippo family was advised that Ron had a learning disability. He had some problems with time sequencing and math. From elementary school through high school, he struggled to succeed. Though a tall, fit, and strapping young man, Ron refused to play sports for fear of being kicked off teams when he failed math. He secured various jobs throughout his high school years working as a landscaper, or on a lobster boat but for one reason or another, these career paths weren't for him.

Mr. DeFilippo recalls how excited his son was when he returned from visiting the Balloon Show at the Calabro Airport. "I never saw my son so excited about the prospect of working on planes." He told Ron, "If you pass math I will sign you up for pilot lessons." Not only did he pass 11<sup>th</sup> grade math, but to everyone's surprise, he passed the Math Regents. After that, Ron went straight to his guidance counselor and signed up for the Airframe Maintenance program. Ron said, "My dad took me to the Dowling College School of Aviation and signed me up for flying lessons in the summer of my junior year at Miller Place High School." Since attending the BOCES Aviation program, Ron has maintained a 91 average, which earned him recognition in the National Technical Honor Society.

Ron's flight plan of life is right on schedule. With the support and assistance of ESBOCES staff, he is soaring to new heights. To date he has over 75 hours of flight training, he has flown solo and landed a part-time position with Executive Flightways, a charter company at MacArthur Airport. Ron said, "ESBOCES provided me a way to achieve my goals." Mr. DeFilippo applauds ESBOCES for being a "safety-net" and helping his son. He recently addressed the ESBOCES Board for the sole purpose of thanking the ESBOCES staff for helping his son to find his way in life and credits ESBOCES with his son's success.

Ron shared, "The staff at ESBOCES has been very supportive and helped me solve different problems that came up during the school year." From making new friends to teaching him how to dress for success and interview for a job, to helping him secure his first aviation job, Ron regards ESBOCES with respect and Mr. Karp with admiration, "He was my mentor. He has a great reputation in the aviation industry. He taught me everything he knows and he knows a lot. Now I'm on my way to becoming a certified aviation/airframe mechanic."