

## Pilots for Christ flies families in need



[Rebecca Burylo](#), Montgomery Advertiser 7:38 p.m. CDT June 13, 2016



Finding out her 16-year-old son had stage-4 cancer put Sandy Hollinger's life into a tail-spin. Pilots for Christ pulled their family back on course and gave them hope again.



Mother Sandy Hollinger shares how Pilots for Christ helped her son Rebecca Burylo



Family poses to support Denver Shuttlesworth as he battles cancer. *(Photo: Contributed)*



Denver Shuttlesworth stays at St. Jude for treatment and received signed Alabama football memorabilia from Coach Nick Saban. *(Photo: Contributed)*

A nonprofit, volunteer and faith-based organization, Pilots for Christ flies patients suffering from very low immune systems or limited mobility to specialized hospitals across the country – at no charge. Hollinger's son, Denver Shuttlesworth had one request. He wanted to be treated at St. Jude and Pilots for Christ made that happen.

Even though the ministry is based in Monroeville, less than 30 minutes from where Hollinger lives in Atmore, between Montgomery and Mobile she only heard about the group when a friend of hers suggested it.

It was shortly after Hollinger's son was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma stage-4 cancer in 2014.

"When Denver was diagnosed we were just heartbroken," Hollinger said. "We had no forewarning of any kind. We went to several doctors that told him what he was feeling was just growing pains."

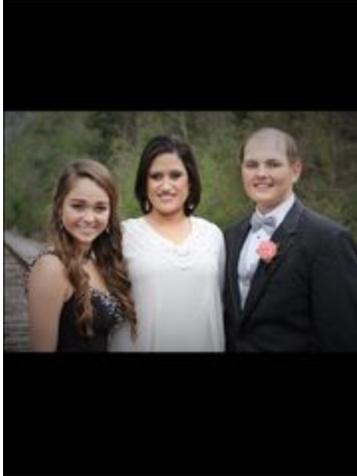


**Sandy Hollinger, left pose with her daughter, mother and son, Denver Shuttlesworth. (Photo: Contributed)**

They were devastated at the news and unsure of what their future held. Since then, Pilots for Christ have helped Hollinger's family travel back and forth from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Although she works full-time for Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Hollinger insists on driving the seven-hour trip to St. Jude's in Memphis, Tenn. as much as she can. It is when her son is too weak for the long drive that Pilots for Christ is there to help reduce the travel time to under an hour.

"Pilots for Christ has been there for us throughout this journey," Hollinger said. "They're always there to offer to fly us and have never asked for anything in return. They have truly been a blessing and I thank God for placing them in our lives."



**Denver Shuttlesworth stands with his mother, Sandy Hollinger, center and his prom date. (Photo: Contributed)**

Now 18, Shuttlesworth has returned to school and enjoys sports and school events. Pilots for Christ even flew him back from St. Jude in time to be crowned Homecoming King at his 10th grade prom and this fall, he is looking forward to enjoying his senior year at J.U. Blacksher High School. He is not in remission, but he is doing "much better." His next visit to St. Jude is June 23.

Hollinger was able to give back to Pilots for Christ last week by helping the organization's celebration dinner at Montgomery's Cramton Bowl Multiplex. There, supporters of the organization heard Hollinger's story and many others who have benefited from the ministry.

Formed in 1994, Pilot for Christ's mission is simply, "to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ through serving those in need of aviation transportation."

Since then, they have flown 1,736 mission flights and 310 flights last year alone. They are currently on track to complete more than 400 "flights of mercy" this year, according to Rosalyn Sales, the development director for Pilots for Christ. Missions include time-critical flights for organ transplants and flights for those physically unable to fly commercially.

Pilots for Christ in Monroeville is one of the largest of the 22 chapters in the United States that make up Pilots for Christ International. They service Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, the Florida panhandle and Louisiana. They fly patients to Mayo Clinics in the midwest to other clinics in New York, Boston and more with round trip cost totaling \$3,400.



**PFC receives Mexia Baptist largest donation ever.**



**Denver and his family stand outside one of the Pilots for Christ's airplane.**

To find out more, visit [pilotsforchrist.net](http://pilotsforchrist.net) or on [Facebook](#)