***For Immediate Release***

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**Single Mother of Five Pursues Dreams to Become Pilot**

CEDAR CITY, Utah -

Shana Bartell is defying the odds to pursue her dreams of becoming a professional pilot with the help of [Southern Utah University’s Aviation program](https://www.suu.edu/aviation/). Bartell is a single mother to five children, as well as legal guardian to her younger sister. Originally from Taylorsville, her family moved to Cedar City in 2014 for her husband's work. Two years later, she and her husband divorced, but Bartell made the decision to stay in Cedar City because of her desire to become a pilot.

“I saw the aircrafts flying around when I moved here and knew I wanted to get involved,” said Bartell.

To get her foot in the door, Bartell applied and became a receptionist for the Aviation Program. “Day one, I knew I loved the industry,” remarked Bartell. “It took me until after my divorce to decide to fly though. I needed to find a way to support my kids on my own. I was looking into options and decided if I was making a big change, I should pursue something I know I’ll enjoy. I enrolled in the program, and have loved every minute of it.”

Along with being a student, Bartell has been working as an apprentice on the aviation mechanic team. This allows her to work towards her Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics License, while continuing to attend school and provide for her family.

“Shana came to work in the Aviation Maintenance Department as a student worker in July 2017,” said [Jared Britt](https://www.suu.edu/experts/profile/?expert=jared), director of Global Aviation Maintenance Training. “She was chosen because of her hard work ethic and drive. Aviation Maintenance requires your full attention when you are working, and Shana was very good at being focused during her shift. Shana learned very quickly and became knowledgeable in the aspects of aviation maintenance. She proved to be an asset to the maintenance team.”

Bartell has been inspired by many in the Aviation Program, admiring the passion each individual has for what they do, and how much they have taught her.

“They continuously check up on me and cheer me on,” said Bartell. “Even instructors that have left for other pilot jobs follow up and ask me how my training is going.”

Being a mom while working and attending school is no easy feat, and Bartell admits that balancing all three tasks is often overwhelming. However, she makes it clear that she loves her children dearly and wants to provide them with the best life she can.

When she first became interested in the program she sat her kids down and told them about the program and the demands it would take.

“I told them that I would be gone a lot and would need to study when I was home,” said Bartell. “We made a plan together, and I let each of them choose where and what they thought they could help with. I couldn't have done it without their support and encouragement.”

Since beginning the program, Bartell has earned her Private Pilot Certificate. She is currently working on her Instrument rating, as well as her Airframe & Powerplant Mechanic certificates. She’s flown night flights, solo flights, and all over the country; including flying over Mount Rushmore, Yellowstone National Park, the Mississippi River, and Devils Tower.

Bartell is grateful for the opportunity she’s had, and for all those who have helped her reach this point. “I dream often of the life this will give my family. I look to inspire my children, my little sister, other students, and single mothers by showing them that with enough work, you can make incredible things happen.”

The road hasn’t been easy, but she stands as an inspiration to many with her determination to work hard and accomplish her goals.

“Considering my situation, it was a little crazy for me to take on such a difficult and expensive degree,” admitted Bartell. “However, I know this is what I’m meant to do; aviation is my passion and where I belong.”

Bartell will graduate with her [Associate Degree of Applied Science Aviation Technology](https://www.suu.edu/aviation/aas.html) in April 2020, and intends to continue on to earn her [Bachelor's in Aviation](https://www.suu.edu/news/2017/12/trustees-approve-new-degrees.html) at SUU right after.

**About Southern Utah University**  
Southern Utah University (1897) evolved from a teacher training institution to a public regional university, offering more than 140 undergraduate and 17 graduate programs.

With world-class project based learning, unique undergraduate research opportunities, and a personalized learning environment (19:1 student to faculty ratio) students lead projects mentored by expert professors. True to the University's core vision, SUU faculty, staff and administrators enable students to honor thought in all its finest forms, achieve excellence in their chosen field, and create positive change in the world.

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