

# Planes Take Off For Puppies At FlyPups Inc.

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PHOTO BY VICKI HOLLAND



**W**hat do homeless dogs, planes and Buck Davidson have in common? FlyPups Inc., a nonprofit organization founded by Matthew Kiener that brings dogs marked for euthanasia at their local shelters to a new family or a no-kill shelter with room for them. Kiener founded the organization to combine his love of flying with his love of dogs and can't think of a better way to spend his days.

International event rider Davidson sits on FlyPups Inc.'s Board of Directors. Kiener's wife, Jessica Kiener, is a friend and student of Davidson's. She rode My Boy Bobby before Davidson took over the ride to finish third at the 2009 Rolex Kentucky CCI\*\*\*\*.

"I think it's a great cause," said Davidson. "Matt is passionate about flying. It serves a few purposes: Matt gets to fly his plane and save puppies. At the end of the day we're all animal lovers."

Matthew is an estate manager for

Davidson's longtime supporters, Carl and Cassandra Segal, in Pottersville, N.J., and owns his own Piper Saratoga.

Davidson has yet to go on a flight with Matthew, but he does stay involved. He met up with the Kieners at the Ocala, Fla., airport, just a few minutes from his winter base, to help get a load of rescued dogs on the plane. Plus, Davidson's status as a top rider brings publicity to the organization. "They've always been big supporters of mine, and I'm a big supporter of theirs," said Davidson.

FlyPups makes travel quicker, easier and less stressful on the dogs. "A couple of hours in the air is just so much better for them [than other modes of travel]," said Matthew.

Advocates from the shelters, both kill and no-kill, contact Matthew when they need his services. These same advocates determine which dogs will make the trip to the no-kill shelters based on adoptability.

Matthew tries never to fly alone on

**Buck Davidson, Matthew Kiener and Jessica Kiener prepare Dale, Brennan and Snickers (two four-month-old German Shepherds and a Pomeranian) for their trip from the Ocala International Airport to Eleventh Hour Rescue in New Jersey.**

his rescue missions. "I generally take someone with me, just in case something ever happens with the dogs," he said.

He's been flying these trips on his own dime for years. "I incorporated and made it a nonprofit organization in 2013," Matthew said. "After doing a few of these, the word spread. So then FlyPups had to be formed to get some donations."

With high fuel costs, Matthew sometimes has to turn down rescue missions. "It's a terrible position to be put in. Either I put up the money for gas, or the dogs are going to be euthanized," he said.

If you're interested in helping give a second chance at life to shelter dogs, find out how to donate at [flypups.org](http://flypups.org).

