

Wheelies With Wings soar

by Janny Ryan

Bruno DeSimone, a 30-year-old wheelchair user from Mill Park recently had the experience of his life. Sponsored by Wheelies With Wings, Bruno won a Suzi Duncan 14-day learn-to-fly scholarship. Valued at \$7,000 the course includes up to 20 hours of ground and flying instruction, plus all meals and accommodation. The only requirement was that Bruno get himself to Cooma – he travelled there with his parents, Ciara and Elio, but once there took up residence in the nurses quarters of the Cooma Hospital, a friendly and



comfortable setting. He joined two fellow awardees – Phil Sleep from South Australia and Tim Jones from Queensland. The best part? 'Just learning how to fly an aeroplane,' of course.

Bruno was lucky to have met wheelchair-user and a pilot instructor, Suzi Duncan at a local community centre where she works part time. Suzi, a Polio thriver with an alpha personality, was an early founder of Wheelies with Wings. Suzi saw Bruno as a perfect candidate for the course, 'Although Bruno's disabilities and heavy medication prevent him from flying solo he can co-pilot. It's about opening up vistas and presenting a sense of possibility in a person's life'. The final award ceremony, according to Suzi, was extraordinary with many from the aviation industry present and with the town of Cooma fully behind the project.

David Clegg, who now organises Wheelies With Wings is always keen to hear from wheelchair users who want to learn to fly, 'We would like, funding



permitting, to have another course for two/three students in October'.

Congratulations Bruno on being in the right place at the right time and being prepared to give it a go!



above L-R: Jason, pilot instructor from Canberra, Phil Sleep, Tim Jones and Bruno DeSimone
far left: Suzi Duncan

Wheelies With Wings

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