

RE/MAX hot air balloon lands at Clinton Township's Miami Elementary



RE/MAX of Southeastern Michigan brings one of its hot air balloons to Miami Elementary School for interactive educational experience. SUBMITTED PHOTO

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Students at Miami Elementary watch as hot air balloon pilot Ted Gauthier brings the balloon to a landing. SUBMITTED PHOTO.

The RE/MAX hot air balloon is more than a logo as students at Miami Elementary in Clinton Township recently learned.

It really flies and it landed on the grounds of their school.

The visit -- which no doubt had the kids wide-eyed and wondering -- was part of a special presentation hosted by RE/MAX of Southeastern Michigan agent Shannon Parker in which students learned cool facts related to the science of hot air balloons.

Demonstrating how hot air rises using the principals of thermal dynamics and the mechanisms that allow him to launch and navigate his way through the blue skies of Michigan was RE/MAX balloon pilot Ted Gauthier.

RE/Max maintains the world's largest fleet of hot-air balloons.

The familiar red, white and blue balloon, which stands 80-feet tall and symbolizes the company's "above the crowd" philosophy, is often seen at shows and festivals around the state. The balloon program and visits like the one to Miami Elementary allow RE/MAX agents to give back to their local communities.

Five fun facts

Here are a few more things to know about hot-air balloons:

- The first hot air balloon was invented in France, by the Montgolfier brothers, in 1783.
- The first passengers to enjoy the thrill of flying in a hot air balloon were not people, but animals! These test pilots included a sheep, duck and rooster, all of which returned to the ground safely after their flight.
- Unlike an airplane, pilots cannot steer a hot air balloon. The pilots are at the mercy of the wind direction, which is why they pay close attention to local weather reports.
- The largest hot-air balloon festival takes place in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During the Balloon Fiesta, 700 balloons can be seen flying in the air over nine days.
- Want to see more balloons? Howell's [Michigan Challenge Balloonfest](#) coming up June 22-24, features a variety of activities including the opportunity to go for a ride.