NEWS RELEASE

Holiday Spirit: Miami based gate agent gives customers a festive send-off

12/21/2016



“Be happy all the time,” is the motto of Miami-based gate agent Raul Correa, who has been a part of the American Airlines family for 20 years.

His energy can’t be missed, especially around the holidays, as he helps passengers board their flights, including flights with service to his native San Juan, Puerto Rico. It’s more of a festive send-off than customers are used to, but regular flyers have come to know that it’s how Raul does his job. “I love to give, I love to serve,” he says.

With a guiro (a percussion instrument) in hand and small giveaways from the dollar store, Raul sings holiday tunes in English and Spanish and encourages passengers to join in. But his passion for people isn’t just confined to passengers. He is proud to tell you his favorite part of the job is working with his fellow American Airlines team members. “I love the teamwork,” Raul says.

Raul started in the airline industry in New York City, then moved to Puerto Rico and has now been in Miami since 2008. His professional journey has impacted his life in more than just his career.

A chance encounter with an American Airlines passenger helped Raul connect with his own father who he had lost touch with after only having met once when Raul was 21 years old.

Recently, while working a flight that was heading to San Juan, Raul helped a passenger who had missed his flight get rebooked on to the next available one. As Raul tells the story, the two men began discussing the town they were from, and as luck would have it, they were both from Caguas. In fact, Raul's father was the passenger's psychiatrist. The passenger wrote down Raul's phone number and a few days later, to Raul's surprise, his father called him.

"Last month I got a call from my father saying he wanted to embrace me, he wanted to hug me, it was wonderful," said Raul. "I hadn't spoken to him in 45 years. I got to reconnect with my father, all because of an American Airlines passenger."

Raul and his father have maintained communication and have a great relationship, he says. Raul is heading to Puerto Rico for his birthday in January to spend it with his father.