Proud of his contributions to his Tulsa community

When Jake Hollcroft, hangar operations coordinator, Tech Ops – Tulsa, was 19 years old, he came out to his mother — and was forced to leave home because of who he was.



Jake was working at a local fast food restaurant making minimum wage, and his options for housing were limited. He soon found himself living in his car. But he had a goal and a dream, and his current circumstances weren't going to stop him from reaching either. His goal? EMT school. His dream? American Airlines.



Jake became interested in being an EMT when his father passed away following a motorcycle accident. He remembers being at the hospital watching how hard the staff worked to save his father's life, and he wanted to pay it forward.

When he found himself homeless, he knew it was time to start on that goal. He applied to EMT school and began working in materials with Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) in Tulsa. With the help of coworkers and steadier pay, he was able to afford housing. He received his EMT certification and went on to work in that field for nine years.

Along the way, Jake remembers seeing a story for American Airlines that featured gay-friendly vacation options. "This was something that spoke directly to me, and I was surprised to see it. Living in Tulsa, American was always considered one of the best places to work, but I wasn't sure if it was for me. After seeing that ad, I knew I really wanted to be there," he said.

While he liked being an EMT, Jake was starting to take an interest in computer programming. He enrolled at Tulsa Community College and set his sights on working at American. For two years, he applied for every job possible to get his foot in the door. When he landed the hangar operations coordinator position in 2016, it brought tears to his eyes. "I felt accomplished, really for the first time ever," he said.

Jake discovered information about American's Employee Business Resource Groups, local organizations that created to represent many employees and their beliefs, nationalities and backgrounds.

One drew his attention immediately — PRIDE, a group devoted to supporting LGBT and the community. He noticed there was not a chapter established in Tulsa. He worked with Stacey Brown, director of component repair and the managing sponsor, and established the first PRIDE EBRG in Tulsa in January 2017, where he was elected president. "Starting PRIDE has really helped me with networking and social interaction. It made me realize I can do a lot more than I ever thought I could," Jake said.

Since the chapter began, more than 20 members have signed up. Jake plans to work on internal events with PRIDE, but also wants to make an impact with community outreach.

"A diverse workforce helps American, because we bring things to the table that may never have been thought about," Jake said. "People from the LGBTQ community may think a maintenance base environment may not be for them, but it is, and PRIDE is proof of that."

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