NEWS RELEASE

Straight to the Gate: Rodrigo Ribeiro

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Dreams really do come true. Just ask Rodrigo Ribeiro who is living his dream as an American Airlines pilot.

“So I wanted to work for American for a long time, ever since I was a kid and I grew up in the Dallas/Fort Worth area,” said Rodrigo. “When I was 19, I got a job at American headquarters working in AAdvantage customer service, and I told them, that day, my goal was to become a pilot for American.”

Fast forward several years later, the boy who took flying lessons to get over his fears, is now safely and confidently at the controls as a First Officer on the Airbus. He is based in Los Angeles.

Rodrigo recently celebrated his first anniversary as a mainline pilot for American. And although he’s a relatively new pilot at American, his love of the airline and all aircraft types runs deep. As evident by his license plate of more than 10 years; AA787.

But making this dream a reality didn’t come easy, it took a lot of hard work. “I went to flight school, I’ve worked the ramp, gate, ticket counter, then I worked for American Eagle as a pilot, and was there for a few years – went onto a competitor to get some more experience and finally got my dream job at American,” said Rodrigo.

Rodrigo says he is also thankful he works for a company that embraces the LGBT community. He first met recruiters from the flight department at the National Gay Pilots Association. “I’m proud to come to work at a company where I can be myself and I don’t have to pretend to be someone I am not.”

He also welcomes the inclusive nature of the world’s largest airline. “I was just in the Long Beach pride parade, marching with fellow team members and we had an American Airlines float – American is proud to support our community, said Rodrigo. “Being an LGBT team member in any company may make some feel isolated, or find it difficult to find common ground, but American and the Pride EBRG work to make all team members feel included and valued.”

Rodrigo looks forward too many more years with American. “This was always my dream,” said Rodrigo. “Our people are amazing and we like to take good care of our customers.”

A commitment to diversity

Earlier this year, a number of American team members attended the annual National Gay Pilots Association (NGPA) Industry Expo and Winter Warm-Up. They met with more than 1,000 LGBT and ally pilots and aviation enthusiasts to celebrate and promote diversity and inclusion in the aviation industry. In 2016, American became a diamond-level sponsor of NGPA, and this year is giving away a $5,000 scholarship and two Boeing 737 type ratings to aspiring aviators through the NGPA. As we continue to celebrate Pride Month, learn more about the **NGPA.**