NEWS RELEASE

Sister Act

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“I’ve always been lucky to have my older sister. I’ve looked up to her in many ways, for as long as I can remember,” said Flight Service Manager Mandy Blaize, echoing a sentiment shared by little sisters everywhere. It’s a common feeling, to look up to older siblings. Admire them for being sports stars or fashion icons, but Mandy looked up to her sister Melodie for a different reason. “Watching her beat cancer was the most vital example she could have ever set for me,” Mandy says.

American Airlines collaborates with Stand Up To Cancer to host discussions for our team members about the latest in cancer research and treatment.

“Always a shining star, her light only seemed to get brighter,” Mandy said about watching her sister go through cancer treatment. “She regularly surfed and skated between doctors’ appointments. She taught herself how to play the ukulele so she could serenade the nurses and other patients hooked up to IV machines in the cancer center. She let artists paint masterpieces on her bald head and only wore wigs with outlandish outfits.” Mandy said that Melodie remained optimistic and radiant throughout it all. And after eight grueling months of treatment, she went into remission.

It was barely a year after her sister went into remission when Mandy found herself on the same path her sister had just traveled: a cancer diagnosis. “Having been on the other side watching my sister, I know cancer in a loved one is a burden that you wish desperately to help carry, but cannot,” Mandy says. So she began living a mantra that seemed “logical” to her: “Make the burden seem lighter with a positive attitude and genuine appreciation of each and every day, just like my sister had.”

Mandy had already learned a truth that most

Sisters and cancer survivors Mandy and Melodie kept each other's spirits up during treatments.

people may never fully appreciate or truly understand. "I found that cancer is much easier to go through yourself, than it is to watch someone else battle it," she says. "I hoped that each person I crossed paths with was inspired by my positivity, just as I had been with my sister, and that they used that inspiration to help make their own burden and situation that much easier to carry."

In that same spirit, American Airlines continues its partnership with Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C). The grassroots organization supports groundbreaking research to bring innovative treatments to patients faster, so cancer patients become cancer survivors, just like Mandy and her sister, who are now both cancer free.

SU2C President and CEO Dr. Sung Poblete regularly meets with American Airlines team members at our bases to discuss the latest in cancer research and treatment, the airline's unique collaboration with SU2C and what it all means for our team members worldwide. At a recent event in Miami, Mandy shared her story, paying it forward with the hope and inspiration her sister gave to her.