NEWS RELEASE

Straight to the Gate: Midiam Soto

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Spend just five minutes with American Airlines team member Midiam Soto and it's not hard to see how much she loves her home island of Puerto Rico.

"I love it with all of my heart," she said. "The people of Puerto Rico have a great culture." She describes "delicious food" and "wonderful family traditions" as just two of the reasons she takes such pride in her heritage.

But in the past week, her love for the Commonwealth – and the celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month – has been mixed with deep concern about the condition of the beautiful place she once called home, and the people – including much of her family – who live there. "It is very sad what we are going thru at this moment with Hurricane Maria."

The Category 4 storm slammed into Puerto Rico during the early hours of September 21 as the territory was already trying to recover from Hurricane Irma. Because of Maria, power has been knocked out and communications between Puerto Rico and the mainland have been almost impossible.

Still, Midiam found a way to reach out to her family through the power of social media and a family friend. She

discovered her niece and sister are safe. She is still awaiting word on other members of her family in her hometown of Coamo and “hoping to God they are all doing fine.”

The spirit of the Puerto Rican people has translated into the work Midiam does each day. “I was taught by my parents to share and to care for others,” said Midiam. “They taught me to always do your part to make this a better world no matter where you are and no matter what you have.”

And so, even with concern for her loved ones in her heart, Midiam, who is based at Miami International Airport, has been hard at work helping to get American Airlines customers to their destinations.

“This is a very special place to work,” Midian said. “For me the Miami hub is a major station. It’s challenging. We have a beautiful family here and we always do our best to help our customers. I just love working in Miami.”

As an International Departure Coordinator, Midiam is responsible for helping all workgroups – from Fleet Service to Flight and even Tech Ops – keep international flights on schedule.

“It’s a special program we have here focused on our Flagship flights – specifically those going to destinations in Europe and South America,” Midiam said. “I like the opportunity to help coordinate and be a liaison putting together all the different activities that take place to be able to get these premium flights out on time.”

Midiam has been with American Airlines for 23 years and actually started her career in Puerto Rico. “I come from San Juan,” she said. “I started in Reservations.” She also worked in Dallas/Fort Worth before settling in Miami.

No matter the position, she doesn’t think twice about going above and beyond for her customers. She recalls a time when she helped a young mother from Guatemala who missed her connecting flight and was running out of supplies. Midiam headed to the store to get diapers and other much needed items. “When I came back, she just smiled and she hugged me and it was so rewarding.”

Midiam also loves to sing Christmas carols to customers during the holidays and loves the Puerto Rican Christmas tradition of parrandas (essentially carnivals or street parties). “Singing our Christmas carols to our family, friends and neighbors; you would love our traditions,” she said.

And she hopes between sharing the spirit of her culture – her beloved Puerto Rican heritage – and successfully getting customers Straight to the Gate, they will continue to love American Airlines, too.

“They say American is one of the best airlines in the world. But it’s not one of the best; it is the best,” she said.