NEWS RELEASE

Straight to the Gate: Simon Gutierrez III

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Friday, Sept. 15 marked the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month. In the Sept./Oct. issue of Celebrated Living, Simon Gutierrez III, Customer Service agent, DFW, reflects on how proud he is of his Mexican American heritage — and of working at American Airlines, where diversity is celebrated.

Everybody has a story. And in my 17 years at American, I've heard many. They're shared by the colleagues I work with, the customers I care for on their journeys and the new friends I've met in the 113 countries I've visited around the world. Each one is unique, but I usually find one common thread: I learn the most from the beginning of someone's story – their heritage – because it's the foundation on which they've built their lives.

When I first started at American as a reservations representative, I didn't realize how diverse this company was. But as I worked my way through a few positions at our corporate headquarters and eventually to the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport as a customer service agent, I quickly learned. I also saw firsthand the advantages of diversity, especially now that American is the world's largest airline.

My own story began in Galveston, Texas, as a third-generation Mexican American. And to this day, I'm proud of what my heritage allows me to contribute. I can elevate the experience of our Spanish-speaking customers by

relating to them in their own language and by sharing my story. I'm able to contribute to the inclusiveness of American as a workplace as co-vice president of the airline's Latin Diversity Network Employee Business Resource Group. And as a group, we're able to give back to the Latin American communities that make up our culture; in just the last couple of years. We've traveled to Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico to serve those in need. American encourages us in these efforts, rewarding our volunteer hours with miles we can donate to the nonprofits of our choice. It makes me proud to see our red, white and blue tail around the world, symbolic of what we stand for as a company.

American is proud to have more than 4,000 team members based in Mexico, the Caribbean and Latin America, a region where we offer more flights to more destinations than any other U.S. carrier. And with a nod to my own heritage, I'm proud to join my colleagues celebrating not only our 75th anniversary of service to Mexico in September, but also National Hispanic Heritage Month, which is marked in the U.S. from September 15 to October 15. I'm proud to be American. I'm just as proud to be Mexican American. And now more than ever, I'm proud to say I work for American. On behalf of the airline and my more than 100,000 colleagues around the world, thanks for flying with us today.