NEWS RELEASE

Straight to the Gate: Wanna Coker

10/27/2017



“The journey has been long and it’s a fight every day.” That’s how Wanna Coker describes her nonstop fight against breast cancer.

“I understood at first it [cancer] was going to be scary,” Wanna said. “It kept me down. But when I added cancer to my to-do list, it just became one of the things, one of the tasks throughout my day that I had to accomplish, and I didn’t give it any more attention than that.”

The Washington, D.C. (DCA)-based Customer Service coordinator was first diagnosed in 2007. She joined American Airlines five years ago.

“I chose to work for American right in the middle of treatment for breast cancer,” she said. “There was a certain point in my life where I felt closed in, sheltered, quiet and I decided to take a job that would place me out front with customers to bring that back out of me.”

It’s a role Wanna embraces on a daily basis. “I like interacting with the customers. I like the day- to-day challenges. I

like meeting different people," she said.

For quite a while, Wanna kept her breast cancer battle to herself. "I call it a silent fight because I don't like to show that I am fighting," she said. "But when you try to hide that you are fighting, it becomes your own internal battle. "

Now, she embraces support and encouragement. "Once a coworker finds out about my battle, and I hear, 'you don't look like you are fighting,'—I love to hear that because it wasn't always this way."

She also believes the power of prayer, helping others and staying positive are instrumental in her day-to-day cancer battle. "The best thing for me: Always find ways to inspire and uplift, educate others and get others involved; that is a joy for me."