American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

National Volunteer Month: A Heart for Others

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Throughout March, we shared stories highlighting the contributions women make to our company and our communities in honor of Women's History Month. Now, as we transition into April, we recognize National Volunteer Month. And in the March/April edition of Celebrated Living, our inflight magazine available in First and Business Class, Phoenix-based flight attendant Stefanie Lathos-Polanco reflected on what both celebrations mean to her.

Spring is one of the most wonderful times of year. As a flight attendant, I have the privilege of seeing colors change and flowers bloom all across the country. It's a chance for all of us to feel more alive, inspired and ready for a fresh start. It's also a season that blends two celebrations close to my heart: Women's History Month in March and National Volunteer Month in April.

For me, the combination is natural. I've been volunteering since I was a little girl. My dad dedicated his entire career to volunteerism, and both of my parents instilled in me the importance of giving back. Doing this work, I learned that when you open the door to a young girl's dreams, you can ignite her passion and enrich her life. And when you open her heart to helping others, you create lifelong connections and compassion. I also saw an opportunity to stand up for women and children and empower them to take charge and make a difference.

That mission is what motivates my work with Girl Up, an initiative of the United Nations Foundation that helps girls' dreams become a reality no matter where they are born. It's also why I volunteer as a non-governmental representative of Airline Ambassadors International at the U.N.: to harness the power of travel — and the kindness of travelers — to help and protect underprivileged children.

I'm proud to say American supports me every step of the way in these endeavors, in the same way they support giving back to the communities we serve. One example is our UNICEF Change for Good program, which allows

customers to donate spare change on select international flights to help kids in need. Last year, that effort generated more than $1 million. Less visible but equally as important is the work my colleagues and I do behind the scenes and to support causes that affect all of us: the fight against cancer, combatting human trafficking, supporting our troops and more.

My upbringing and career — and being a woman — have offered me some incredible opportunities to pay it forward and to teach the next generation to do the same. As you read this, I hope you'll consider how you can use your power and greatness to give back – because when we lift each other up, we all rise.

Stefanie Lathos-Polanco
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