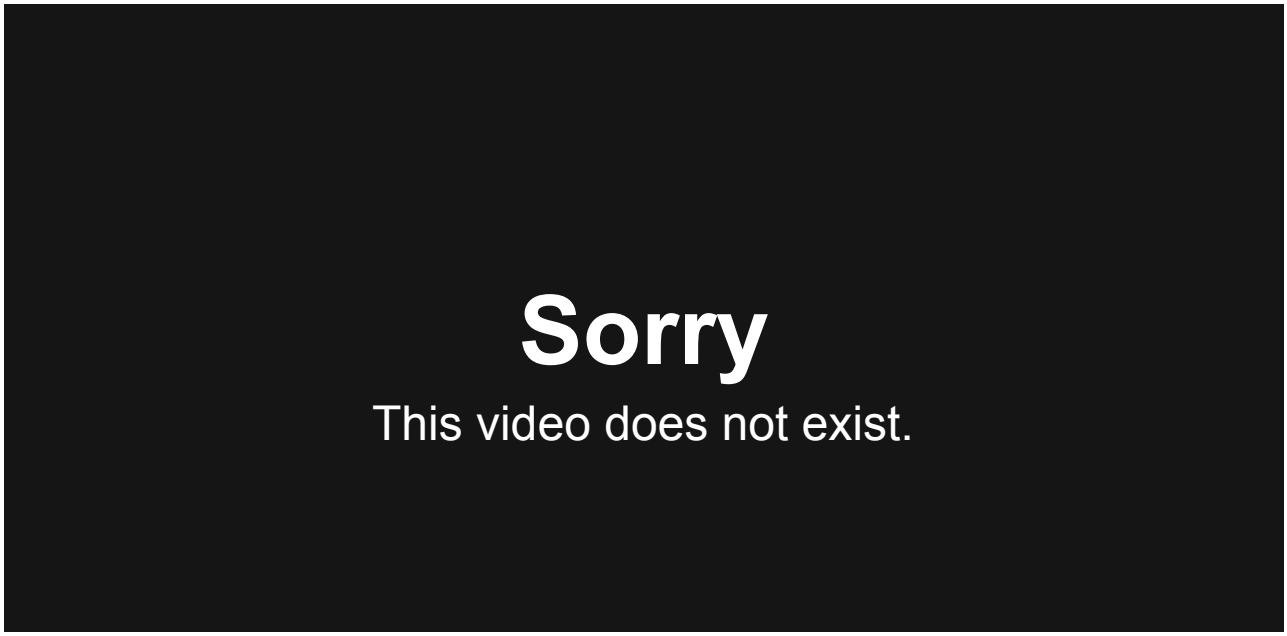
NEWS RELEASE

Three-Time Cancer Survivor Shandra Fitzpatrick is a ‘Beacon of Hope’

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Today, American Airlines, Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) and Marvel Studios’ Avengers: Infinity War **announced a powerful collaboration as they team up in the fight against cancer**. The inspiring initiative features beloved Marvel Studios’ Avengers: Infinity War heroes, esteemed SU2C researchers and American Airlines team members who have personally fought cancer. To raise funds and awareness, and to further Stand Up To Cancer’s mission to bring groundbreaking therapies and treatments to patients as quickly as possible, this first-of-its-kind collaboration comes to life in print, radio, digital and broadcast PSAs with a powerful call to action.

Read more below about our own hero, Los Angeles-based Customer Care Agent Shandra Fitzpatrick, a three-time cancer survivor who believes it’s important to help others through their journey and spread hope.



When Shandra Fitzpatrick first saw the Stand Up To Cancer/American Airlines print PSA on which she's featured, the emotion was real. She squealed with excitement. There she was, standing in a V-formation, Scarlett Johansson's Black Widow on her right, Chris Evans' Captain America on her left. The words "Save Lives Now / Join the battle against cancer today" comprised the stoic call to action scrolled underneath.

Shandra didn't have a choice when it came to joining the battle. The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Customer Service agent is a three-time breast cancer survivor.

She'll actually correct you when you call her that: "No, I'm a person living," she said with her characteristic positive perspective. "I was surviving when I was going through all that chemo, throwing up from Friday to Monday; that's surviving. I survived it three times, yes, but now I'm living."

In fact, she's more than living — she's leading the charge on the battlefield where more than 1.6 million new cancer patients will be diagnosed this year. Since first sharing her story with a poignant testimonial in the pages of American Way in 2014, she's been the go-to person for help at LAX. From fellow team members to customers to people she meets along the way, Shandra said it's important that she is transparent about her experiences so that others feel comfortable talking to her about theirs.

In her column, Shandra mentioned being diagnosed when she was in her 30s, then learning 10 years later that the cancer had returned. She talks about how treatments were successful. And then a year later — another diagnosis. This time it was Stage IV.

She said that after the third diagnosis, she struggled. But then it happened — the cancer's purpose revealed itself. Shandra calls them "lifesticks" — moments of clarity that unveil the true purpose of your experience.

"After that third diagnosis, I was a mess and in a dark place; I couldn't understand it," she said. "Why am I going through this for the third time? I really wrestled with it. But I took a step back and prayed, fasted … I did the things that bring me peace of mind and clarity. And then the answer revealed itself."

Help others. She said that is why she is here.

Shandra knows that her colleagues and customers consider her a beacon of hope — that's her superhero power. She talks to them about support and encouragement, education and awareness … and hope. "They say, 'you're a beacon of hope, Shandra,'" she said. "I'll accept that responsibility, and I walk it and do the best I can. And you know

what, as soon as I leaned into that, it turned around for me. It made sense."

Every day, Shandra hopes to come into contact with those who need her. She has helped colleagues and customers alike through uncertainty. She's taken friends to doctor appointments, guided fellow team members with information and tried and true resources, and she's gathered fellow chemo patients around as they talk about the not-so-discussed real life aspects of living while battling cancer. And most importantly, she has witnessed their joy on the other side of recovery.

"Oh, they are always grateful and they thank me. And I tell them: 'Don't thank me, you go back out there on the battlefield and you help bring another one through — that's how we do this,'" she said. "Find someone to help, and that experience will help you. Believe me."

Recently on a sunny afternoon at LAX, a pilot friend and Shandra were talking on the jetbridge. He all of a sudden took her hand and led her toward the plane. She didn't know what he was doing.

The pilot got on the loud speaker and said, "'Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm your captain today. And this is Shandra Fitzpatrick. She is a cancer survivor and she is my hero." The whole plane stood up and clapped.

"I just teared up and hugged his neck," she said. "You get what you put into this world."

Customer Care Agent Shandra Fitzpatrick and SU2C Scientific Advisor Dr. Phillip A. Sharp stand up with Marvel superheroes.

Shandra gets direction on the set of the broadcast PSA.