American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

# “We All Just Want Happiness and Respect”

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We join the LGBTQ community in recognizing June as Pride Month. In recent remarks to the National Gay Pilots Association, Suzanne Boda, American Airlines Senior Vice President – Los Angeles, spoke about acceptance, respect and the lessons she learned from her parents. Here’s an excerpt of her remarks.

Throughout my time in aviation, I’ve seen a lot of change. Without a doubt, being a part of this industry’s rise to become one of the most open and supportive career options for members of the LGBTQ community has made me tremendously proud. And I know it didn’t happen by accident.

Embracing diversity is something that’s deeply personal to me. It’s truly a part of who I am. Growing up, mom was always the first person to open the door to those in need. In fact, she did it so often that we called our home the local 'welcoming committee.'

Mom told us, 'It’s not our place to judge.'

My father, a local minister, was the same way. The first time I learned about homosexuality came in Sunday school, when one student said someone else was gay, which in those days was unfortunately not as accepted as it is now.

I remember dad simply saying, 'So what if they are? Do you think that God cares?'

Ever since, I’ve gone all around the globe testing my parents’ belief about people. And I’m here to tell you, it’s absolutely true. In every corner of the world and in every walk of life, we all just want happiness and respect.

Taking the time to learn about each other requires us to withhold our judgements. But when we do that, we begin to look at others as what they are — people, just like you and I. And that is how we embrace our differences and

truly celebrate our diversity.

As I look back, I've realized that you can never quit that mindset once you establish it. I could not be more grateful to my parents for instilling that in me.

Suzanne Boda, senior vice president, Los Angeles