American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Champions of the Year honored for their commitment to children around the world

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Tom Block has a family history of giving back. He said a charitable uncle inspired him early on to volunteer his time and effort. So when the American Airlines Flight Attendant heard about **UNICEF**'s Change for Good — a program where flight attendants ("Champions") help raise funds for children by gathering leftover foreign currency during flights — he said there was no question that he would volunteer. "I have been a Champion since the beginning of the program 25 years ago," he said. "It's all about giving back."

His fellow flight attendants recognized his dedication and passion by nominating him to be a Champion of the Year. Tom, who is based out of Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), joined fellow Champions — Soad Hamden, Chicago (ORD) and Patricio Millan, Santiago, Chile (SCL) — in Chicago Saturday to be honored as the 2018 Champions of the Year with a special luncheon and award presentation. Fellow 2018 Champion of the Year Angela Ryall, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina (RDU), could not be in attendance.

Since 1994, American has collected more than $16 million to support UNICEF's Change for Good program. Volunteers, known as Champions for Children, are primarily flight attendants who help by collecting spare currency of any denomination from generous customers on select international flights. Contributions are used to provide lifesaving assistance to the world's poorest, most vulnerable children in more than 190 countries.

While this can be just a bit of change for travelers, this team member-led volunteer effort generates an average of $1 million a year to support the UNICEF's Change for Good program and has helped save and improve the lives of millions of children around the world. In 2018, donations from American's Change for Good program supported work in Guatemala, Peru, Paraguay and other countries in need.

Soad said she is inspired by the children they help and the work that UNICEF is doing to better the lives of children around the world.

From left, UNICEF's Barron Segar, Flight Attendants Tom Block, Soad Hamden and Patricio Millan, and Franco Tedeschi, American Vice President of Hub Operations at ORD, attended the luncheon in Chicago.

> "I never expected to be doing this, but I am so grateful to have the opportunity to collect for UNICEF and help children around the world in this small way. When I am on my flights and collecting for UNICEF, I am always amazed by the generosity of people. We have customers of all ages, nationalities and religious beliefs on our flights and they are so willing to donate and help this cause. It gives me so much joy to see the goodness in people and makes me want to be a better person, too."
> — Angela Ryall, 2018 Champion of the Year

"Every child deserves to be happy," Soad said. "I just realize how fortunate we are. If we can take a little time out of our day, it can help change the world."

Read more about this year's Champions of the Year and their dedication in excerpts from their nominations.
Tom Block: "Tom is so passionate about the Change for Good program and has never ever failed on a flight to participate. You can hear the passion in his voice and passengers relate, whether it's in English or German, to what he is saying and to giving [to help the program]. But we all know what a special person Tom is and where his heart is: He's a believer in the program."

Soad Hamden: "Soad is dedicated to helping those in need. She does so much to have a positive impact where she can, inspiring me and others along the way, and making this world a better place. She is a smart, hardworking and compassionate person who truly gets my vote for someone who stands out for always going above and beyond!"

Patricio Milan: "Patricio is an outstanding Champion and member of the Champions Advisory Council. He exhibits great passion for supporting UNICEF and makes an effort on every trip to encourage his colleagues (one by one) to sign up as Champions."

Angela Ryall: "Angela consistently does the announcements and walks the walk — always with a smile on her face and approachability that is second to none! She is a shining example of what a Champion for Children should be in every sense!"