American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

A family takes flight together

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Mary Jo, Rylee and Steve celebrate after working the same flight.

When Scott Brown first ran in to Mary Jo Conklin, she was a fellow new hire flight attendant in town for training at the American Airlines Training & Conference Center. The two bonded over conversations about the unique career path and what inspired them to apply — opportunities to move to different cities, travel around the world and meet incredible people along the way. That was more than 30 years ago.

After graduation, Scott and Mary Jo were sent to their first base placements in New York City, where they continued to encourage each other in their new endeavor. Eventually, Scott headed to the Dallas-Fort Worth base and Mary Jo transferred to Los Angeles, but they still kept in touch throughout the years, even taking vacations together.

First, there was a long-distance friendship. But when the two flight attendants found themselves together in Dallas-Fort Worth, the two great friends became more than friends. Within the first four years of marriage, their two children, Rylee and Jake, were born.

Caring for two children with a job that requires both parents to be away from home was a challenge initially. However, the scale of a global airline allowed them to bid opposite schedules, vacations and reserve times. The Brown family took vacations like any typical family — but sometimes that meant only one parent could be on vacation with the kids at a time. On some vacations, Rylee and Jake would have one parent the first night and another the second.

The Brown family poses with flight attendant colleagues after a flight to Hawaii.

Scott said that it takes the right partnership to make this lifestyle work.

“When traveling around the world, I sometimes joke with customers saying, ‘I’m a married single parent,’ which takes some additional explaining,” Scott said. “I can recall times when I would return from a trip, and Mary Jo would be waiting with the kids curbside. I would get in the car, and she would take off on her next trip. It was challenging, but we made it work.”

“One of us was always able to be with our children and it worked out for the best,” Mary Jo said. “It was a fun experience taking both of our children on layovers with us and giving them the same opportunity as we had to experience the world.”

The world was small for Rylee and Jake. They knew how to navigate an airport at an early age and had been across continents and oceans many times. It was obvious that the two had developed a passion for travel that their parents fostered. During her third year of college, Rylee decided that she too was meant to travel the skies. While on a trip to Santiago, Chile, she applied to become an American Airlines flight attendant with the ultimate goal of following in her parents’ footsteps.

“I didn’t even know that Rylee had applied,” Mary Jo said. “I’ve always had high aspirations for my children, so to learn that one of them wanted to follow in our footsteps was truly exciting for us.”

Rylee Brown was prepared for takeoff at an early age.

Rylee completed flight attendant training, and then completed her sociology degree during her second year of flying for American.

But for the Brown family, the journey is beginning once again for their youngest son. Jake recently completed his bachelor’s degree and has begun training to be a part of the newest group of American flight attendants. Once he completes the five-week program, he will get to join a group of world-class flight attendants, including his mom, dad and older sister.

“We take great pride in our children’s decision to pursue careers in Flight Service,” Mary Jo said. “It’s a lifestyle that offers great flexibility and allows us to continue experiencing the world from a different perspective.”

Learn more interesting facts and impressive stats about **American Airlines flight attendants**.