American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

# American's Reservations team gives students a place to play in Winston-Salem

10/14/2019

When team members at the American Airlines Winston-Salem Reservations office learned that local elementary school students had nothing but an empty field to play on during recess, they saw an opportunity to help give area children a new place to play.

Deborah Edwards, Customer Care Manager at the Winston-Salem Reservations office, has a long relationship with Speas Global Elementary School. She remembers leading cheers as a child for the local Little League team in the empty field next to the school, years before her children began to attend class there. She would also end up driving the school bus there.

"The impact of this playground is invaluable. With the growth in the community and the need for something like this, it's well past time," Deborah said.

Karina Brown, a Reservations Agent and Community Relations Chair for American's Latin Diversity Network in Winston-Salem, has been a long-time supporter of the elementary school and the values that they instill in their students, too.

"My daughter attended Speas. Their commitment to diversity and inclusion has always resonated with me," Karina said. "We still attend International Night, where the students have an opportunity to learn about different countries and traditions. At American, we value the same principles. Our team saw the opportunity to help a school that has given so much to our community over the years."

After months of planning, more than 50 American volunteers joined the playground-building charity Carter's Kids

and other community members to bring the school's vision to life, constructing an 1,800-square-foot playground designed for children ages 5 to 12. The playground features a slide, rock wall and other climbing structures.

"This is a positive change not only for our school but for our community. This area is packed on the weekends, and this playground gives our kids a place to gather and play," said Principal Robert Ash.

"Play is so important to a child's physical and emotional development," said PTA member and former PTA president Heather Hosey. "This playground allows them to interact with their peers in a way they haven't been able to before this build. The funds we've been raising for the last three years were earmarked for a playground, and we still had a long way to go. Thanks to Carter's Kids and American Airlines, we've made this dream a reality for our kids."

American has more than 700 team members at its Winston-Salem reservations office and 11 local Employee Business Resource Groups that regularly volunteer in the community.

"Our job is to take care of our customers, and our customers are here in our community. We have team members whose children attend this school, and it's important for us to care for them too," said Kathy Saunders, Manager of Global Reservations. "We are proud to come together and help the community where it's needed."

Winston-Salem Reservations team members celebrated the finished playground in partnership with Carter's Kids at Speas Global Elementary School.

Volunteers assembled a slide for a playground during the school playground build.