American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Supporting the fight

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Each month in American Way, we feature an article written from the perspective of an American Airlines team member — a unique way to connect the airline's customers with the people who care for them on life's journey. For the October issue, we're observing Breast Cancer Awareness Month and highlighting the perspective of Flight Attendant Linda Rossi, who relied on both her family and her extended American family for support during her battle with breast cancer.

Linda Rossi, DFW-based Flight Attendant

Many flight attendants say they have jet fuel in their veins. Some simply love flying. For others, the profession runs in their family. That often means a child following in a parent's footsteps. My story is different.

I followed my daughter, Kathryn, into the world of aviation after two decades working with faith-based nonprofits. I left for no other reason than wanting a change — a leap of faith in its own right. Joining Kathryn in the sky wasn't originally part of the plan, but it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

Our role as flight attendants is to ensure your safety while also providing you with excellent service. What I never imagined after getting my wings was how quickly things would change. Less than two months after training, following my 20th annual mammogram, I was diagnosed with breast cancer that spread to my lymph nodes. I had a bilateral mastectomy followed by 25 rounds of radiation. Just as quickly as I started flying, I was grounded.

During four months of recovery, I realized how important it was to get back to my customers, colleagues, managers, friends and normal family life. Despite being new, I already had an unbelievable support system. When I couldn't help or serve them, they did that for me. It was their care and motivation that got me back in the sky quicker than anyone imagined.

Flying with me now on an Airbus A321 are the names of more than 22,000 fighters, survivors and those we've lost to cancer. During the month of July, anyone who donated $25 or more to Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) could add a name to the plane in honor of a loved one. The collaboration among American, SU2C and country music superstar Tim McGraw raised more than $800,000 toward critical research with the shared hope that we might one day find a cure.

There are still challenges in my own recovery, but I'm feeling great. And I can't stress this enough: It's because I got my mammogram. Catching the cancer when I did allowed me to be here today and share this message with you. There's no better time than during Breast Cancer Awareness Month to get checked. Do it for yourself and the ones you love. On behalf of American and my 130,000 colleagues, thank you for flying with us today.

Linda Rossi
Flight Attendant
Fort Worth, Texas

To learn more about Stand Up To Cancer and its proven collaborative research programs, or to donate, visit **aa.com/standup**.