

NEWS RELEASE

# Recognizing Human Trafficking Awareness Month

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Robbie Hamilton has lived through some dark days. As a victim of human trafficking, she was once homeless, addicted and stuck in a life she did not imagine for herself. Years later, Robbie was arrested. It was the beginning of the end of her life in the shadows.

Every year on the anniversary of her arrest, Robbie delivers cookies to the police station as a gesture of thanks to the officers who she says saved her life. This year, on Jan. 11, she received a full pardon from Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. And now, Robbie works with New Friends New Life, counseling and mentoring women and girls who have been impacted by human trafficking just as she was.

More than 100 American Airlines team members listened to Robbie's story during a human trafficking awareness event at the airline's Robert L. Crandall Campus earlier this month. The session was organized in cooperation with New Friends New Life, a nonprofit organization based in Dallas that works to restore and empower formerly trafficked and sexually exploited women, teen girls and children. The event served to kick off American's **new partnership** with New Friends New Life.

During the event, team members heard from Bianca Jackson, chief development officer of New Friends New Life, who described the challenges of human trafficking and the toll the crime takes on communities, including the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She explained the telltale signs of human trafficking and what airline employees, in particular, should watch for.

"We as an airline have the ability to make a difference in ways that other organizations or communities don't," said Caroline Barker, who is a director of IT Finance and attended the session. "For me personally, it's paying attention, especially when you're at the airport, which we are — often."

Erica Bellomy, who works as senior specialist on the Benefit Strategy team, said she came away with a heightened awareness of how human trafficking is a widespread issue, even in the local community.

“There were a lot of facts about human trafficking that I honestly didn’t know,” she said. “Knowing how prevalent this is in our area and especially in Texas, I’m definitely going to take the information I learned and share it.”

Kyle Krause is a Customer Care Manager for Global Reservations at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) and leads the DFW chapter of the Family Matters EBRG. He said the event motivated him to get fellow team members involved in tackling the challenge. “I actually didn’t know it was such an issue,” he said. “When you sit down and see all the facts, it’s important. You’ll start looking for the signs.”

The event was just one of several programs about human trafficking that American team members participated in during January, which is recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

During an event led by U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao at the Department of Transportation (DOT) in Washington, D.C., Executive Vice President of People and Global Engagement Elise Eberwein participated in a panel discussion and spoke about American’s longstanding commitment to combating human trafficking. The event was a unified show of opposition to human trafficking by the whole of the U.S. transportation industry, and American joined in signing a pledge to educate team members, raise awareness and share progress on our efforts with DOT.

“From the airport to the flight deck to the cabin, American team members are highly motivated to be part of the solution, and we are proud of the work they do,” Elise said.

Ahead of Super Bowl LIV, Steve Neuman, a Managing Director with the Global Government Affairs team, represented American at a roundtable conversation in Miami hosted by Florida Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz. He highlighted the airline’s training and awareness initiatives in conversation with a group of local stakeholders from the public and private sectors.

At Miami International Airport, a group of frontline team members participated in a human trafficking awareness seminar led by Kim Robinson, CEO of New Friends New Life, and Jessica Brazeal, the organization’s Chief Program Officer.

The Professional Women in Aviation (PWA) held lunch-and-learn sessions for airport employees at several different stations, including Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix. That session was the second airport training organized as part of the SAFE Action Project, an **ongoing collaboration** between American and the Office of the Arizona Attorney General. The PWA also held lunch-and-learn events at DFW and the Robert L. Crandall Campus.

Additionally, American **began a partnership** with the Blue Campaign, a comprehensive antitrafficking effort led by the Department of Homeland Security. Through the partnership, American and the Blue Campaign will work together to raise awareness of human trafficking by sharing awareness materials, engaging in events and public awareness campaigns, and amplifying a shared antitrafficking message.

The campus event with New Friends New Life stood as a fitting conclusion for the month — but it's only the start of what American, its team members, and its partners are committed to accomplishing together in the fight against human trafficking. As the first project of the partnership, team members in attendance wrote notes of encouragement and prepared journals to be shared with women and girls who've been subjected to human trafficking in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

When asked about what American team members should keep in mind when it comes to human trafficking, Robbie encouraged awareness and engagement.

"It's not other people's problem," she said. "They're actually seeing it, they just don't know that's what they're seeing. Everybody can have a part in ending this."