American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Like mother, like daughter: Caring for people is a family affair

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For Philadelphia-based Flight Attendants Collett Springle and Bianca Bennett, working at American isn't just business as usual — it's a family affair. The mother-daughter duo takes pride in their work and finds joy in caring for customers, team members and each other — wherever life takes them.

Collett emigrated from Georgetown, Guyana, to the United States at age 13. While on family vacations as a child, she was inspired by the decorum of flight attendants and their care for passengers. In 1998, while reading her local newspaper, the then-single mother of two discovered a US Airways job posting in her local newspaper and applied.

"It was a childhood dream of mine to be a flight attendant," Collett said. "It brings me joy when I put on my uniform — I'm proud of what I'm putting on. It's not a role that I'm playing — it's who I am."

Collett's love of engaging with and learning from customers and team members is a big part of who she is. She sees it as her calling.

"I look forward to interacting with our passengers and being with a diverse group at work — it's refreshing," Collett said. "We're all learning from each other."

Inspired by her mother's love of diversity and support of others, Bianca announced she would apply to be a flight attendant after college.

"It's all about the people for me," Bianca said. "To be there and take care of them while they're getting where they're going is important to me."

However, Bianca's excitement about pursuing a career in aviation was soon tempered when she learned of her mom's diagnosis, making it difficult for her to focus on anything else.

"When my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, it traumatized our whole family. She stayed so strong and positive," Bianca said. "She held us up."

Throughout her treatment, the support that Collett received from fellow team members kept her and her family going. They regularly checked on her and assisted her in the transition.

"It was amazing to see the outpour of love that I got from crew members," Collett said. "I had colleagues that were showing me love from work, and it helped me a lot with the journey."

Collett received the news that she was cancer free two days before Bianca left for flight attendant training. Bianca was relieved that her mom was healthy and that she could continue to glean inspiration from Collett — as a daughter and colleague.

"I went to training with a clear mind knowing that once I graduated, I could fly with her," Bianca said. "Having her there at my graduation when I received my wings was a dream come true."

On MLK Day this year, Collett celebrated three years in recovery from breast cancer.

"It's a sickness you should share because someone will send kind words that remind you that you're not alone in the journey," Collett said. "Others who were going through a similar journey felt seen and appreciated."

Today, Collett and Bianca have a renewed pride in what it means to be American Airlines team members and embrace the American Why of caring for people on life's journey, on and off the runway.

"American is a wonderful company to work for because it's so inclusive and diverse. You get to work with people from all walks of life. And you're able to learn from one another," Bianca said. "It's just broadened my whole mindset and made me more culturally aware and open-minded."

Collett is grateful that she was able to model those values for her children and is amazed by Bianca's work ethic when they fly together. She sees herself in Bianca when she first started at that age.

"I'm proud that my daughter wants to follow in my footsteps," Collett said. "In my heart, I feel like I did something right."

For Bianca, propelled by a love of people and diversity, Collett did a lot right.

“When my mom started, there weren’t many black flight attendants. Like her, I want young black girls to know that the industry is more diverse now,” Bianca said. “When they see me, I want them to know that they, too, can be a flight attendant.”