American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Love became my second language

9/15/2020

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. In the September issue, a team member from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport shares her story of being proud of her Mexican American heritage.

I am a first generation American.

I was born soon after my parents emigrated from Mexico. They worked hard as migrant workers in the orange groves of Florida, my dad working his way from the grove to the headquarters of a large juice company.

Like many children of immigrants, I've always felt like I have a dual identity. I was born in America, but we only spoke Spanish at home, and family, customs culture and heritage were an important part of my childhood. I can still smell the traditional Mexican dishes my mom cooked at home, the seasoning was always just right and thinking about her from-scratch flour tortillas makes my mouth water.

I'm proud of my Mexican American heritage. Every year, nearly 60 million Latinx like myself observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

As a child, I spent a lot of time translating for my parents. Some of my friends and even my four siblings would get annoyed when they had to translate, but I never did. I always wanted to help. And I still enjoy helping, which is why I think I gravitated to American's Reservations department.

I started my career at American nearly 26 years ago in teleservices and quickly transferred to the Reservations

department working on the Spanish resolution desk helping customers find the best flight options for their needs. During the last two and a half decades, my Reservations colleagues across the world and I have helped millions of our customers in their journey to visit the people and places that mean the most of them.

My commitment to the region and my culture doesn't stop there. Through the years, I've had the opportunity to serve individuals and families in poor, rural areas of Latin America through American's Latin Diversity Network (LDN) Employee Business Resource Group. Nearly 3,000 colleagues across 17 chapters in North and South America and Europe have volunteered in orphanages, built wells in remote villages and gathered hygiene kits and toiletries to name just a few.

Last year, I participated in one of LDN's trips to Mexico where we donated toiletries and much needed rain boots to the people of village near San Luis Potosi. The opportunity to come together with my colleagues and the villagers was incredible. On this trip, I had the opportunity to love and serve through translation. It's one thing to make a donation, but it's another to hand deliver the donation.

Sonia Carrillo
Reservations Representative
Dallas Fort Worth (DFW)