American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Never give up the dream of learning something new

10/14/2020

Growing up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Carlos Jimenez, a recently promoted director at the American Airlines Integrated Operations Center (IOC), developed an appreciation for aviation at a young age. “My house was on the final approach path to the airport,” Carlos explained. “It’s what I saw every day.”

It was no surprise that when it came time to search for his first job, Carlos found himself walking through Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (SJU) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. “I didn’t know any English at the time, but I knew I wanted to work for an airline and wanted to push myself to learn something new,” he said. He started his career as a Fleet Service clerk for American at SJU before transferring to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) for a similar position.

As a Fleet Service clerk, Carlos now got to see up close and in person those big airplanes that flew over his home and quickly realized he wanted to take his passion further. Over the next several years, Carlos would go on to earn both a bachelor’s degree in Aeronautics and a master’s degree in Aeronautical Science and Safety Management Systems from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He would also go on to earn his pilot’s license and become a flight instructor on the side.

But as someone who’s always ready for the next challenge, Carlos knew there was more in store for him. “When I was on the ramp, I knew the operation. But I also knew there was more driving the business behind the scenes,” he said. “I remember looking up at the tower between Terminal A and C at DFW and saying, ‘One day, I’m going to work there.’” And he did.

Though Carlos’ success can be attributed to his drive and desire to keep learning, it’s also the result of people fighting for and teaching him along the way. “I owe it to those coming behind me to do the same thing, to pass on

what I've learned." And, as a Latinx, Carlos feels that work is even more critical. "I want to support those who have gone or are going through similar experiences that I've gone through."

Reflecting on the young man in San Juan looking up at the airplanes flying over him, Carlos' advice is simple: Never give up the dream of learning something new and always find a way to be what you want to be.

As the IOC's newest director, Carlos has taken his own advice. "American made me who I am today," he shared. "I'm so grateful for the opportunity, responsibility and ability to help keep our airline moving safely and reliably."