American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

# Inspiring the next generation of aviation professionals

4/23/2021

## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

Jimmy Brooks enjoys mentoring others, especially when it comes to career development. The American Airlines general manager at Austin Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) says it's his duty to lead with positive energy and help position his colleagues for success in their careers. That's why Jimmy was eager to join a recent panel to share advice from his career journey and mentor students in the city he calls home.

Jimmy was one of five American team members to participate in a virtual career panel last week geared toward high school students in the Austin area. The opportunity came through American's partnership with the **just keep livin foundatio**n, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering high school students and providing them tools for a better future.

The panelists shared their unique career paths, as well as lessons learned and the process they use to set goals for the future. They shared obstacles and how they overcame those challenges to professionally thrive.

## LESSONS LEARNED

New York-based Sales Director Cynthia Barnes learned at a young age that success is all about "attitude and aptitude." Cynthia explained to the students that aptitude comes from life experiences. She used a personal example of when she learned English in the fourth grade after she and her family moved to the United States from

Guatemala. Cynthia encouraged the students to use what they learn on their life's journey to fortify their aptitude and always have a positive attitude.

"Success is all about attitude and aptitude."

## SETTING GOALS

First Officer Brandon Bailey, who spent more than a decade in the U.S. Air Force before his career with American, shared a strategy he learned in the military to set achievable goals. He presented the SMART acronym to create goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Brandon reminded students that the path to success isn't always linear and that challenges are opportunities to solve problems along the way.

"Be resilient in fighting through challenges to achieve your goals."

"This is a fantastic career, but obviously this last year has been a challenge. We've been able to work through it, and, now, I'm more confident than ever in our airline," Brandon said. "There will be challenges for you as a young student when getting to wherever you want to go. Remember the goal-setting strategy I taught you and be resilient in fighting through challenges to achieve your goals."

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

For Anthony DeGrazia, American's director of line maintenance at Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD), communication is the key to overcoming obstacles. He said he enjoys the problem-solving part of his job, specifically when collaborating and connecting with teammates.

"Communication is key to overcoming obstacles."

Anthony recalled a time in his career when he managed line maintenance operations in different locations spanning the country. Anthony and his teammates would meet for lunch in one city to talk about things and resolve issues. "After a few months, it just became everyone getting together and having lunch because the issues weren't there anymore," Anthony said. "It was just a matter of us being a team and us being a family. That is one of my best examples of working together as one team."

## TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY

The opportunity to be part of American's work in the communities it serves has been a career highlight for Kim

Millican, a customer service agent based at Miami International Airport (MIA). Kim said she's fortunate to participate in American's volunteer efforts and appreciates the opportunity to care for the airline's customers and communities.

"Follow your heart and do what you love."
"My job is about taking care of people and that's what we do at American Airlines," Kim said.

"Make sure you follow your heart and do what you love. At American, there are opportunities to take part in things that make you feel fulfilled."

American has partnered with the just keep livin foundation for several years on community efforts, including disaster relief, fundraisers and after school programs. Most recently, American partnered with the foundation's **Texas Relief Fund** in April to help those in need recover from the devastating impact of Winter Storm Uri.