American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

Something to celebrate every day

5/11/2021

For Grace Hwang, Manager of Leisure Sales at American Airlines, it wasn't the title or daily work that drew her to the airline industry — it was the culture.

After spending the early part of her career in consulting and aviation, the Alabama native moved to Texas and landed a marketing role for a global food brand in Dallas. A couple months into the job, she realized she wasn't as much of a "foodie" as she thought.

"I did that for a while, but I quickly realized that I was really drawn to working for an airline," Grace said. After applying to American, she started her airline journey in 2017 supporting international co-brand partnerships.

"At American, the culture of the company is very inclusive," she said. Also a member of the LGBT community, Hwang shared, "In my first week at American, they invited me to participate in a PRIDE video and celebrate who I am … I immediately felt welcomed and free to bring my true self to work."

Working across the organization has exposed Grace to the diverse teams that help the airline run. Born in College Station, Texas, to parents from Taiwan and China, she admitted, "Diversity has always been at the forefront of my mind, especially growing up as one of the few Asian kids in a very homogenous environment."

In Leisure Sales, Grace gets to work with different cultures every day. Some of the third-party travel agencies her team supports specifically address the needs of Asian Americans traveling regularly to see family and friends. By working at American, Grace has been able to see her extended family and friends around the world, including Birmingham, Alabama; Los Angeles; Toronto; and Seoul, South Korea. She believes travel is one of the first steps to learning about and respecting other cultures. Given her diverse life experiences, Grace is disturbed by the dramatic rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans since the coronavirus pandemic began.

While she considers herself fortunate to not have experienced any targeted racial attacks, Grace finds it difficult to comprehend why people would target the Asian community. “The hate crimes are really unsettling; you wouldn’t expect that sort of stuff to happen,” she said. “With so much going on in the world — we’re still in a global pandemic — it’s hard to rationalize why there’s so much ugliness in the world when it’s a time for all of us to pull together and unite.”

Having celebrated a promotion just prior to the pandemic, Grace is looking forward to the airline industry’s rebound and furthering her role in helping more people experience other cultures.

“Diversity is important every day of the year; it’s not something we should only focus on for one day or month at a time. It’s about values — values that we pass down, and share with each other,” she said. “Travel allows you to experience other cultures and see first-hand that people around the world all share similar values.”

American’s commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
American proudly celebrates the diversity of our team members and our customers, and we work to create an open, inclusive culture where people from all backgrounds feel welcome. Through American’s Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, we are delivering on **our commitment** to examine our corporate values, evolve policies and improve access and opportunities for all.

Grace and her immediate family celebrating a family reunion with (blue) red envelopes. “It’s our tradition that we always receive red envelopes containing money when we attend our family reunions,” Grace said.

Grace pictured with her brother, his children, and two cousins at a family reunion in Niagara Falls.