American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

The shared rewards of allyship

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In the years since the Stonewall Riots gave rise to the modern LGBTQ+ movement, countless voices have propelled us toward greater understanding, acceptance and equality. Civil rights activists like Marsha P. Johnson, Edie Windsor, Bayard Rustin and Harvey Milk lent their voices and actions to create lasting change, advancing rights and recognition for members of the LGBTQ+ community. While progress has been made, the fight for LGBTQ+ civil rights continues.

Among the most influential voices today are those of allies — members of the majority who take an active role to support, advocate and stand in solidarity with marginalized communities. Allyship comes in all shapes and forms, both personal and public, and has helped amplify the impact and reach of the LGBTQ+ movement.

At American Airlines, allies across all levels of the company play a key role in advancing our inclusive culture and maintaining a welcoming environment for team members and customers alike.

AN UNLIKELY PATH TO ALLYSHIP

For Viviana Nicola, a Buenos Aires (EZE) based flight attendant, her journey toward allyship started with a chance call in 2018. She was asked to help reinvigorate American's local Pride Employee Business Resource Group (EBRG) chapter. At the time, she admits, "I knew so little about the LGBTQ+ community that I would often transpose letters in conversation."

Nevertheless, Viviana was determined to make a difference. "My goal was to listen, learn and create a nurturing space for members of Pride to feel they could be themselves."

> I'm thankful to members of Pride for letting me listen to their stories and learn from their experiences. Doing so has given me a renewed sense of purpose and has helped me better understand myself."
> — Viviana Nicola, Flight Attendant (EZE)

She started by asking questions and working to educate herself. Through open conversations, she grew closer to her LGBTQ+ colleagues, empathizing with their journey and fostering a shared sense of friendship and respect. "I'm thankful to members of Pride for letting me listen to their stories and learn from their experiences. Doing so has given me a renewed sense of purpose and has helped me better understand myself."

As she became more involved, Viviana used her platform to better educate American's leadership team on the unique issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community and improve visibility for Pride throughout South America. Since becoming president of the EZE Pride EBRG chapter, she has turned understanding into action — helping build Pride chapters in Brazil and Chile. Viviana has also lead American to join Pride Connection Argentina and the LGBTQ Argentina Chamber of Commerce. Thanks to these efforts, American became the first and only airline to be recognized by the City of Buenos Aires as a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace in March 2020.

"I hope the LGBTQ+ community knows that I stand with them and that they matter," she said. "I am confident American is the right place for me thanks to the opportunities provided by Pride. As an ally, I will continue to fight to ensure everyone feels comfortable and confident to live as their true and authentic selves."

THE POWER AND LASTING IMPACT OF ALLIES

Donna Rosen, Manager of IT Operations for American's wholly owned regional partners, describes her life in two chapters. For the first 40 years of her life, she lived as David — a straight man and decorated collegiate wrestler. The second chapter began when Donna chose to come out as a transgender woman. It was a process that helped her express her true self, but also devastated her marriage, jeopardized her career as a consultant and thrust her into a community she had never known. "Until then I never knew what it felt like to be marginalized," she said.

Following her transition, Donna moved and started a new life with the support of her parents and siblings, but quickly found herself hiding in what felt like yet another closet. "Despite finding fulfillment and self-acceptance for the first time in my life, I focused my energy on trying to be 'just Donna' without acknowledging who I had been," she said.

> "I'm thankful to be surrounded by allies at American that provide me unconditional support, cultivate my

> growth as a visible transgender manager and allow me to live with dignity."
> — Donna Rosen, IT Operations Manager

Thanks to a strong community of allies and supportive work environment, Donna found the confidence to embrace her journey and become what she describes as a "reluctant activist." Since then, she has become a fierce advocate for transgender representation nationally — serving as the first transgender member on the Boards of Directors for the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Today, she serves as a co-chair of American's global Pride EBRG network working to facilitate change that creates a better life for others.

"I'm thankful to be surrounded by allies at American that provide me unconditional support, cultivate my growth as a visible transgender manager and allow me to live with dignity," Donna said. "They take an active role by reaching out, building relationships and advocating for change even when it doesn't affect them."

When asked what advice she would give to those seeking to become allies, Donna is quick to point out that allyship is an important aspect of a supportive culture and ultimately change. "You don't have to be part of a marginalized community to recognize wrong is wrong. So, don't wait for something bad to happen before you become an ally and choose to act."