



NEWS RELEASE

American Airlines inducts 100 team members into the Circle of Excellence

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American Airlines inducted 100 of its top team members to the new Circle of Excellence at a recognition experience in Dallas-Fort Worth in November. Circle of Excellence honorees are team members with a career-long history of exemplary customer service, commitment to their teams and American's operation. Formerly known as the Chairman's Award, the Circle of Excellence was renamed in 2023 to purposefully put the focus on the recipient. The award continues to be the highest honor and gratitude awarded to American's team members for their career achievements.

More than 1,600 peer nominations were submitted this year from around the world. A panel of former recipients reviews each submission and deliberates on the nominees in partnership with senior leaders in the organization, including CEO Robert Isom. This year's honorees have a combined 2,543 years of service with American and its legacy carriers, and an average of 25 years of service. Honorees represent the vast global network American serves, living in Argentina, Australia, England, Israel, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos and the United States.

Robert recognized these team members as dedicated leaders and problem solvers who have supported the company through the years and contributed to its successes today.

"Our Circle of Excellence honorees are the true power behind American's success," he said. "They repeatedly go beyond their responsibilities to take care of our team, customers and operation. We owe our honorees a great debt of gratitude for all the ways their talent and contributions have helped make American the greatest airline in the world."

Winners represent workgroups throughout the airline, some working through unique crises, others dedicated to fostering a workplace of inclusivity, and some challenging the status quo to move across the airline career playground.

Leading through challenging times

Racheli Vardi, General Manager at Tel Aviv, Israel, restarted service to the airport during the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented a unique set of challenges. She was nominated for the Circle of Excellence by her peers and leadership team because of her unwavering commitment to maintaining a safe and sound operation in a turbulent region. Racheli is a servant leader, putting the team and customers before herself, especially in times of crises, and has worked diligently to lead a successful station.

"One of the key factors in running a reliable operation is to have a very good and established team," said Racheli. "We are like a small, tight family. We care for the customers, the crews and we are very close with each other."

In 2021, just a few days following the opening of the Tel Aviv station, Racheli and team moved swiftly to evacuate all crew, team members and customers following some attacks in the area.

"The geopolitical situation that we have in the country makes people very aware of safety and security," said Racheli. "I also learned during my military service to lead by example. I felt a sense of responsibility not only to my team that is working with me, but also for the crews and other team members that remained in the country that are not used to all kinds of political conflicts and emergency situations. I felt responsible for them, for their well-being and safety."

Racheli has repeatedly successfully evacuated customers, her team, team members visiting the country and crews.

"I have a lot of gratitude to American Airlines. I have a lot of gratitude and appreciation for my management, to the regional management, to the VP of International Operations and all the team that did an amazing job in supporting us, especially during recent events," said Racheli.

Inspiring peers to pursue career dreams

Kevaughn Hammond, a New York-based first officer, started his career at American as an aviation maintenance technician while pursuing his requirements to serve as a military pilot. Kevaughn is passionate about aviation and has inspired many of his peers to pursue careers as pilots, and personally mentors them on their journeys.

"For every person interested in becoming a pilot, don't be afraid of failure," said Kevaughn, when asked what he tells mentees. "It's a part of the journey. Always focus on your dreams. Write them down and hold yourself accountable."

Kevaghn builds and maintains relationships with team members in all areas he's supported. Nominated by an AMT he worked with at the start of his career, Kevaghn couldn't believe his team put him up for the Circle of Excellence.

"I was astonished when I received the Circle of Excellence award. I didn't expect it at all. I was just coming off of a flight and I was told by our director of flight in the Northeast that I was awarded it," said Kevaghn. "It meant so much to me. That's what American Airlines is all about. We're all family and we all take care of each other."

Celebrations honor Circle of Excellence winners with an unforgettable experience

In November, American treated its honorees and their guests to a two-day experience celebrating their achievements, including exclusive brunch and tour on the Robert L. Crandall Campus in Fort Worth, Texas, and ending with an evening gala at the Winspear Opera House in Dallas. Honorees receive a special pin, trophy and \$10,000.