



NEWS RELEASE

Embracing Pride through allyship

6/22/2023

An American Airlines team member shares how she became a true diversity, equity, and inclusion champion, showing how allyship is a way for everyone to celebrate equality during Pride month.

Nearly 30 years ago, Customer Relations Manager Banu Scruggs migrated to the United States from Turkey with hopes of living out her American dream. She was just 25 but had big dreams of pursuing higher education with a bachelor's in business management and a master's in criminology.

Her first and only job has been with American over the last 30 years. As a Reservations agent, Banu embarked on a career surrounded by colleagues who would become some of her closest friends, several of whom were a part of the LGBTQ+ community. They welcomed and accepted her as a foreigner when she needed it the most. In return she gained love, respect and a better understanding of the challenges the LGBTQ+ community faced. Banu said she loved her team and her role, which further helped expose her to different cultures, ways of life and diverse practices and set the foundation for her advocacy work in DEI.

Banu also met her husband, Fleet Service Agent Terry Scruggs, at American. Terry has been with the airline for over 36 years and married to Banu for 25 years. The couple shares a passion for aviation and has created a family-like environment with their colleagues on and off the job.

Banu is also passionate about her family. She has a transgender child from her previous marriage. Proud and supportive, she shares her child's story to educate others and empower those on a similar journey.

"As a mother, I knew the signs. It took me some time to understand, but I was her biggest ally once I did," Banu said. "You have one life to live; you must be comfortable and happy in your own skin to be true to yourself."



As a Turkish Muslim woman married to a Black Christian man with a transgender child, Banu has lived through discrimination in several variations. She said her journey had made her sensitive to understanding stereotypes, unconscious bias and discrimination. However, that journey also helps her support those she cares about and helps her daily in her current role at American.

Banu now serves as a Customer Experience Escalation and Resolution (CEER) team manager, handling discrimination complaints related to race, gender, nationality, age, size, religion, sexual orientation or Military/Veteran status. Her team also shares customer feedback to supervisors to help drive change while serving and rebuilding the customer experience.

"I love the work I do daily. I'm advocating for respect and helping to make the world a little kinder each day through my own experiences."

— Banu Scruggs

Banu is a powerful advocate for all and spends time learning and embracing her intersectionality. She is a member of the Pride, Black Professional Network and Women in Aviation Employee Business Resource Groups at American. Banu has confided with the Pride EBRG for support in her LGBTQ+ parenting journey and in return has shared her story and experience with others to drive understanding and acceptance.

Banu has simple advice, "Love is love, and it is unconditional."

Although she has seen progress, Banu recognizes there is still a long way to go and is energized by the journey ahead to continue to advocate for equality for all.

[Download image »](#)

Banu and her husband Terry Scruggs of 25 years met at American.

[Download image »](#)

Banu showed her support of the LGBTQ+ community at the Dallas Pride parade.

About American Airlines Group

To Care for People on Life's Journey®. Shares of American Airlines Group Inc. trade on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol AAL and the company's stock is included in the S&P 500. Learn more about what's happening at American by visiting news.aa.com and connect with American on Twitter [@AmericanAir](https://twitter.com/AmericanAir) and at

[Facebook.com/AmericanAirlines](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanAirlines).