

PDX People: Four Stories of Extraordinary Customer Service

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From losing a precious belonging to facing an upset child in a sticky situation, when passengers find themselves in less-than-ideal circumstances, PDX People come through with problem-solving skills and empathy.

While difficult situations, emotional moments and medical emergencies may not be regular occurrences, airport employees provide excellent customer service every day. To recognize those examples that truly stand out as extraordinary, we host the PDX People customer service awards each quarter.

While the ceremony may be virtual, the gratitude for their efforts is tangible. Below are the PDX People recognized for their extraordinary efforts between July and September 2020.

Denis Volchenko, Dollar Rent a Car



The hair-raising moment when you notice your wallet, phone or treasured keepsake is missing from your pocket is a relatable feeling. When a rental car passenger had that concerning experience, the staff at Dollar Rent a Car stepped up to help.

After returning her vehicle, the customer noticed that a sentimental charm was no longer in her possession and realized it must have fallen out in the car. She notified the representative at the counter, who called the wash area in an attempt to locate the car. Denis Volchenko, who was detailing the vehicle, immediately brought the car back to the return area and the charm was quickly reunited with its owner.

The grateful customer sent a note to thank Denis and the Dollar Rent a Car team for their efforts: "Finding my charm was against the odds...and so wonderful! Thank you for the great service!"

Maria Castaneda and Jose Aguilar, Alaska Airlines



Alaska Airline employees Maria Castaneda and Jose Aguilar were enjoying a moment of quiet as they waited for an inbound flight. But the peaceful atmosphere was abruptly disturbed as the cries of a small child cut through the air.

Maria and Jose rushed to see what was causing the child's distress. Once at the scene, they realized the child's leg was somehow wedged between the seats in the boarding area and couldn't easily be freed.

After calling emergency personnel, Jose, Maria and a passenger in the boarding area attempted to pull the seats apart to free the child's leg while the worried parents tried to calm their child. When their first attempt failed, Jose thought quickly and ran next door to Henry's Tavern to ask for some oil. Although the employee at Henry's was slightly confused at Jose's unusual request, they obliged.

The oil did the trick and the youngster was freed and uninjured. Seeing that the family was still shaken up by their ordeal, Maria stayed by their side, bringing calm and compassion until they were settled enough to board their flight.

Skip Baker, Port of Portland Police Department

**Michael Dayton, Levi Favara, Ryan Stapleton, Tyler Thompson ,
Brandon Yu, Ashley Yukich, Portland Airport Fire and Rescue**

Tracy Bowser, Port of Portland Communications Center



Kevin, a PDX construction worker, was out on the tarmac by the Concourse E extension when he noticed his heart was beating too fast. He stopped to take a break indoors, but still didn't feel well after resting. Starting to feel concerned, he decided he needed a second opinion.

Kevin drove over to the front of the terminal where the Port Police park their vehicles, knowing an officer was likely to be nearby. He spotted Officer Skip Baker and described what he was experiencing. Officer Baker immediately called emergency personnel and, under the guidance of Port Dispatcher Tracy Bowser, collected Kevin's health information while they waited for the paramedics.

A few minutes later, emergency medical technicians Michael Dayton, Levi Favara, Ryan Stapleton, Tyler Thompson, Brandon Yu and Ashley Yukich arrived on the scene. An EEG quickly determined that Kevin's heart rate was in excess of 200 beats per minute – a life-threatening situation. Paramedics began immediate treatment and loaded Kevin into the ambulance. During this time, Officer Baker provided comfort and reassurance, called Kevin's wife and his employer, and stayed with Kevin right up until the ambulance doors closed.

Kevin was in the hospital for three days and has since recovered. He and his family are tremendously thankful to Officer Baker and the rest of the team for their help.

"I do believe that the actions of Officer Baker probably saved my life," Kevin said. "I cannot express my gratitude enough for his quick actions. My family and I owe him a huge thanks."

John Wilson, Port of Portland

Port of Portland employee John Wilson has a demanding job directing traffic and monitoring vehicles arriving and departing the airport. But in the interest of customer service, he tacked on another difficult task: Changing a flat tire.

When a passenger's car became stranded on the roadway due to a flat tire, John took it upon himself to change out the spare. He demonstrated initiative and problem-solving – getting the driver back on the road, managing the potential traffic hazard and providing the highest level of customer service possible.



More PDX People Quarterly Award Winners: July – October 2020



Carmen Matthews, Alaska Airlines

Category: Airlines

Carmen found a nearby vending machine and used her own money to purchase milk for a flustered passenger's child.



Jody Martini, Capers Café et Le Bar

Category: Concessions Food and Beverage

Jody's positive, helpful spirit has made her an essential part of the Capers team.



Lisa, Tender Loving Empire

Category: Concessions Retail

Lisa took the time to comfort and reassure a young boy whose family lost their home in the recent wildfire.

Jan Mayangitan, TSA

Category: Federal



Jan received a glowing compliment from a passenger for his compassionate and professional communication.

Nelly Bruno, SP Plus Corporation

Category: Ground Transportation

Nelly covered numerous shifts at work to ensure her teammates were able to use their vacation time.



Patrick Croteau, G2

Category: Support Services

Patrick used his critical thinking skills, knowledge of security procedures at PDX and courteous conduct to prevent a potential security issue.

