

PDX People: Four Stories of Extraordinary Customer Service

portside.portofportland.online/2021/01/pdx-people-four-stories-of-extraordinary-customer-service

January 27, 2021



Reaching out when someone needs a helping hand is a little trickier these days, but when passengers find themselves in less-than-ideal circumstances, our PDX People still come through with problem-solving skills and empathy.

While difficult situations and emotional moments 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 we recognized from October through December 2020.

Mario Saroni, SP Plus Corporation

After a long flight, most travelers are relieved to get to their car and get on their way. But sometimes a leaky tire or a forgotten dome light means their return home is delayed...and that's where SP Plus Corporation's Mario Saroni shines.

With a calm presence and a can-do attitude, Mario consistently provides prompt service. By acknowledging the need for urgency and using his excellent communications skills, he reassures customers that their issue will be resolved in a timely manner, often de-escalating a stressful situation. Customers leave knowing that at PDX, we care about our passengers through every step of their travels.

Officer Jason McKay, Port of Portland Police



When a distraught parent called in about their daughter, Port of Portland Police Officer Jason McKay was quick to assist.

The parent sent in this recognition for his efforts:

“I called about my daughter who was in a bad state of mind and unable to navigate the airport. Jason responded with kindness at a moment when kindness was needed and greatly appreciated.

Much to my relief, he was able to find and assist my daughter who was confused and lost in the wrong concourse. He also called me back to report that my daughter was safe in the hands of her airline and rebooked on a later flight.

People like Jason, who serve strangers with empathy and care, need to be commended for

being excellent and thoughtful.”

Knowing a family member is struggling when you’re unable to support them in person is hard, but knowing someone is there to help can ease that stress. Jason’s caring and responsive communication made all the difference to this worried parent.

Monica Martinez, Relay Resources

Salima McRae, Port of Portland



Monica Martinez (left) and Salima McRae (right)

Mr. Eduardo needed to book a flight to Ecuador, but a language barrier made the already complicated transaction even more challenging. Thankfully, Relay Resources' Monica Martinez was available to assist...and it's lucky for everyone involved that she did.

When attempting to purchase the ticket, Mr. Eduardo found out that his bank's credit limit prevented him from charging the full amount. And, while he did have cash on hand, the airline was unable to accept it as payment.

Fortunately, an on-site solution exists: Kiosks in the ticket lobby can be used to convert cash to a pre-paid credit card. Unfortunately, the card Mr. Eduardo purchased was for less than what was needed for a ticket, and the airline couldn't accept two forms of payment for one transaction.

At this point, Salima McRae – a Port of Portland airport operations specialist – stepped in to help. She found a way to purchase the ticket online for Mr. Eduardo, and Monica used her personal credit card to complete the transaction. Mr. Eduardo then reimbursed Monica with the pre-paid credit card plus cash for the total cost of the ticket.

Monica didn't stop there – she continued to go above and beyond to help, securing a hotel and assisting with transportation arrangements. Monica and Salima's teamwork and kindness ensured that Mr. Eduardo could resolve a difficult situation and reach his destination.

Babita Kainth, Prospect Airport Services

Every day, Prospect Airport Services' Babita Kainth helps passengers get to their gate on time...and she always does it with a smile on her face.

A recent situation really put Babita's commitment to on-time departures to the test. Due to a variety of circumstances, one airline's full cleaning crew was unavailable. Since aircraft must be thoroughly cleaned before departure, it was imperative that the airline rally a crew to take on the job and get the flight out on time.

A call went out for volunteers to help clean and airline employees quickly took on the challenge. But just when it looked like a crew was in place, a maintenance issue meant those who stepped up were suddenly no longer available.

Babita, who was dropping off a passenger, overheard airline employees discussing the circumstances, and promptly volunteered to help out. Thanks to Babita and a few other willing helpers, the airline was able to get the aircraft cleaned and out on time.

More PDX People Quarterly Award Winners: October – December 2020

Nancy Reyes, Alaska Airlines



Category: Airlines

Nancy made it possible for a passenger to get home for the holidays. She used her own funds and made his day!

Max Unger, Dollar Rent A Car

Category: Rental Cars



Max de-escalated a heated situation between customers with such skill that his supervisors received a personal phone call commending him.

Martin Rios, Transportation Security Administration

Category: Federal

Martin went out of his way to assist a family stranded at PDX. He helped with translation, booked a ticket and purchased their meals, using his own money to help cover the costs.



Jasmine Alexander, All About Foods Group – Jamba Juice

Category: Concessions Food and Beverage

Jasmine re-opened the PDX Jamba Juice after it had already closed for the night, going above and beyond to take care of a group of passengers.



Crystal Channel, Hudson Group

Category: Concessions Retail

Crystal encountered a distraught passenger who left her phone in her daughter's car. Using her detective skills, Crystal located both the daughter and the phone, and received a special gift in return. [Read more about her efforts.](#)

