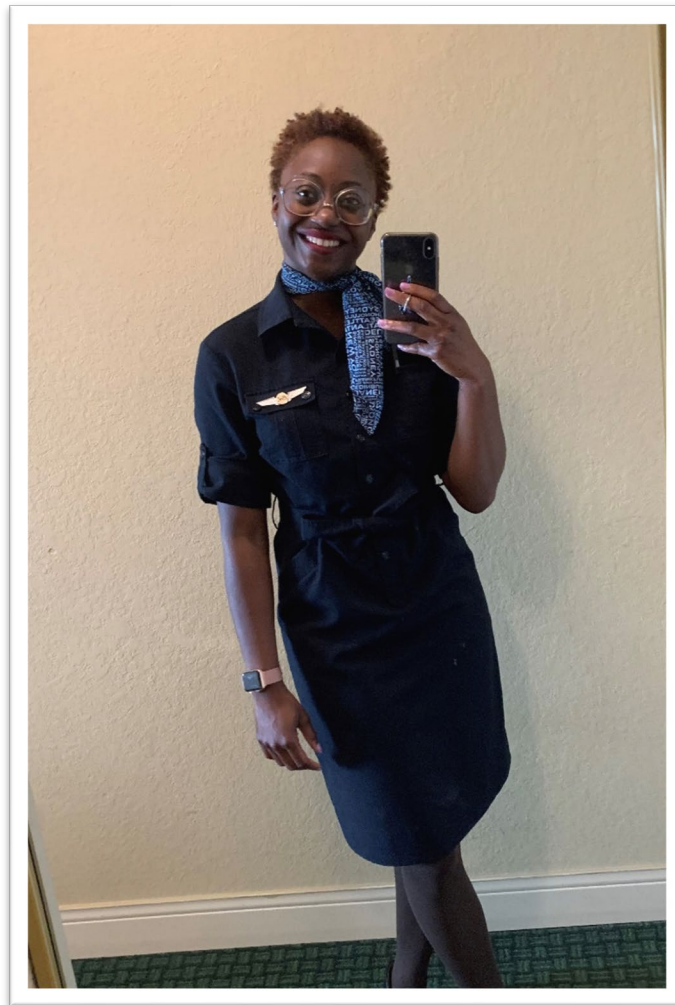


Team Member Spotlight: Flight Attendant Iesha Williamson



The month of February is Black History Month, and we would like to take the opportunity to share the incredible stories of just a few of the standout members of our diverse team. This week we're featuring Iesha Williamson – A bright and magnetic people-person, Iesha is consistently rated as one of our top Flight Attendants by our passengers! Read on to hear some of Iesha's story...

When did your interest in aviation start?

"My mother was born in Jamaica but was raised in Toronto. She eventually moved to Washington DC where she met my father and had me and my sister (I won't discuss which is the favorite – *hint: it's me!*). So growing up I had a strong connection to the Toronto area and every summer, my mom would send us back up there to visit with my grandma and extended family. So every single year, we would take the two flights out and back just after school ended and about a week before we started up again. And even from that young age - I just always felt so comfortable on the plane! I loved it!

On those flights to and from Toronto as a child, I realized you don't really see the pilots very much. The Flight Attendants are really the people you interact with and remember when you get off a flight. They embody the airline that you fly. As I grew up, I realized how much I wanted to become a Flight Attendant and talked about it to the point that my friends and family were like, "*we get it lesha...you're going to be a Flight Attendant...we've heard this story before!*"

What's it like being a Flight Attendant and achieving your dream?

"I've been flying for about three years now, and there's always a small degree of stress associated with flying – making sure to keep everyone safe and being on time, but I have fun! On every flight I take, I make sure to have a real interaction with at least one passenger. I love the opportunities to make little friendships and connections during my daily travels. One time we were delayed, and I just sat down with a group of women who were on my flight and started talking! I learned they were going to NYC to visit one of their daughters, and then heading into D.C. for a few days, which is where I live! So I end up playing 'tour-guide' and telling them all the best spots to eat and things to do...and before we ever even boarded we were all friends! The more you fly and get into the role, the more people you recognize and get to know your regular passengers and can take care of everyone!"



What do your plans look like for the future?

"This isn't a job for me – it's a career! I plan on staying in aviation. I've considered becoming a pilot and thought about some other avenues that I could pursue in the industry, because I really enjoy being part of the representation that I looked up to as a kid! Even though it's getting much better, there still really aren't that many African Americans or women that have a career in aviation. When



you go to the airport and do see these underrepresented groups wearing the uniform, with their stripes and looking sharp – it’s really empowering, and it feels really good to be a part of it.”

What advice would you give to a young person of color?

“I grew up in a predominantly African American neighborhood, and I didn’t have any friends or family or neighbors that were in aviation. Many times, if you ask someone in this industry, ‘What made you want to get into aviation?’ they’ll say something like ‘Oh my father was a Pilot.’ Someone in their family or a close friend that they knew growing up was an aviator. In my community we had just about everything – doctors, lawyers, veterinarians...but I never saw a Pilot or Flight Attendant. As an adult, I’ve had some amazing opportunities to be that representation for the next generation: I was asked by my niece and nephew’s daycare director to come in on career day and speak to the kids! That’s something I never had – and it’s really great to be able to help a child to get the idea ‘I met a Flight Attendant today...maybe I could be one when I grow up!’ So, I would say to just follow your dreams! Doors will close, and others that are right for you will open but don’t just rely on fate – be willing to put in the work to make things happen!”

