



Peter O. Knight Airport  
Plant City Airport  
Tampa Executive Airport

June 28, 2021

Hillsborough County  
Aviation Authority  
P.O. Box 22287  
Tampa, Florida 33622  
phone/ 813-870-8700  
fax/ 813-875-6670  
TampaAirport.com

Tampa International Airport embraces innovation, determination and teamwork as a benchmark for all employees, and to see a shining example of this, look no further than TPA Director of Concessions Kate Webb. As a rising star in the aviation industry, she came to TPA three years ago with the *Airport Business* 40 Under 40 Award, and she's been a huge part of TPA's growth and – more recently – recovery from a challenging year.

For these reasons and more, we are nominating Kate for the ACI-NA Heroes Award.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kate was an ambassador, partner and advocate for the Airport and its Concessions partners. Since the very beginning of the pandemic, Kate has been intentional about making sure every frontline employee sees her gratitude and her smile. She made herself accessible to the General Managers and has rallied behind them with rewards, recognition and a listening ear to keep them going when the Airport was empty and employees were scarce.

Kate has shepherded one of the strongest Concession re-opening plans in the country. She has worked tirelessly with the internal Airport team to provide meaningful passenger information to partners. Her efforts in developing new methods for sharing information has allowed Concessionaires to open profitably without cannibalizing each other's business.

Kate saw an opportunity to reduce expenses in the operation of the Concessions Receiving and Distribution Center. While there was no contract language to reduce costs due to passenger or product volume dropping, she was able to save more than 20 percent on these expenses during the pandemic.

The new assignments she willingly took on and championed included a COVID-19 Wi-Fi Survey, a TPA to Go mobile order and delivery service, a Chatbot pilot program, "I AM TPA" Surprise and Delight recognition and Concessions-wide hiring support.

She worked hand-in-hand with TPA's research department to survey travelers, collecting data on when and how often they expect to travel in the future, what services they are looking for and how they feel about the Airport's proactive measures during the pandemic. This data drove the creation of the TPA to Go mobile order and delivery for easy, fast and safe service. With the majority of travelers looking for contactless grab and go food options, Kate partnered with Grab in a pilot program combining the delivery services of At Your Gate. While the two-year pilot program is primarily devoted to food and beverage service, the service also includes the rollout of retail sales across the airport.

Kate's interest in the latest technology led her to partner with Airport's Communications Department to pilot an international Chabot company wanting to reach the U.S. market, seeing TPA as a good barometer for success. This Chatbot was added to the homepage of the Airport's website prompting

customers to get answers to airport inquiries. Initially it was focused on answering COVID questions and then moved into querying dining interests, eventually connecting customers to the TPAtoGo.com website to order food from TPA restaurants.

Kate's commitment to customer excellence showed her brilliance with taking the "I AM TPA" Concessions Recognition Program to a new level by bringing the recognition directly to the honorees in place of the previous monthly breakfast group gatherings. She and her team surprised and delighted the frontline and back-of-house individuals who exhibited above and beyond service during the pandemic. This was especially meaningful during the slow and uncertain early months. These employees received a customized certificate, a \$50 debit card and a professional photo that rotates on the Airport digital screens.

One of the most challenging operational concerns was with labor shortages affecting all aviation business lines, as well as businesses all over the nation. Kate challenged her team and rolled up her sleeves to bring the first ever Virtual Hiring Day along with an onsite Hiring Day to reach as many potential applicants as possible. A custom URL ([worktpa.com](http://worktpa.com)) was deployed, listing open positions and pay ranges along with videos of long time airport employees singing the praises of working at TPA. Participants were given online access to hiring managers at a time slot convenient for them and onsite participants were given safe measures and time slots to meet face to face with hiring managers along with free parking, bottled water and refreshments. To continue this support, quarterly Hiring Days are planned along with an onboarding swag bag (clear backpack, badge lanyard, mask and goodies) to reward newcomers as well as thanking existing employees for their continued dedication to TPA.

Kate clearly understood the emotional intelligence of those around her and comforted everyone as she would a family member. Her laughter, kindness and thoughtful tokens to others showed her strength and heroic abilities. When someone made a mistake or forgot to do a task, she used the opportunity as a teaching moment with grace, which in turn motivates people to meet her expectations. Kate celebrates big and small weekly wins to help the team move confidently forward.

She builds and fosters strong relationships with a high level of credibility by asking her team for input and she shares TPA's Concessions Department vision to keep them in the know. Kate cares for each team member in ways that are customized to the individual, showing she sees them for who they are and what is important for their work/life balance. This form of mentorship grows a strong cohesive team able to accomplish anything!

Most of all, Kate's genuine smile and positive take on life is refreshing to everyone she touches. She is a true hero during a time when those around her need her the most.

Respectfully,



Joe Lopano

CEO, Tampa International Airport