A Lesson in Service-Based Leadership

Nov. 16, 2023 - In the summer of 2023, Andrea Miralda, the Culture and Engagement Manager at DoubleTree Breckenridge, a Vail Resorts managed property, received a call from Glen Baumgart. Glen, a dad of two, had just wrapped up a visit to Breckenridge with his daughters. He was calling in search of a stuffed animal named Peace Bear.

This may seem like a lost stuffed bear to some, but for Glen and his daughters, Peace Bear is an important member of the family. A gift to his wife Jen from years prior, Peace Bear is the family's special mom mascot after Jen died of cancer in 2020. When she was first diagnosed, Jen kept Peace Bear by her side through five surgeries, three trials, and multiple rounds of chemotherapy. Wherever Glen and his daughters go – Peace Bear follows. Their visit to Breckenridge Ski Resort marked a return to one of their favorite family vacations, and a place that they last visited with Jen.

"We were at the airport when my youngest realized we had forgotten something special at the hotel," Glen said. "When we found that Peace Bear was lost, I knew I could call and get a great response. I pleaded that they look for the bear. The next day, Andrea reported the bear was found! As I expressed my gratitude with the description of Peace Bear's importance, I could feel tears coming on in me, and I could hear the same with Andrea."

Vail Resorts has a culture of service-based leadership that the company calls "Epic Service." Epic Service is grounded in the belief that "we serve because we are leaders, and we are leaders because we serve." Through Epic Service, Vail Resorts attracts employees aligned to the company's values and invests in their development through training in leadership, guest service and our business.

Andrea quickly offered to mail Peace Bear back to the Baumgart family, but Glen insisted that the bear was too important to ship. Glen happened to be returning to Denver the following week for work and asked to retrieve Peace Bear in-person.

"I walked in waiting for who I thought would be Andrea who was working at the front desk. She asked, 'Can I help you?' and I replied, 'I think you have my bear.' The look in her eyes told me she did. She said she had been anticipating my arrival, showing me, it was the main thing on the hotel calendar."

When Andrea reunited Peace Bear, the two shared tears. Glen didn't know what he would've told his children if he didn't get the bear back.

"When I realized he was willing to drive back to the property, it put into perspective how much Breckenridge means to him, and how much it meant to his wife Jen," says Andrea. "Returning Peace Bear made my whole week. I feel like I was supposed to be there that day to do this."

Andrea embodies Vail Resorts' core value of *Serve Others*, demonstrating how fulfilling it can be to provide exceptional guest service, all while displaying operational excellence.

"Working for Vail Resorts you take pride in your work," Andrea said. "Working for this company, you're willing to go above and beyond for every single customer and do that every single day."

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