

## Flagship Horticulture Program Flourishes at SLC

Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) is the 21st busiest airport in North America and the 70th busiest in the world, with more than 370 flights departing daily to 99 nonstop destinations.

Operated and managed by the Salt Lake City Department of Airports, SLC is currently undergoing a \$4 billion renovation. The New SLC is designed to accommodate 34 million passengers and will replace the five existing concourses with two linear concourses. The goal of the project is to optimize convenience, safety, and efficiency for aviation customers.

### ! The Challenge

Demonstrating its commitment to customers, Salt Lake City previously surveyed passengers to find out what elements of the airport experience they consider most important. The survey revealed that one of the top priorities is the presence of live plants.

When Flagship Facility Services began its partnership with SLC in 2020, it was challenged with further developing the airport's horticulture program to improve air quality, promote sustainability, and ultimately, increase customer satisfaction.

### ✓ The Solution

Flagship at once devoted the resources necessary to expand SLC's horticulture program. Led by Leslee Peterson, the horticulture team now cares for over 1,000 indoor plants, including a variety of pines, lilies, palms, and ferns. In fact, SLC is home to 13 of the 18 plants featured on NASA's list of best air-filtering plants. Some of the plants stand taller than 10 feet and are more than 15 years old.

A graduate of the University of Washington, Leslee is responsible for sourcing plant materials, grooming and dusting plants, checking plants for disease, and managing pests. Watering alone requires an astounding 65 hours a week from Leslee's team.

***"When I'm on the floor watering, I have five to 10 passengers coming up to me on a daily basis. They ask questions, even take pictures of me working," said Leslee. "And they thank me, because the plants mean a lot to them."***



### ↑↑ The Outcome

Horticulture plays an enormous role in helping passengers feel at ease as they navigate the New SLC and face the inevitable stresses associated with travel. Research shows that spending even a short amount of time in nature improves mental health and sharpens cognition.

Leslee recently encountered a passenger among the airport's 15-year-old pines who said that the trees provided respite in their moment of need – an experience she was thrilled to provide.

In addition to calming passengers, the plants are contributing to SLC's sustainability goals, which include reducing air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions to improve public health and reduce environmental impact. Each plant at SLC is specially selected for its ability to remove toxins and enhance air quality.

In an industry where customers value service *and* sustainability, SLC's horticulture program delivers the best of both worlds. Flagship is proud to support this endeavor to create a happy, healthy airport environment.

