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Digicel's Marlon Williams Wins 2nd Annual Utility Customer Service Distinction Award

(KINGSTON, Jamaica; 2024 November 15): A Technical Operator at Digicel Jamaica, Marlon Williams has won the Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities (CACU) 2nd annual Utility Customer Service Distinction Award. The announcement was made at a function on 2024 November 13 held at the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites in New Kingston.

Launched last year, the Award is intended to acknowledge and recognise excellence in customer service by a utility staff member who establishes and maintains a positive and effective working relationship with internal and external customers, fellow employees, and the general public.

The winner emerged from a very competitive field of eleven (11) nominees from all major utility providers: Digicel, FLOW, Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and the National Water Commission.

Beyond restoring connectivity to hundreds of thousands of customers in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl last July, Mr. Williams was praised for going above expectations, trekking impassable roadways to deliver ice and food supplies to a customer in hard-hit Malvern, in St. Elizabeth. With no electricity in the area, he volunteered his igloo to store the ice, making life a little more comfortable for the customer and her neighbours. It was also highlighted that in Breadnut Hill, St. Ann, Mr. Williams converted his van into a charging station for some customers to stay connected.

He was praised by the judging panel for going the extra mile, stepping outside of his job functions to extend kindness, help and empathy to those in need during a difficult time. The panel consisted of representatives of CACU, Erwin Burton and Gilroy Graham; Richard Rowe, Regional Officer, Consumer Affairs Commission and Yvonne Nicholson, Director, Consumer & Public Affairs.

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In reacting to his win, Mr. Williams says he is honoured and humbled to have been recognised by his organisation for nomination for the award. "Proverbs 22 says a good name should be pursued rather than great riches, and one of the things I can tell you is that a good customer service agent must be at peace with the fact that money doesn't determine your effort. If you're going to make an impact it cannot be about the dollar sign."

In praising the calibre of the nominations received for this year's awards, Chairman of the CACU, Yasmin Chong said, "The past months have shown us that adaptability, creativity and resilience aren't just nice-to-have qualities, they are essential if we are to succeed. All our nominees embody many of these traits in spades. They've not only met the challenge presented to them today, but they are working towards paving the way for tomorrow's innovations."

The OUR's Director-General, Ansord Hewitt in his remarks at the beginning of the awards ceremony, urged utility employees whose jobs entail handling customer complaints to be empathetic and refrain from scripted, standard responses.

"Too often we rely on scripted dialogues that may come off as being robotic or insincere. This approach fails to address the unique emotions and concerns of each customer and leads to a lack of genuine connection', he said. "This absence of compassion and understanding can lead to frustrating interactions. Customers might feel unheard or dismissed, which exacerbates their issues rather than alleviating them. Even though we categorise customer complaints, no two customers are alike, and it is critical that we appreciate the variation in their experience as well as the different contexts".

About CACU

The Consumer Advisory Committee on Utilities (CACU) was established in 2004 to provide the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) with a forum through which it can receive consumers' views on broad regulatory issues as well as their perspectives on issues affecting the relationships between the utility companies and consumers. As the principal forum and point of contact for the OUR in its consideration of consumer issues and concerns, the membership is drawn from consumer groups, the private business sector, academia, the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) and the public.