

Jamalco employees quit smoking

October 2014



Jamalco employees who participated in the Smoking Cessation programme are (from left) Deryck Beckford, Horace Logan, Brenda Beale, Nicholas Dougherty, and Derron Garwood.

MAY PEN, Clarendon — Five Jamalco employees created history when they graduated recently from the first Smoking Cessation programme to be launched at a corporate entity in Jamaica, a news release from the bauxite/alumina company has said.

The five employees, Deryck Beckford, Horace Logan, Brenda Beale, Nicholas Dougherty, and Derron Garwood, were among 18 persons who enrolled in the special programme to quit smoking last September.

The release said all five graduates are from the company's Mines Department.

A similar programme will take place at the Jamalco refinery. The launch and declaration of the initiative also took place during the graduation exercise, the release said.

Jamalco's EHS Manager Andrea Spence said the initiative was in response to a challenge that was issued by Alcoa's Chief Executive Officer Klaus Kleinfeld in his 2013 New Year's message. She said Kleinfeld had challenged all locations to implement wellness programmes for employees.

Spence said a decision was taken to develop the Smoking Cessation programme to help employees who smoke to quit the habit because of the adverse effects of nicotine on the body. The programme, she said, revolved around four pillars: eat well, be active, improve well-being; and be tobacco free.

Managing Director Antonio Melo congratulated the five employees for taking the bold step and lauded Nurse Charmaine Gordon-Simpson for leading the initiative in the Mines Department. "Our commitment is to save every smoker at Jamalco and we will not stop until we reach all of them," Melo said.

Guest speaker and executive director at the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) Michael Tucker outlined the dangers of smoking noting that there are over 1.3 billion smokers, most of whom will develop lung cancer and 10 million will die from the disease.

Tucker said despite the negative effects of smoking and nicotine on the body, there has been an increase in the number of smokers between 2006 and 2013 and the gap between male and female smokers is narrowing. He added that some 27.6 per cent of the school population is involved in tobacco use.

He lauded the graduates for finding the determination to quit smoking and called on their families to assist them on their road to recovery. "Make it a loving and caring atmosphere when they come home so they will not have the urge to regress" he said.

To the graduates he said: "You who have gone the journey, you should be an advocate for those who need help, so help the young among us as well as your friends."

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In her overview of the programme, Josein Baker of the NCDA commended the graduates. “You are demonstrating to thousands that the habit of smoking can be stopped. She also thanked the mentors who were trained as volunteers to provide support to these employees.

Brenda Beale, had been smoking for 20 years. Since she has kicked the habit she says she has been feeling healthier, her skin is more beautiful and she is breathing more freely. “From now on I will be reaching out to other smokers and will embrace the life that God has given to me,” she said.

A smoker for 25 years, **Derron Garwood** explained that he too is feeling healthier and there are improvements in other areas of his life.