

For Immediate Release

## **Winners Announced at the 27<sup>th</sup> ROSE Awards Metro Detroit Hospitality Community Celebrates the Best in the Hospitality and Travel Industries at the 27<sup>th</sup> ROSE Awards**

DETROIT – Excellence in hospitality and service was honored by Visit Detroit at the 27th Recognition of Service Excellence (ROSE) Awards. Nearly 460,000 people in Southeast Michigan work in an industry connected to hospitality and travel, and 145 of those professionals were honored at the event. More than 600 industry colleagues attended the award ceremony that took place on August 31, 2023, at the Sound Board Theater at the MotorCity Casino Hotel.

"Visitors are coming back to Southeast Michigan in the millions after the pandemic and spending billions of dollars to support our region's economy," said Visit Detroit President & CEO Claude Molinari. "The Talyor Swift and Beyonce concerts, the Movement Festival, our incredible culinary scene, and our welcoming hotels and attractions are not possible without the dedication of hospitality industry professionals that Visit Detroit is honored to recognize at ROSE Awards."

The 145 ROSE Award nominations were provided by clients, guests, supervisors and the general public. One winner in each of the six categories was chosen. Additionally, one overall service champion, selected by a panel of expert hospitality professionals was also recognized.

The 2023 category winners were:

- Volunteers — Hiran Alles, Volunteer, Wayne County Airport Authority
- Attractions and Casinos – Ny'Asia Valdez, BarHandler, The HandleBar
- Transportation – Jamara Lee, Customer Service Agent, Delta Air Lines
- Restaurants – John Boyce, Bartender, 5ive Steakhouse
- Behind the Scenes – Thomasina Bryant, Concierge, Huntington Place
- Hotels – Bianca Lupp, Front Desk Agent, Auburn Hills Marriott Pontiac

The 2023 Overall Service Champion was Kitty Whitfield, Small Business Engagement Manager, Downtown Detroit Partnership. During the pandemic, Kitty was on the frontlines working with hospitality and small businesses to help them get the support and resources they needed to stay in business. She is a fierce advocate for Detroit, Detroiters, and the businesses in the community.

### **McLaughlin Award for Hospitality**

The William F. McLaughlin Award for hospitality customer service was awarded to the **Detroit Riverfront Conservancy**. As they mark their 20th anniversary this year, the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy remains steadfast in their mission to unite the 5.5-mile stretch from the Ambassador Bridge to Gabriel Richard Park, situated just east of the Belle Isle Bridge.

Notably, the Riverfront has achieved the remarkable distinction of being crowned the nation's premier riverwalk for three consecutive years, as recognized by the USA Today's 10Best list.

Fox 2's Roop Raj served as master of ceremonies for the evening, which included entertainment by Rodney Page, Darian Taschner, Full View Productions, and Elevate Production Group.

For more information about the ROSE Awards, go to [theroseawards.com](http://theroseawards.com).

\*Photos available upon request.\*

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Visit Detroit is a private, not-for-profit organization with a mission to drive regional tourism and economic impact by connecting the world to our diverse communities, rich history and spirit of innovation. Visit Detroit is the catalyst for bringing business travel, connections, trade shows, events, and leisure travelers to our region. More than 700 businesses are represented in the Visit Detroit membership. Visit Detroit was founded in 1896 as the world's first convention and visitors bureau, and more than 700 business are represented in the membership. [Visitdetroit.com](http://Visitdetroit.com).

### **Addendum I: Additional Information on Award Winners**

**Overall Service Champion: Kitty Whitfield-** Kitty is the Small Business Engagement Manager for the Downtown Detroit Partnership. Kitty works with restaurants, retail, and other small businesses in Detroit to provide them critical resources, support, and connections.

**Volunteers Category: Hiran Alles** Hiran has been a volunteer at the airport for five years. He was nominated by ten different people for his helpful, compassionate, and kind service. Hiran is known for going above and beyond to help passengers as they navigate Wayne County Airport.

**Attractions and Casinos Category: Ny'Asia Valdez-** Ny'Asia is a Barhandler for the Handlebar Her unwavering commitment to excellence shines through in her daily endeavors. Ny'Asia's infectious love for her job, the people she serves, and her colleagues is palpable and reciprocated by everyone fortunate enough to work alongside her. Her boundless enthusiasm and charismatic knowledge about the city breathe life into her work, making her a true asset to the community.

**Transportation Category: Jamara Lee-** Jamara Lee is a customer service agent for Delta Airlines. Jamara is a standout professional whose unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional internal and external customer service sets her apart. Jamara is compassionate to everyone, especially people experiencing stressful travel situations.

**Restaurants Category: John Boyce-** John is a bartender and bar-back 5ive Steakhouse at Saint John's Resort in Plymouth, MI. Colleagues of John call him a master of his craft. He is always creating new

cocktails that combine aesthetic appeal and great taste. John's personality also helps create exceptional an exceptional guest experience.

**Behind the Scenes: Thomasina Bryant-** Thomasina is a concierge at Huntington Place. Earlier this year, she was stationed at the information desk when she encountered a person in the midst of a mental health crisis. Thomasina's unwavering composure and her continued engagement with the individual, even in the presence of security and police personnel who arrived to offer additional assistance, highlight her remarkable ability to make a significant difference through seemingly small yet impactful actions.

**Hotels: Bianca Lupp-** Bianca Lupp is a front desk agent at the Auburn Hills Marriot Pontiac. Bianca consistently welcomes everyone with a cheerful smile as they step through the hotel's doors. She extends the same level of respect and kindness to both her colleagues and the guests she serves. Bianca's willingness to consistently go the extra mile for both her team and the guests exemplifies her dedication and commitment to fostering a warm and inviting atmosphere.

## **Addendum 2: Prizes for Overall Service Champion and Category Winners**

### **Overall Service Champion prizes**

- \$1,500 Cash
- Two Round Trip Tickets for Travel within US/Canada – Mexico/Caribbean provided by Delta Air Lines
- Four Charity Preview Tickets to the North American International Auto Show
- Four Suite Tickets for a Show at the Fox Theatre during the 2023-2024 Season plus Lunch or Dinner with Nonalcoholic Beverages on the Loge Level Prior to the Show
- Detroit Tigers Game Tickets (4)
- Crystal Award
- Two Dozen Red Roses
- One Bottle of Champagne

### **Category Winners**

- \$500 Visa Gift Card
- One Complimentary Roundtrip Tickets within US48/Canada provided by Delta Air Lines
- Detroit Tigers Game Tickets (2)
- Crystal Award
- One Dozen Red Roses
- One Bottle of Champagne