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Birthday Blessings wins $10K Jimmie Johnson Helmet of Hope grant

All-volunteer nonprofit's logo to appear on Johnson's helmet at Pepsi 400

(Charlotte, N.C., August 19, 2010) - Thanks to nominations from loyal supporters and media friends, Birthday Blessings, a Charlotte-based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that celebrates and supports the lives of homeless children, has been awarded a $10,000 Helmet of Hope grant from the Jimmie Johnson Foundation. Its logo will appear on Johnson's helmet, along with 12 other Helmet of Hope grant recipients at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, C.A., in October during the Pepsi 400.

The Helmet of Hope program was launched in 2008 as a way to give fans and members of the media across the country the opportunity to nominate their favorite charity to be featured on Johnson's helmet for the Pepsi 400 race. It began as a way for Johnson and his wife, Chandra, to give back to charities who are giving so much to the communities they serve -- a way to help boost those nonprofits' efforts and bring them recognition at a nation-wide level.

This is the first year that the program is awarding its selected charities with a $10,000 grant, thanks to the Foundation's partnership with Samsung Hope for Children Program, a corporate-giving program that aligns athletes and retail partners to help children learn, live, and thrive. Birthday Blessings is one of seven Charlotte-based charities among more than 30 nationwide that have received a spot on the Samsung Helmet of Hope since 2008.

"We are so excited and grateful to be selected as a grant recipient through the Helmet of Hope initiative. Not only do we feel blessed to receive this generous donation and be featured on Jimmie's helmet, but we are equally grateful to the many caring and dedicated supporters who nominated Birthday Blessings. Our volunteers are truly the heart of all that we do."

While the Jimmie Johnson Foundation received many nominations for Birthday Blessings, it was Terri Springer's that sealed the deal. Said Springer: "I started volunteering in 2008, and since I began, my family has been part of it, too. Logan, my 10-year-old, loves to go and help. He helps at some parties and watched as one boy blew out his candles. The boy didn't know how to do it because he had never had candles on his cake before. Logan was very touched by that, and hopes that all children can celebrate their birthdays. The organization not only provides smiles, but gives the children a moment of normalcy in a time when it isn't normal."

Birthday Blessings began in 2005 as a family service project created by Mint Hill couple Amy and John Cervantes. In 2008, they incorporated their service venture as a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit, quickly expanding the organization's programs and services. To date, Birthday Blessings has celebrated more than 1,200 birthdays for homeless children and their families. The all-volunteer nonprofit currently serves 14 homeless facilities and programs across a four-county region, as well as transient homeless elementary and middle school students throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The organization also provides Blessing Baskets filled with care essentials to help welcome and support the arrival of homeless babies.

Birthday Blessings began developing a national expansion program in 2009, with pilot affiliate chapters now getting under way in northeast Indiana; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Atlanta, Georgia.

For more information, go to www.birthdayblessings.org and www.helmetofhope.org.

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