Speedway Children's Charities awards grants at annual tree lighting at Lowe's Motor Speedway

By SceneDaily Staff Tuesday, December 01, 2009

[Left to Right] General Sadler, radio personalities John Boy and Billy and Marcus Smith present a check to local children's charities during the annual tree lighting at Lowe's Motor Speedway.

Speedway Children's Charities donated more than $854,000 to organizations benefiting Charlotte-area children during Monday night's annual tree lighting ceremony at Lowe's Motor Speedway.

Marcus Smith, president and general manager of LMS, joined Retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Tom Sadler, executive director of Speedway Children's Charities, in awarding the grants to 93 organizations.

"Children are a gift, and it's a blessing that we're able to assist so many each year," Smith said in a news release. "Everyone at Speedway Children's Charities strives to make a difference in the lives of as many children as possible, and this year we're helping kids though programs at more than 90 organizations in the Lowe's Motor Speedway community. It's just amazing to see how many children we're able to assist."

Speedway Children's Charities raised the money through various fundraising activities along with individual and corporate donations throughout the year.

A number of agencies will directly benefit from the funds, including A Better World, which helps provide finances to operate after-school programs; **Birthday Blessings, whose Shelter Party Program hosts birthday parties for homeless children and their families**; Northeast Foundation Inc., which helps fund Camp Open Airways and Camp Sweet Freedom for asthmatic and diabetic children to attend a summer day camp under medical supervision to control their asthma and diabetes while participating in typical camp activities; and Thompson Child & Family Focus, which provides comprehensive early childhood education where typically developing and special needs children learn together.

In addition to the grant distribution, the holiday ceremony included the lighting of Lowe's Motor Speedway's one-of-a-kind 50-foot Christmas tree and visits by Santa Claus and the track mascot, Lug Nut.