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MEDIA ALERT

CALABASAS RACER, RENÉ VILLENEUVE, JOINED 850 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN 2015 TOYOTA GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH FIELD TRIPS FOR KIDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHO:

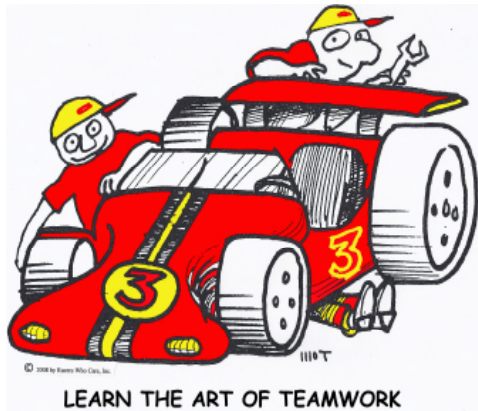
Eight hundred fifty students from nine Los Angeles schools, 11 Long Beach schools, five Long Beach Parks, the Long Beach Boys & Girls Club and the Long Beach YMCA participated, along with Calabasas-based SCCA Pirelli World Challenge Series competition and Ski Barber Racing School Instructor, René Villeneuve, on field trips at the **2015 Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach**.

The students were treated to Racers Who Care Quick Tips on Winning in Life life skills presentations made by pro-racers and motorsports professionals, based on their personal career experiences, and enjoyed racer-guided Paddock Tours to see the Tips being enacted in real life by race teams. Dr. Billows and Spencer Pigot participated in Quick Tips on Winning in Life presentations, sharing their favorite Quick Tips on Winning in Life based on their own personal experiences.

The 10 race weekend field trips, were made possible by donations from the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach and by a grant from Long Beach-based William T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation and were founded, organized and hosted by Racers Who Care, Inc.

Long Beach schools, parks and organizations involved included: the following Long Beach elementary Schools: Burbank [Long Beach] Elementary School, Grant Elementary School, International Elementary School, Star King Elementary School, Willard Elementary School, Edison Elementary School, Garfield Elementary School, Roosevelt Elementary School, Lee Elementary School, Hudson Elementary, Stevenson Elementary School, and Chavez Elementary School; from the following Long Beach parks: Stearn Park [Special Needs Children], Orizaba Park, Houghton Park, Scherer Park, McBride Park, King Park, and Pan American Park. Additionally, the Long Beach YMCA and the Log Beach Boys & Girls Clubs brought students out to participate.

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Arranged through Leo Gallardo, of the L.A. All-Stars after school program provider, students participated from the Suva Intermediate School, View Park Elementary School, Lou Dantzer Elementary School, Synergy Kinetic Academy, College Ready Middle Academy #12, College Ready Middle Academy #4, RISE Middle School, Burlington Middle School, Bell Gardens Intermediate School, and Harte Preparatory Middle School. Participating through the coordination of Manuel McLeod, of the Champions for Charters after school program provider, students participated from Los Angeles area's New Heights Charter School.

RACERS:

Born in the United States to a family with strong roots in Canada, René grew up in the USA, Canada and France. René started racing in 1987 when he attended the Spenard-David Racing School in Canada, operated by Richard Spenard – a popular and former Formula Atlantic teammate of Gilles Villeneuve. A Formula Ford 2000 season came next for René before a move back to the U.S. to compete in Barber/SAAB for two seasons. The series proved to be a valuable asset on René's racing ladder – competing with now world-famous drivers such as Brian Herta.

René took an opportunity to work in the music industry and quickly found himself managing the tours of "America's Favorite Band" – the Beach Boys. While with The Beach Boys an opportunity came up to go to Japan to compete in FF1600 with Kato Gumi Racing.

He returned to American road racing on the Rolex Grand Am Series and American Le Mans Series where in 2012, driving a Porsche in the GTC Class for GMG racing, he scored an ALMS podium finish at Laguna Seca.

Other racers involved in inspiring kids to believe in themselves and in their dreams included: Donald Galaz, a drag racer and spokesperson for the National Brotherhood of Street Racers, from San Pedro, California; from Indianapolis, the IndyCar Medical and Safety Team, including Dr. Geoff Billows, Medical Director for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Michael Carey and Gail Truess, from Phoenix, Arizona, and Bill Condermann; also from Indianapolis was Indy Lights competitor for Juncos Racing, Spencer Pigot and his teammate, from Santa Clara, California, Kyle Kaiser; Mazda Spec Miata competitor on the Oregon Region SCCA STL Championship Series, Dani Ferrara, of Vancouver, Washington; SCCA Pirelli World Challenge competitor, Mike

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Skeen, based in Charlotte, North Carolina; racer Marcus Wiley, of Riverside, California, who has tried out several types of racing; JD Davis, who provides support services for teams at races, from Fresno, California; and, Kenton Koch, of Covina, California, who is competing in Cooper Tires Prototype Lites Powered by Mazda.

Several volunteers generously assisted with the field trips during race weekend, including: Andrew Gekas, a City of Long Beach employee, Missy Collins, Leo Gallardo, of LA-All Stars, and Tess Cozine, a Los Angeles family law attorney. Additional volunteers traveled quite a way at their own expense to participate, including Janna Hitchcock, who traveled in from Phoenix; and Stayce White, from Barstow, California.

EVENT SUPPORTERS:

Joy Warren, of the City of Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine Department, partnering with RWC on the field trip program, scheduled various student groups and coordinated the students' transportation and on site arrival. Additionally, partnering with RWC on scheduling Los Angeles student groups were Leo Gallardo, of LA All-Stars, and Manuel McLeod of Champions for Charters Club, both are primarily after school program providers. The Long Beach Boys & Girls Club and YMCA also sent groups of students to participate.

WHY:

Quick Tips on Winning in Life racer presentations to children's groups, schools, hospitals are an avenue through which professional racers can give back to the communities where they live and race, by inspiring, affirming, empowering, and fueling the dreams of children and teens, and encouraging them to believe in themselves and reach for their dreams.

The Racer Quick Tips Presentations and Paddock Tours center on key universal truths RWC calls Quick Tips on Winning in Life, applicable to all children and teens regardless of age, cultural background, or life experience: find something to do in life that you really love, study, learn the art of teamwork, find a mentor, take the long view, be flexible with your dreams and goals, avoid the path of least resistance, and more. Racers share with kids their own personal experiences centered around these Quick Tips.

Racers Who Care, Inc. is a Van Nuys, California-based 501c3 charitable corporation, founded in 1993, that works with auto, boat, motorcycle, truck and even snowmobile racers dedicated to making a positive difference for our next generation. In Southern California, and throughout the U.S. in communities surrounding their tracks, RWC's racers have unforgettably impacted kids with exciting observations on how to succeed, presented by people who have -- very publicly, and in a field perceived as ruthless, tough and unforgiving.

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