

January 21, 2008

Jim Moran Classic Helps Prepare Kids for Brighter Futures



(From left) YATC Executive Director Terry Routley, along with current and former YATC students Larry Wiggins, with his daughter Tyra, Anthony Lleras, with his fiancée Seema Basdeo and Morris Castañeda, joined Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback and longtime YATC supporter Jim Kelly (fourth from left) on the golf course during the 2007 Jim Moran Classic.

Deerfield Beach, Fla. – Without help from the Youth Automotive Training Center (YATC), Morris Castañeda is sure that he would be in a dead-end job or dead. “My parents were worried about what my future would be,” he said, admitting that he was not the best student when he was younger and had no ambitions for college. Given the opportunity to turn his life around, Castañeda, a 1990 graduate of YATC, is now pursuing a bachelor’s degree while he works full time as a product administrator with Courtesy Insurance Company, a division of JM Family Enterprises, Inc., where he has worked for 15 years. Crediting Jim Moran and all those who had a major impact on his life, Castañeda noted, “If it weren’t for them and all of you who support the school, I wouldn’t be here today. I wish Mr. Moran was here to see me graduate, but I do know this – he’s here in spirit.”

Castañeda is one of more than 430 graduates of YATC and was one of the special guest speakers at the 2007 Jim Moran Classic, an annual fund-raising event held at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress in Orlando, Fla.

that supports YATC. Founded by Jim Moran, YATC is a one-of-a-kind South Florida educational facility that provides young adults with the opportunity to learn a trade and equips them with the tools they need to prepare for a brighter future filled with economic opportunity and success. Moran also founded and served as honorary chairman of diversified automotive company JM Family Enterprises, Inc.

“Jim always believed in giving second chances and in making a real difference in someone else’s life,” said Jan Moran. “It would have meant so much to him to see how dedicated YATC’s friends and supporters continue to be, and how strongly they continue to share his commitment. The Classic was his favorite event of the year because it was all about being there for the kids.”

More than 530 individuals and corporations participated in the Classic weekend, joined by many celebrities who have dedicated their time and talents to help raise funding for YATC. Golf legends and long-time supporters Chi Chi Rodriguez and Mark Pfeil conducted the golf clinic; the tennis clinic and tournament were led by pros Wendy Turnbull, Virginia Wade, Hana Mandlikova and Doby Petrovich. Other sports greats participating in the event included Jim Kelly, Dan Marino, Joe Montana, Earl Morrall, Mike Schmidt, Jason Taylor and more than 25 others. The Classic Banquet was emceed by Emmy Award-winning television news anchor and reporter Doug Dunbar, who has also been a long-time supporter, as well as a YATC Advisory Board member.



In addition to the golf and tennis tournaments, clinics and contests, the weekend of activities included a silent auction of sports memorabilia sponsored by Mounted Memories, a special kids and teens program and raffles for a 2008 Toyota Tundra X-SP and two custom 2008 Harley-Davidson FXDF Fat Bob motorcycles donated by Bruce Rossmeyer's Daytona and Fort Lauderdale Harley-Davidson dealerships. Sponsors of the Classic included: Presenting Sponsor, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., along with Major Sponsors, Auto Carrier Express, Inc., Centurion Auto Logistics, Inc., The Cross Country Group, Darrow Automotive, Ken Hall, O'Brien Auto Team, Bruce Rossmeyer's Daytona Harley-Davidson, Bruce Rossmeyer's Ft. Lauderdale Harley-Davidson & Daytona Toyota, Southern Manufacturing & Argue Automotive Accessories, Tire Kingdom, Reynolds & Reynolds, Dell and many others.

During the Classic Banquet, Anthony Lleras, a member of YATC's Class of 2008, shared with guests the difficult times he experienced growing up, when he and his family often found themselves homeless. "Every car we had, we lived in. My life has been really rough, but YATC is helping me a lot. It's a stepping stone for the rest of my life." His appreciation and enthusiasm for the program will continue after he graduates, as he promised to return to YATC to tell future students, "It's the best thing that could happen to you. There are so many people who want you to succeed."

Former Classic speaker and Class of 1993 graduate Larry Wiggins also attended with his daughter, Tyra. YATC Executive Director Terry Routley explained to guests how important the program's assistance, particularly the lunch program, can be for students like Wiggins, who admitted, "There were days I didn't eat except for at YATC." Wiggins went on to become another of the program's success stories, having served in the U.S. military and having gained sufficient career experience to work toward a master electrician's certification. He is grateful for the ongoing personal and professional support offered to all program participants, and like more than 90% of YATC's graduates, Wiggins will continue to make the most of his second chance.

About the Youth Automotive Training Center

Established by Jim Moran in 1984, the mission of the Youth Automotive Training Center is to train and educate at-risk youth in basic automotive repair skills, academic remediation, job readiness and life management skills. The goal of this program is to prepare young adults who are at a disadvantage in their lives to become self-sufficient, productive, law-abiding citizens. Students are referred to YATC in a variety of ways, including through the Departments of Juvenile Justice and Children and Families, as well as YATC graduates, local clergy and word of mouth.

For more information about the Youth Automotive Training Center, visit www.yatc.org or contact Hillary Gurman, Community Relations Manager at (954) 428-0909 or at yatcgurm@bellsouth.net. YATC is located at 399 SW Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, Deerfield Beach, Florida.

###