

Kingdom Racing Outreaching to 1 Million IndyCar Fans

On race day, the scene is exhilarating: Loudspeakers blare, the smell of burnt rubber fills the air and dozens of turbocharged, open-wheeled race cars conquer the oval at g-force speeds. Yet off the track, it doesn't take a checkered flag for spectators to experience the sweet taste of victory. In fact, to Kingdom Racing—the electrifying, faith-based IndyCar racing team—the joy of 'winning' is celebrated at every race, and is one of profound, eternal significance.

As founder and co-owner, Houston businessman George Del Canto shares his passion for its ministry and the life-changing ways it touches hearts for God.

"Our mission at Kingdom Racing, to 'deliver God's Word through motorsports,' means we're all about winning hearts and lives for Christ," he says.

Kingdom Racing focuses on two dynamic outreach ministries at the racetrack. Their Miles of Smiles ministry reaches out to individuals (identified through local organizations and churches) who are going through various difficulties or loss.

"We treat them like rock stars," Del Canto nods, "giving them deeply personal VIP access to the racing team and cars for the entire day, ministering to them, loving them. To reach the entire racing community, our trackside Fan Festivals feature show cars, autograph sessions, top Christian entertainment and more—offering experiences and resources that touch people in a comfortable way, giving them an opportunity to think about God."

Three Fan Festivals are slated for the 2013 season: leading up to the Indy 500 on May 26; in Ft. Worth, Texas, on June 8; and in Houston, Oct. 5-6. The Miles of Smiles ministry will bless

individuals and families at 10 races throughout the season, which kicks off March 24 in St. Petersburg, Fla., and runs through Oct. 19 with the World Championships in Fontana, Calif.

While 2008 marked the launch of Kingdom Racing as the first faith-based team to compete in the Indy 500, its conception began years earlier and resulted from Del Canto's personal journey of loss and restoration.

"A dozen years ago, I found myself bankrupt," he explains, "financially, emotionally and spiritually. One night, I knelt down and cried, 'God, I can't take this anymore. I give all my problems to You—You find a way.' And He did."

Later, while in a prayer group that challenged him to carry out a "big dream for God," Del Canto remembers his wife asking him, "What's your big dream for God, George?"

"I'm going to build an IndyCar team and deliver God's Word through motorsports," he instantly replied, believing without a doubt that God gave him the idea as he unconsciously formed the words. And Kingdom Racing was born.

Now, five years later, key relationships have been formed with national partners and ministries such as Man in the Mirror, Creation Museum, Fiesta Mart Inc., Athletes in Action, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, IndyCar Ministry and Cru, formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ.

When Del Canto began putting the team together, he met IndyCar driver and national champion Davey Hamilton and quickly realized that he was the embodiment of the Kingdom Racing story—a man who at one time had felt washed up, yet found healing in Christ.

Indeed, Hamilton had survived a horrific crash in 2001 at Texas Motor Speedway that almost led to the amputation of his legs. Turning to God in his brokenness, Hamilton endured 21

surgeries over six years before “God helped me return to the cockpit,” he says, reviving his racing career.

Celebrating a fifth-place overall finish in the IZOD IndyCar series championship, and concluding its first full season of IndyCar competition in 2012, the Kingdom Racing team is poised for a superior outcome in 2013.

“We want to cheer our team on to victory,” Del Canto shares, “a winning season gives us an incredible platform for sharing and delivering God’s Word.”

Now with the goal to reach “one million men for Christ,” Kingdom Racing looks forward to ‘winning’ each race in a deeply passionate way, “all for His glory,” Del Canto affirms. “With God at our side, seeking Him in all things, we can run the race of this life, deliver His Word, and celebrate true victory.”