

Gwendolyn Strong Foundation Selected By NASCAR Champion Jimmie Johnson For Helmet of Hope Campaign

The Gwendolyn Strong Foundation (GSF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing awareness of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), the #1 genetic killer of young children, and accelerating cure focused SMA research, was selected by four-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson and the Jimmie Johnson Foundation as one of the children's charities for its 2010 Samsung Helmet of Hope campaign. For that honor, GSF will receive a \$10,000 grant from the Jimmie Johnson Foundation and GSF's logo will grace Johnson's racing helmet for the prestigious NASCAR Sprint Cup Series event – Pepsi 400 – at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California on October 10, 2010.

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In its third year, the Samsung Helmet of Hope program is a partnership of the Jimmie Johnson Foundation, Samsung, and Lowe's. Fans and media members across the country nominate their favorite children's charity for a chance to be featured on Johnson's helmet for a select race. New this year, selected charities are also receiving a grant of \$10,000. This partnership is part of the Samsung Hope for Children program, a corporate giving program that aligns athletes and retail partners to help children learn, live, and thrive.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be honored as a Helmet of Hope charity," said Bill Strong, GSF co-founder. "Although not a household name, SMA kills more young children than any other inherited disease and the Helmet of Hope selection provides an incredible opportunity to raise much needed awareness of SMA, its brutal reality, and the enormous hope for groundbreaking research that could end this cruel disease for good. Thank you to Jimmie Johnson, the Jimmie Johnson Foundation, Samsung, and Lowe's for creating this impactful campaign."

SMA is a terminal, degenerative genetic disease that impacts the voluntary muscles in infants and children, including the ability to walk, sit, stand, eat, breathe, and even swallow, while cognitive ability is never affected. Ninety percent of children born with SMA die before the age of two. One in every 40 people or nearly eight Million Americans unknowingly carries the gene responsible for SMA. There is currently no treatment or cure and although SMA research is underfunded, it is extremely advanced. GSF is focused on helping ensure resources are not the obstacle in attaining that cure.

To further its mission, one-hundred-percent of the \$10,000 grant from the Jimmie Johnson Foundation will be going toward GSF's "\$200K For SMA" fundraising campaign. This campaign is a collaboration between GSF and FightSMA, a leading national SMA organization, to direct necessary funds to propel the promising

SMA gene therapy research of Dr. Brian Kaspar and other collaborating scientists at Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University toward human clinical trials.

To learn more about SMA and GSF, please visit <http://GwendolynStrongFoundation.org>

To read the Jimmie Johnson Foundation press release, please visit <http://bit.ly/GSFHelmetOfHope>

To learn more about the Samsung Helmet of Hope campaign, please visit <http://HelmetOfHope.org>

To learn more about the Jimmie Johnson Foundation, please visit <http://JimmieJohnsonFoundation.org>

About Gwendolyn Strong Foundation (GSF) – GSF is based in Santa Barbara, California and seeks to increase awareness and research funding for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), the leading genetic killer of young children. To learn more about SMA and GSF, please visit

<http://GwendolynStrongFoundation.org>

Image Gallery



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