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Festival of Children Foundation Awards \$50,000 to Autism Society of America as Part of Online Video Talent Challenge to Celebrate National Child Awareness Month

A Total of \$72,500 Awarded to Children's Charities as 220 Videos Capture More than 2.5 Million Social Impressions

COSTA MESA, Calif. (Oct. 13, 2016) – As a result of its first online video talent challenge held in September, [Festival of Children Foundation](#) (FOCF), a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children by strengthening the charities that serve them, awarded \$72,500 to several children's charities across the country, including a first place prize of \$50,000 to the [Autism Society of America](#). The NCAM [talent challenge](#), which was created to celebrate [National Child Awareness Month](#) (NCAM) in September, encouraged people to submit one-minute videos showcasing a special talent, call out their children's charity of choice, and then challenge at least two other people to do the same.

During the month, people from all walks of life submitted videos, from film, TV and Broadway star Matthew Morrison, TV host Mario Lopez, legendary pop icon Marie Osmond, and professional skateboarding star Tony Hawk, to everyday folks including children, high school students, a grandmother and more.

In the end, it was an emerging rapper and bus driver from San Diego, Vee "Vrsatyl" Meadows, who won the challenge with a music video of his original song, "Born This Way," which features the families of two co-workers with children living with autism. Vrsatyl designated The Autism Society of America for the \$50,000 grant, and has since built a broad following of fans, who support his mission to bring awareness to the cause. He along with the second place winner, the Orange County School of the Arts in Santa Ana, Calif., will be celebrated on Tuesday, Oct. 18, at a special event held at the school at 11:30 a.m. Vrsatyl will perform his winning song, accompanied by four dance students performing original choreography created just for the song. The Orange County School of the Arts is located at 1010 North Main Street, Santa Ana, Calif., 92701.

"The biggest winners of the National Child Awareness Month Talent Challenge are America's children," said Sandy Segerstrom Daniels, Founder & Executive Director of Festival of Children Foundation. "There are so many wonderful organizations out there doing extraordinary work for kids. This campaign was able to focus and amplify the voices of their advocates in a really fun and meaningful way. We are so grateful for Olivia Newton John's endorsement of the talent challenge and all of the added attention it brought to the charities."

“We are thrilled and honored to be the recipient of this donation because of Vee's contest win,” said Scott Badesch, president of Autism Society of America. “Vee is a real hero of ours, as his words and actions help advance the respect and dignity of each person with autism. “

NCAM Talent Challenge Attracts More 2.5 Million Social Impressions

The NCAM Talent Challenge was hosted on Indi.com, an innovative new video social network that connects individuals, charities and companies directly with fans and supporters. Indi.com leverages a proprietary voting method, called “Indi Buzz,” that more accurately captures the total number of social interactions across multiple channels to identify a winning video.

More than 220 videos were submitted during the month, accumulating more than 2.6 million “Buzz” points, or the total number of social interactions the videos received.

The winners of the National Child Awareness Month (NCAM) Talent Challenge are:

\$50,000, 1st Place Buzz Winner: Autism Society of America, Bethesda, Maryland, 876,846 Buzz Points

\$5,000, 2nd Place Buzz Winner: Orange County School of the Arts, Santa Ana, Calif., 755,906 Buzz Points

\$2,500, 3rd Place Buzz Winner: Children’s Miracle Network, Salt Lake City, Utah, 101,096 Buzz Points

\$5,000, Founders Prize: The Learning Tree, Anniston, Alabama

\$5,000, NCAM Youth Ambassador: Truly Thrive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

\$5,000 September Buzz Winner: Orange County School of the Arts, Santa Ana, Calif.

About Autism Society of America

Founded in 1965, the Autism Society is the nation’s leading grassroots autism organization, and exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. We do this by increasing public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the autism spectrum, advocating for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and providing the latest information regarding treatment, education and research. The Society maintains a strong nationwide network of affiliates to provide support and grassroots advocacy at local, state and federal levels. www.autism-society.org.

About Festival of Children Foundation

Festival of Children Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the lives of children by strengthening the charities that serve them. 100% of Foundation’s administrative costs are covered by committed funding, allowing donations to go further in direct support of programs and services that improve the lives of children.

<http://www.festivalofchildren.org/>

About National Child Awareness Month

The effort to have September declared as [National Child Awareness Month](#) began as a local effort in Orange County, Calif., by Festival of Children Foundation Founder Sandy Segerstrom Daniels to raise awareness and focus America’s attention on our greatest asset – our children. The Orange County Board of Supervisors first unanimously designated September as “Child Awareness Month” in September 2002. In September of 2003, the State of California commended Festival of Children Foundation’s efforts and declared September as “Children Awareness Month.” In 2008, the U.S. Senate passed U.S. Senate Resolution 644 declaring September 2008 “National Child Awareness Month.” Since then, Ms. Segerstrom Daniels and Festival of Children Foundation have been successful in having every successive September declared as “National Child Awareness Month.”