

Racing with His Heart: Professional Racer Helps Children

by Kelly Wimmer

While speeding 160 miles an hour in front of 10,000 racing fans and millions of television viewers, racecar driver Pete Olson plans to help his CCF sponsored children as well as thousands of other CCF kids. He'll be displaying the CCF logo and website on the cockpit of his racecar. Olson requested permission last year to advertise CCF on his racecar in order to encourage racing fans to help children.

"I thought this would be something good to do because I know of all the media coverage the race series will get. I thought this would be a unique way to hopefully get more sponsors for the children."

Olson sponsors two children through CCF, a little girl, Araya, from Thailand and a little boy, Shivnarine, from Dominica. Olson said, "I wanted to do something good for CCF because of the satisfaction I get out of sponsoring kids."

Olson has taken an interesting path to the finish line. He began by racing small sailboats when he would stay with his grandparents for the summer. Next, he moved up to competitive bikes. Venturing in a different direction from racing, he realized he also had the desire to travel abroad. "I always kept racing in the back of my mind," said Olson. He then traveled to Taiwan to teach kindergarten for a year. "Taiwan is not the Third World but also not the standard we live in here in the U.S. This made me put things into perspective and made me feel more grateful for the privileges I've had," said Olson.

Upon his return, he pursued his



Racecar driver, Pete Olson, who added CCF's website to his racecar as a way of finding more sponsors for children CCF serves.

dream of becoming a professional racecar driver. Gradually, he moved up through the ranks of different racing series to the point where he will compete in the incredibly popular China Formula Renault Championship Series.

"My parents are pretty traditional and they definitely taught us over the years that it's important to think of others, and that giving back is important no matter how small the act is." Sparked by these early lessons and his experiences in Taiwan, Olson began sponsoring his CCF children.

Olson enjoys reading the letters from his seven-year-old sponsored girl, Araya. "Araya totally reminded me of my students in Taiwan. In her letters she tells me a lot. Now that I live in Asia again, I would like to visit Araya," said Olson. Olson also feels a close bond with his seven-year-old sponsored boy, Shivnarine. Olson said, "Shivnarine is an inspiration to me because he wants to be a professional cricket player. This constantly reminds me of myself and my own childhood dream. I feel grateful to give something back," said Olson.