



Uptown Charlotte to Host 2011 Carrousel Representatives

Fifty-eight senior girls to participate in scholarship program and activities

CHARLOTTE, NC – November 9, 2011 – Fifty-eight area high schools will participate in the 2011 Carrousel Scholarship Program, which is affiliated with the Belk Carolinas' Carrousel Parade. Each school has selected a senior girl as its 2011 Carrousel Representative. After the November 23 awards ceremony at which the top scholarship winner will be named, the Representatives will enjoy some of uptown Charlotte's exciting attractions.

Carolinas' Carrousel, Inc., the non-profit organization that produces the parade, began its Carrousel Scholarship program in 1967. Since then, the top scholarship winner has been crowned the Carrousel Queen, and four runners-up also have received scholarships. Starting this year, the top award winner will be named the Carrousel Scholar to emphasize that the scholarships recognize academic excellence and community involvement. To further change the perception that the Carrousel program is a pageant, this year's Scholarship Awards Ceremony will be a luncheon rather than an evening event, and the Representatives will wear business attire instead of formal gowns.

"We feel strongly that these are very positive changes to the Carrousel Scholarship Program," said Linda Healy Vespa, executive director of Carolinas' Carrousel, Inc. "The title Carrousel Scholar communicates the importance the organization places on the winning student's achievements and aspirations."

The high school representatives have submitted applications for the scholarships and will participate in orientation meetings and interviews prior to the Carrousel Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, November 23, at the Charlotte Marriott City Center. At the ceremony, the Carrousel Scholar and four runners-up will be selected from this group of 58 senior girls:

High School	Representative
AL Brown HS	Katie Belk
Alexander Central HS	Tyler Gordon
Anson HS	Kailee Cole
Ardrey Kell HS	Meredith Morrow
Ashbrook HS	Shannon Kay
Bandys HS	Kelley Kruse
Bessemer City HS	Sierra Croft
Burns HS	Abby Hamrick
Central Academy of Technology & Arts	Jada Campbell
Charlotte Catholic HS	Carolyn Bahar
Chase HS	Anna Bross
Cherryville HS	Jenna Alexander
Clover HS	Savannah Knight
Crest HS	Kristen Stroud
Cuthbertson HS	Elena Wandzilak
David W. Butler HS	Andrea Swehla
East Burke HS	Katelan Hart
East Gaston HS	Shelby Winchester

East Lincoln HS	Tristan Gales
East Mecklenburg HS	Madison Cheswick
East Rutherford HS	Kaziah Miller
Forest Hills HS	Micala Griffin
Forestview HS	Jessica Brugman
Gaston Day School	Pooja Shah
Harding University HS	Peyton Brown
Hunter Huss HS	Miriam Lewis
Jay M. Robinson HS	Molly Walker
Kings Mountain HS	Elizabeth Baker
Lake Norman Charter School	Rachel Gebelein
Lincoln Charter School	Michelle Gavel
Lincolnton HS	Grace Turner
Marvin Ridge HS	Dara Fazelnia
Metrolina Christian Academy	Abigail Johnson
Mooresville HS	Christina Holbrooks
North Gaston HS	Taylor Cagle
North Lincoln HS	Sarah Clarke
North Mecklenburg HS	Kayla McCollum
Olympic Community of Schools	Lauren Kesel
Parkwood HS	Jessica Keesler
Phillip O. Berry HS	Gabrielle Roseboro
Piedmont HS	Maggie Vuncannon
Porter Ridge HS	Kelli Quinn
Providence Sr. HS	Sapna Pathak
Rocky River HS	Charity Cruz
Rutherfordton-Spindale Central HS	Amanda Baynard
Shelby HS	Emily Morgan
South Iredell HS	Payton Blankenship
South Mecklenburg HS	Samantha Forlenza
South Point HS	Mary Rose Fisher
South Pointe Christian School	Abigail Horton
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	Haley Stepp
Union Academy	Callie Bader
Union County Early College	Leyna Crane
W.A. Hough HS	Shelby Major
Weddington HS	Lauren Kempf
West Charlotte HS	Tracy Gaiten
West Lincoln HS	Megan Avery
West Mecklenburg HS	Ashley Cuomo

Scholarships will also be awarded to seniors who participate in area high school marching bands, with matching awards granted to the high schools' band programs.

WBTV news anchor Molly Grantham will serve as the award ceremony's Emcee. The keynote speaker will be Amber Koonce, the 2007 Carrousel Queen and a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill. Amber was recently named one of Glamour Magazine's Top 10 College Women. The outgoing Carrousel Queen, Clarissa Liu, will present the trophy to the 2011 Carrousel Scholar.

After the Awards Ceremony, all of the Carrousel Representatives will spend the afternoon at the NASCAR Hall of Fame, where they will find high-octane fun. The NASCAR Hall of Fame features more than 50 hands-on stations, authentic NASCAR artifacts and historic stock car exhibits. Guests can get actively involved and practice a pit stop, walk through a full-size NASCAR Sprint Cup hauler, call a race, get behind the wheel in one of eight iRacing simulators and more. A tour of uptown Charlotte, conducted by Charlotte Crown Guides with a motorcoach provided by Rose Chauffeured Transportation, will follow the Representatives' visit to the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

All of the Carrousel Representatives will ride on floats in the Belk Carolinas' Carrousel Parade, which starts at 10 A.M. on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 24. The parade will be broadcast on WBTV at 1:00 P.M. on Thanksgiving.

About Carolinas' Carrousel, Inc.

The Belk Carolinas' Carrousel Parade has evolved over more than six decades as a regional tradition and highlight of the Holiday Season. Founded in 1947 by four local businessmen to attract holiday shoppers to uptown Charlotte, the Thanksgiving week events have become so much more. In 2008, the Parade was recognized as the fourth largest Thanksgiving Parade in the United States. The Parade and its ancillary events are produced by Carolinas' Carrousel, Inc., an independent, volunteer, non-profit, charitable organization. Carolinas' Carrousel is committed to enhancing regional area's community life through quality family oriented entertainment. The Parade officially announces and celebrates the beginning of the Holiday Season. In addition, it promotes excellence through awards to area high school students and marching bands. The Carolinas' Carrousel also exists to offer business, industry, and the local citizenry the opportunity of participating in showcasing the region and encouraging academic and artistic excellence in the future leaders of the area.

About NASCAR Hall of Fame

Conveniently located in uptown Charlotte, N.C., the 150,000-square-foot NASCAR Hall of Fame is an interactive, entertainment attraction honoring the history and heritage of NASCAR. It was the second highest attended sports hall of fame in American its opening year. The high-tech venue, designed to educate and entertain race fans and non-fans alike, opened May 11, 2010, and includes artifacts, hands-on exhibits, 278-person state-of-the-art theater, Hall of Honor, Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant, NASCAR Hall of Fame Gear Shop and NASCAR Media Group-operated broadcast studio. The venue is open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. seven days a week and has an attached parking garage on Brevard Street. The five-acre site also includes a privately developed 19-story office tower and 102,000-square-foot expansion to the Charlotte Convention Center, highlighted by a 40,000 square-foot ballroom. The NASCAR Hall of Fame is owned by the City of Charlotte, licensed by NASCAR and operated by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority. www.NASCARHall.com.

About Belk, Inc.

Charlotte, N.C.-based Belk, Inc. (www.belk.com) is the nation's largest privately owned mainline department store company with 303 Belk stores located in 16 Southern states. The company was founded in 1888 by William Henry Belk in Monroe, N.C., and is in the third generation of Belk family leadership. Its belk.com Web site offers a wide assortment of fashion apparel, shoes and accessories for the entire family along with top name cosmetics, a wedding registry and a large selection of quality merchandise for the home. To connect with Belk via Facebook, Twitter, blog, mobile phone text messages or by email, go to: Belk Get Connected.

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Media Relations Contact: Linda Healy Vespa, 704-525-0250

linda@carrouselparade.org