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Toyota and Up with People

by Bob Riel

In keeping with a corporate philosophy of support for educational programs and cultural understanding, Toyota Motor Corporation has formed a promising relationship with the international organization *Up With People*.

A dynamic educational and cultural program, *Up With People* each year sends five casts, each with 170 international students, to 500 cities around the world. In each city, students live with local families, participate in community service activities, and stage an energetic musical show.

In addition to using their music to spread a message of peace and of hope for the future, *Up With People* students come away from their year in the program with global perspective, a better awareness of community needs, and a tremendous understanding of what it means to live and work within a multi-cultural community. It is *Up With People's* hope that students will bring their experiences home at the end of the program and will make a positive contribution towards a better society as they take on leadership roles in their own countries, communities and businesses.

Toyota Motor Corporation President Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda has recently accepted a position on *Up With People's* Board of Directors. "I cannot imagine a better way to build understanding than through the inspiring message delivered so convincingly by *Up With People*," he said. "I pray that their message will grow even stronger until someday it can reach the eyes and ears of the young and old in every corner of our great world."

Dr. Toyoda will serve on *Up With People's* Board with a number of other prominent leaders, including F. James McDonald, retired President of General Motors Corporation, and Eugene Cernan, Commander of Apollo XVII and the last man to walk on the Moon.

In addition to this level of involvement, Toyota has undertaken other steps to support *Up With People*. A 1991 MR2 Turbo has been donated to the organization as the grand prize in a 25th Anniversary Sweepstakes. As part of the Sweepstakes, Toyota dealers throughout the United States are working with *Up With People* casts to display MR2 vehicles in front of theaters where the group is performing.

Toyota has also donated a Previa van to assist with the program's transportation needs, and in 1990 made a \$15,000 grant to *Up With People* in support of international cultural exchange.

In 25 years, 13,000 young men and women from more than 60 countries have participated in the *Up With People* program. They have visited 52 nations, including tours in the past two years of the Russian, Estonian and Ukrainian Republics in the Soviet Union, Japan, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Panama, Australia and numerous countries throughout North America and Western Europe.

Up With People casts have been featured at four Super Bowl halftime shows, and have performed in the Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China, at St. Peter's Square in Rome, at the Rugby League Grand Finals in Sydney, Australia, at the Kennedy Performing Arts Center in Washington, D.C., and many other prestigious locations throughout the world. In addition, students have given thousands of informal performances in such locations as prisons, hospitals, elderly homes, and schools for the handicapped.