

January, 1999

Gene Lasker joined forces with the American Diabetes Association last year, or, rather, was sent to us by a higher power as far as we're concerned!

In January of 1998, two weeks before our Fourth Annual Tampa Bay 500 Mini-NASCAR Race, I received a frantic call from one of the volunteers helping to plan the race. She called me at home on a Saturday morning to relay the wonderful news that a friend of hers had just met Gene Lasker, National Sprint Car Champion, and that he might be interested in helping us. She gave me his phone number and asked me to call him right away.

I called Gene the moment we hung up and the rest is history. He offered his support and did more for the event than we could have hoped for! He displayed his winning race car, signed autographs, drove the Pace Car, and even donated a Dale Earnhardt autographed Wheaties Cereal box for the live auction, held the night before the race at a banquet for the race teams. He was a hit with the teams and the thousands of spectators who turned out for the race.

After the event I contacted Gene to invite him to join the planning committee for the 1999 race. I knew he was interested in working with us again, but did not know if he would agree to take on the responsibility of serving on the committee. Gene said "yes" and quickly became one of our most committed and productive volunteers.

The Fifth Annual Tampa Bay 500 Mini-NASCAR Race to benefit the American Diabetes Association might be our best yet thanks to Gene's enthusiastic dedication to making the event a success!



Anne Gustin Yancar
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