

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



John Passante Named Inaugural Recipient of the AACF Humanitarian Award Sponsored by NEXUS North America



Sacramento, Calif. – May 27, 2025- [The Automotive Aftermarket Charitable Foundation \(AACF\)](#), a 501c3 supporting people in the automotive aftermarket industry and their families during the hardest moments of their lives, is honored to announce that Dr. John Passante has been selected as the first-ever recipient of the AACF Humanitarian Award, presented live during the final keynote at Auto Care Connect 2025.

Sponsored by NEXUS North America, this prestigious new award celebrates individuals, companies, associations, or groups within the automotive aftermarket who exemplify compassion, selflessness, and a deep commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Dr. Passante, a respected industry executive, speaker, mentor, and lifelong advocate for personal growth and professional development, was recognized for his exceptional contributions to the automotive aftermarket community. His legacy of empowering people—through education, mentorship, and a genuine belief in human potential—has had a lasting and profound impact.

“I am deeply honored that the Foundation would recognize me with this award”, said Dr. Passante. “Receiving the AACF Humanitarian Award has truly touched me. I’m overwhelmed, humbled, and so very, very thankful to be named its first recipient.”

Accepting the award on Dr. Passante’s behalf was Joe Stephan, Vice President, Sales & Business Development at NEXUS North America.

“NEXUS Automotive International and our NEXUS North America Distributor Members are proud to be the sponsor of the AACF Humanitarian Award. And we were thrilled to hear that Dr. John Passante was chosen to be recognized as the inaugural recipient of this prestigious award. Dr. Passante exemplifies what it means to be a family man & friend, a professional at the highest level and has always taken the time to mentor, share, guide so many in our great Automotive Aftermarket community. The bar has now been set very high for future award winners,” said Stephan.

Joining Stephan on stage for the presentation were Jon Owens, President of the AACF Board of Trustees, Thierry Mugnier, Chief Financial Officer, NEXUS Automotive International and John Kairys, Executive Director of AACF. Their presence underscored the significance of the moment and the deep appreciation AACF holds for the humanitarian contributions of industry leaders like Dr. Passante.

AACF extends its deepest gratitude to NEXUS North America for generously sponsoring this award and helping make this meaningful recognition possible.

AACF also offers a heartfelt thank you to the Auto Care Association for providing the platform at Connect 2025 to announce this award and shine a spotlight on the power of service, compassion, and leadership within our industry.

“We couldn’t be more pleased having Dr. John as the inaugural recipient of AACF’s Humanitarian Award”, said Owens. “He is the perfect representative of what the award is all about – caring for others, giving back and helping those who need it most. Add to that the fact that he is an industry icon - trusted and admired by all who know him – it draws attention to the magnitude of this recognition and the credibility behind its’ intent.”

For more information about the AACF Humanitarian Award or the mission of AACF, visit www.aftermarketcharity.org.

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About Automotive Aftermarket Charitable Foundation (AACF)

The AACF was founded in 1959 to assist automotive aftermarket members and their families who, due to catastrophic illness or terrible accident, have exhausted all other available resources in maintaining a reasonable existence. AACF provides essential financial assistance, access to resources, and a support network to ensure that no one in the industry faces hardship alone. With the support of generous donors, AACF continues to make a positive impact on the lives of automotive aftermarket professionals across the nation. For more information visit www.aftermarketcharity.org

About NEXUS Automotive International

Established in 2014 by CEO Gaël Escribe, NEXUS Automotive International, the automotive aftermarket (AA) company, is shaping the future of the AA.

Thanks to an entrepreneurial, innovative and agile mindset, N! disrupts the industry, bringing innovative solutions for a more sustainable, digital and connected mobility. At the same time, it supports its community of more than 457 members in 137 countries, allied with 76 global suppliers, by providing services to accelerate their growth.

N! is offering new approaches and new ideas for a connected, global and consolidated world of tomorrow to accelerate the success of car and heavy-duty spare parts and services distributors and manufacturers, through 16 regional structures that connect them.

NEXUS’ consolidated turnover was more than 42 billion euros in 2023.

More information: NEXUS Automotive International



About NEXUS North America

Established in 2015, NEXUS North America is a regional NEXUS entity with Distributor Members located in USA, Canada and Mexico. The Members within NEXUS North America are APA/TruStar, APSG – ProntoNetwork & Federated, VIPAR Heavy Duty/Power Heavy Duty, Advance Auto Parts, CDO - Refaccionaría California and Uni-Select.

More information: NEXUS North America