

NONPROFITS

## Mercedes-Benz USA partners with Shoes That Fit to donate sneakers to disadvantaged school kids

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*Mercedes-Benz USA worked with celebrity singer Ludacris to bring new footwear to disadvantaged school kids around the United States. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz USA*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker Mercedes-Benz USA worked with celebrity singer Ludacris to bring new footwear to kids around the United States.

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The initiative was through the Atlanta-based Mercedes-Benz USA's Season to Shine charity campaign for the holidays, supported by nonprofit Shoes That Fit, an organization that gifts children with new footwear for athletics. Mercedes-Benz USA sought the help of Ludacris and The Ludacris Foundation to bring the brand new shoes to Atlanta school children.

"We are thrilled to partner with Shoes That Fit and to have donated sneakers to students across the country," said Dimitris Psillakis, president/CEO of Mercedes-Benz USA, in a statement. "This is a tangible step to ensure children arrive at school with confidence, prepared to learn, play and succeed.

"We are committed to helping the next generation thrive, and make a lasting contribution to our local communities and beyond," he said.

Footing the bill

The company's Driving Your Future initiative works to strengthen safety, education and professional development for kids, and Season to Shine is one component.

The effort's other player, Shoes That Fit, has given more than 2 million new shoes and important goods to U.S. kids since 1992. Sixty-two percent of the schools that it has worked with indicated an increase of good behavior, and an 87 percent growth of noticed students' positive self image.

This holiday season alone Mercedes-Benz USA gifted 1,270 brand new shoes to the kids at Michael R. Hollis Innovation Academy and Leonora P. Miles Intermediate Elementary, two schools with whom it has partnered.

"Kicking off the holiday season with a new pair of shoes will give our students the confidence they need to tackle the rest of the school year," said Thalise Perry, principal at Miles Intermediate Elementary School, in a statement. "We are so grateful to Mercedes for making this happen and bringing holiday cheer to our school."

The company invited its workers to be a part of Season to Shine's show of goodwill, asking them to send new footwear to [Shoes That Fit](#). Those shoes will be sent to those around the United States, especially those in underserved communities.

"Shoes are intrinsically important to kids," said Amy Fass, CEO and executive director of Shoes That Fit, in a statement.

"Too many families are forced to choose rent and food over shoes, leaving children wearing shoes that hurt, embarrass them, cause them to miss out on physical activities and sometimes miss school altogether," she said. "New shoes make a basic and lasting impact."

"We are so grateful to Mercedes for meeting a basic need and making a lasting impact on the lives of kids by providing 1,270 pairs of shoes," she said.

Ludacris, a native of Atlanta, joined in on the charity work by working alongside the volunteers from [Mercedes-Benz USA](#). He and the volunteers brought the shoes in person to the local children.

"I care deeply about supporting and serving kids in my hometown of Atlanta and it was an honor to help my friends at Mercedes give back with their Season to Shine event," Ludacris said in a statement.

"I know that the new shoes are a small stepping stone to helping these students live out their dreams and realize their greatness," he said.

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