# Build-A-Bear x Hello Kitty and Friends Workshop Expands Nationally with New Locations at American Dream and Mall of America

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*Two new Workshops opening in early 2026 following the debut of the first-ever location in Los Angeles*

ST. LOUIS, Dec. 4, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Build-A-Bear Workshop, the iconic retail experience known for bringing a little more heart to life, and Sanrio®, the global lifestyle brand best known for Hello Kitty®, today announced the national expansion of the Build-A-Bear x Hello Kitty and Friends Workshop with new locations set to open at American Dream in East Rutherford, New Jersey, and Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, in early 2026.




The first Build-A-Bear & Hello Kitty and Friends Workshop opened in Los Angeles last year and quickly became a go-to destination for collectors, families, and devoted Sanrio fans. Its strong appeal made it clear that the experience deserved a broader presence, especially in places that draw millions of visitors from around the world. Both American Dream, just outside New York City, and Mall of America, one of the most visited retail and entertainment destinations in the United States, offer the kind of scale and visibility that make them ideal homes for this next phase of growth.

Each Build-A-Bear x Hello Kitty and Friends Workshop immerses guests in the world of Hello Kitty, with signature touches from both brands throughout, including pink shopping bags and aprons, custom Cub Condos, and more. Guests choose their favorite character, take part in the iconic stuffing experience and signature Heart Ceremony, then personalize their new friend with themed outfits, scents, sounds, and accessories inspired by Hello Kitty, Cinnamoroll™, Kuromi™, My Melody™, and the whole crew.

"From the moment we opened in Los Angeles, it was obvious that fans connected with this experience in a meaningful way," said Chris Hurt, Chief Operating Officer Build-A-Bear Workshop. "Bringing the Build-A-Bear & Hello Kitty and Friends Workshop to American Dream and Mall of America gives us the opportunity to welcome guests from around the world who travel to these iconic destinations throughout the year."

"This partnership with Build-A-Bear brings our characters to life in a way only the Workshop experience can," said Jill Koch, SVP of Brand Management and Marketing at Sanrio, Inc. "The success in Los Angeles proved how powerfully fans connect with this hands-on, heart-filled approach, and expanding to American Dream and Mall of America lets us deepen that connection and create unforgettable moments for fans of all ages."

These new Workshops continue to expand the one-of-a-kind Build-A-Bear x Hello Kitty and Friends experience to fans across the country. For generations who grew up with Build-A-Bear's heart and Hello Kitty's bow, this is where nostalgia meets new memories by always adding a little more heart to life.

To explore the current Build-A-Bear x Hello Kitty & Friends collection visit buildabear.com.

**About Build-A-Bear**

Since its beginning in 1997, Build-A-Bear has evolved to become a beloved multi-generational brand focused on its mission to "add a little more heart to life," where guests of all ages make their own "furry friends" in celebration and commemoration of life

moments. Guests create their own stuffed animals by participating in the stuffing, dressing, accessorizing, and naming of their own teddy bears and other plush toys based on the Company's own intellectual property and in conjunction with a variety of best-in-class licenses. The hands-on and interactive nature of our more than 600 company-owned, partner-operated and franchise experience locations around the world, combined with Build-A-Bear's pop-culture appeal, often fosters a lasting and emotional brand connection with consumers and has enabled the Company to expand beyond its retail stores to include e-commerce sales on www.buildabear.com and non-plush branded consumer categories via out-bound licensing agreements with leading manufacturers, as well as the creation of engaging content via Build-A-Bear Entertainment (a subsidiary of Build-A-Bear Workshop, Inc.). The brand's newest communications campaign, "The Stuff You Love," commemorates more than a quarter-century of creating cherished memories worldwide. Build-A-Bear Workshop, Inc. (NYSE: BBW) posted consolidated total revenues of $496.0 million for fiscal 2024. For more information, visit the Investor Relations section of buildabear.com.

**About Sanrio®**

Sanrio® is the global lifestyle brand and home to Hello Kitty®, created in 1974, and many other beloved character brands such as My Melody™, Kuromi™, LittleTwinStars™, Cinnamoroll™, Pompompurin™, gudetama™, Aggretsuko™, Chocc Badtz-Maru™ and Keroppi™. Sanrio was founded on the philosophy that a small gift can bring happiness and friendship to people of all ages. Since 1960, this philosophy has served as the inspiration to offer quality products, services and activities that promote communication and inspire unique consumer experiences across the world. Today, Sanrio's business extends into the entertainment industry with several content series, gaming offerings and theme parks. Sanrio boasts an extensive product lineup which is available in over 130 countries. Sanrio hopes to bring smiles to everyone's faces with their vision of "One World, Connecting Smiles." To learn more about Sanrio, please visit www.sanrio.com and follow @sanrio and @hellokitty on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Pinterest and subscribe to the Hello Kitty and Friends YouTube Channel.

**About Mall of America**
At 5.6 million square feet, Mall of America is the largest shopping and entertainment complex in North America with more than 500 world-class retail stores and restaurants; Nickelodeon Universe, a 7-acre indoor theme park; SEA LIFE Minnesota Aquarium; FlyOver America; Crayola Experience; and more. The Mall opened in 1992 and is located in Bloomington, Minn., minutes from downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul and adjacent to MSP International Airport. Follow Mall of America on Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok. Listen to *So Much More* – a Mall of America podcast, on all major platforms or watch on YouTube. Download the Mall of America app from the App Store for iOS or Google Play for Android.

**About American Dream**

American Dream, developed by Triple Five Group, is an unparalleled mix of world-class entertainment, retail and dining, comprising more than 3-million square feet just minutes away from New York City in East Rutherford, New Jersey. American Dream is home to leading attractions, including DreamWorks Water Park, Nickelodeon Universe Theme Park, Ninja Kidz Action Park, Sesame Street Learn & Play, THE GAMEROOM Powered by Hasbro, New Jersey Hall of Fame, LEGOLAND Discovery Center, SEA LIFE Aquarium, Big SNOW Ski Hill, Dream Wheel – a 300-foot observation wheel overlooking the NYC skyline. American Dream's immersive luxury shopping and dining experience – The Avenue – features Saks Fifth Avenue, Hermès, Rolex, Cartier, Watches of Switzerland, Saint Laurent, Tiffany & Co., Gucci, Balenciaga, Dolce & Gabbana, Ferrari, Gentle Monster, Canada Goose, Carpaccio, a fine-dining Italian restaurant, and much more. The retail and dining collection is further expanded with flagship locations for Aritzia, H&M, PRIMARK, Uniqlo, Sephora and Zara; as well as the Toys"R"Us global flagship, the only standalone location in the U.S, the first-ever MrBeast Burger restaurant, world renowned chef Marcus Samuelsson's Marcus Live! and the world's first and only "candy department store," IT'SUGAR. American Dream also hosts major events and activations in partnership with celebrities and leading brands, including the NBA, WWE, Club World Cup, the New York Giants, Nintendo, Dragon Ball, the Jonas Brothers, Tom Brady, Kendrick Lamar & SZA, MrBeast, and more.




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