



BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP® Opens at Columbiana Centre on October 31st!

October 30, 2003

HUNDREDS OF TEDDY BEARS TO BE STUFFED & FLUFFED FOR CHILDREN AT LEXINGTON MEDICAL CENTER ON NOVEMBER 1ST.

ST. LOUIS, MO (October 30, 2003) - Build-A-Bear Workshop®, Where Best Friends Are Made®, is opening a store at Columbiana Centre on October 31st. After opening the premier store in St. Louis with resounding success in 1997 and then in cities throughout the United States and Canada over the last six years, Build-A-Bear Workshop is now bringing its unique entertainment retail concept to the Columbia area.

Build-A-Bear Workshop is based on the premise that nearly everyone, regardless of age, has a special fondness for stuffed animals. At Build-A-Bear Workshop, visitors, or Guest Bear Builderssm, create their own stuffed animals as they "choose, stuff, stitch, fluff, name and dress" their way through a series of bear-making stations. A variety of inventive bear merchandise is also available, including hundreds of coordinating outfits and accessories for all bear occasions.

As part of the grand opening Build-A-Bear Workshop shop invites children of all ages to come to Build-A-Bear Workshop on Saturday, November 1st to participate in Stuffed with Hugs and make a bear for free. Two hundred bears will be donated to Lexington Medical Center. By participating in Stuffed with Hugs, children can help other children in need. The hug of a Teddy Bear can bring a smile to any child who is facing difficult circumstances.

The purpose of Stuffed with Hugs is to give children a chance to help others according to Chief Executive Bear Maxine Clark, "Build-A-Bear Workshop is a store for, and about, kids and Stuffed with Hugs has allowed kids to put smiles on the faces of tens of thousands of other children. It is a simple, yet significant way for kids to help other kids and make a difference."

On May 17th, 2003, the third annual Stuffed with Hugs Day took place at Build-A-Bear Workshop locations across the country. Through this effort, over 17,000 teddy bears were made by children and donated to local children's hospitals across the country. Each time a new Build-A-Bear Workshop opens, a Stuffed with Hugs event is held to benefit the community. Since Stuffed with Hugs began in 2001, Build-A-Bear Workshop has donated more than 75,000 bears to worthy causes in cities all across America.

Chief Executive Bear Maxine Clark, former president of Payless ShoeSource, knows what families want in a shopping experience, and the store is her response to happy memories of shopping as a child. Build-A-Bear Workshop's innovative store concept takes children's interactive entertainment retailing to a new level, combining the process of making your own bear with the exciting atmosphere and fun of shopping the way it used to be. "When I was young, it was exciting for me to see all the decorations in the stores, and I loved every minute of it," says Clark. "That excitement was something I wanted to re-create for children and

families today."

"We want to provide a quality fun shopping experience for children and families," says Clark. "Besides, we all need to remember what it is to be a kid. We love seeing the smiles on our Guests' faces, sharing their excitement and watching them have fun."

Build-A-Bear Workshop stuffed animals are very affordable, ranging in price from \$10 to \$25. In addition, with every purchase of \$10 or more, each Guest joins the Buy Stuff Club®, which is the Build-A-Bear Workshop frequent-buyer incentive program. For every \$100 spent, Guests receive \$10 off their next purchase.

Clark is looking forward to opening a store in Columbia. She notes, "Our plan is always to open in the premier malls across the country, and we will continue this approach as we open at Columbiana Centre. We have had many Guests in the Columbia area ask us when we will be opening a location in their community. Now that we are opening this store, we will be able to reach more Build-A-Bear Workshop Guests in the area and we are thrilled to be there."

"One of the reasons that this mall is in the category of premier U.S. malls is the work of its development company, General Growth," says Clark. "General Growth has been wonderful to work with and we are looking forward to bringing another Build-A-Bear Workshop to one of their locations."

In 2003 a major focus of the company's commitment to children includes Nikki's Bear, a very special bear that was introduced in January of 2003, dedicated to raising money for pediatric cancer. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each Nikki's Bear is donated to the Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation to support treatment programs and children's cancer research and to help families of children with cancer. Since January, tens-of-thousands of Nikki's Bears have been purchased to help the cause of children's cancer.

Build-A-Bear Workshop aims to continue its aggressive expansion plan nationally and as such has opened in several new markets this year including Richmond, VA, Columbia, SC, Lancaster, PA, Destin FL, and Dayton and Akron, OH-as well as internationally. The company has been planning its global strategy for the past several years, and is opening stores in Japan, United Kingdom, Korean, Australia and Canada symbolizing a natural extension of its international business growth.

Commenting on the plan, Clark said, "Our decision to open stores abroad is a response to the thousands of requests we have received from our international Guests who have shopped in our stores in the United States and on our Web site since we opened our first store in 1997-both factors indicating a strong customer base and reputation in other countries. Build-A-Bear Workshop's expansion has continued to exceed our expectations during this past year and we look forward to bringing more smiles to our Guests and friends in these countries."

Build-A-Bear Workshop is the innovator and leader of the make-your-own-stuffed-animal concept for mall-base retailing and currently operates stores in 36 states, and a very successful e-commerce business. The company is the fifth fastest-growing privately held firm in St. Louis and by the end of 2003 there will be more than 150 locations in the USA including four stores in Canada. Build-A-Bear Workshop aims to establish a global brand over the next 5 years, with franchise plans across Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. For more information, call (888) 560-BEAR or visit the company's award-winning web site at www.buildabear.com.