



OCTOBER IS LITERACY MONTH AT BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP® - INTERACTIVE RETAILER LAUNCHES FIRST ANNUAL BEAREMY'S BOOK DRIVE

October 1, 2003

ST. LOUIS, MO, OCTOBER 1, 2003 - October is Literacy Month at Build-A-Bear Workshop - the innovator and leader in the make-your-own-stuffed-animal concept. To celebrate, the interactive retail entertainment company has partnered with First Book, a national non-profit children's literacy organization, to host the first-ever Bearemy's® Book Drive from October 10 - 13, 2003. In addition, the company is celebrating the first birthday of Bearemy's Book Club - where best friends share stories, and Read Teddy™, a very special fund-raising literacy furry friend!

This October, whether you donate a new children's book, participate in Bearemy's Book Club or choose a snuggly friend to support reading, Build-A-Bear Workshop invites Guests (ages 3 to 103) to come and make a difference in a child's life.

Fur the love of reading - Bearemy's Book Drive:

Calling all books! From October 10 - 13, for each new children's book donated to Bearemy's Book Drive, as a special thank you, Guests will receive a \$5 coupon towards the purchase of any animal priced at \$10 or more. Guests of all ages are invited to bring a new book to any of the Build-A-Bear Workshop locations to provide the gift of reading to children who would not otherwise own their own books. "Just like teddy bears, books can carry kids of all ages off on adventures greater than they could ever imagine," says Maxine Clark, founder and Chief Executive Bear of Build-A-Bear Workshop where Guests can make their own unique stuffed animals that can be dressed in furry fashions, sports gear, and many other outfits and accessories. Reading has the power to expand the life of every child and we are thrilled to introduce our Bearemy's Book Drive to promote literacy and help put books into the hands of children."

Following the weekend-long initiative, Ambassador of Bear Hugs mascot Bearemy® with the assistance of First Book National Partner Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and their Ladies Auxiliary will collect the books and distribute them to military children, after-school, and mentoring programs supported by First Book. First Book President, Kyle Zimmer notes, "thanks to wonderful partners such as Build-A-Bear Workshop and the VFW, in the last two years alone, First Book has provided almost 15 million new books to children in need in hundreds of communities nationwide."

Furbulous Adventures - Bearemy's Book Club, Read Teddy and Reba McEntire!

Imagine a national book club for children where best friends share their favorite stories! Beginning in 2002, Build-A-Bear Workshop created a web-based Bearemy's Book Club to encourage children of all ages to read and to give them a voice in reviewing and recommending books to other children. Young readers and parents are invited to visit www.buildabear.com and submit their reviews of recently read books. Reviews are posted so that others can share in their literary adventures! The book club is an ongoing feature of the Build-

A-Bear Workshop reading initiative and offers reviews by nationally and locally known celebrities.

As an added bonus of the book club in October, Build-A-Bear Workshop will post book reviews by Reba McEntire, one of the most successful country music singers and entertainers in America and a spokesperson for First Book. Reba says, "Both my mother and grandmother were school teachers, and I have a degree in elementary education. I realize that despite all the literacy messages out there that tell parents to read to their children, there are a large number of parents who cannot act on that information because they don't have access to books."

And that's not all! Build-A-Bear Workshop has a special, literacy furry friend - Read Teddy™! One dollar of every purchase of Read Teddy is donated to First Book to help purchase books that will be distributed to children without access to books in communities across the country. Since launching its partnership with First Book, Build-A-Bear Workshop has provided tens of thousands of dollars to help buy books and distribute them to children nationwide.

About Build-A-Bear Workshop

Build-A-Bear Workshop continues to redefine the concept of mall-based entertainment retail. In doing so, the company has been recognized by the retail industry with numerous awards including the prestigious National Retail Federation's International 2001 Retail Innovator of the Year.

Build-A-Bear Workshop is an interactive, entertainment mall-based retailer that invites Guests of all ages to create their own customized stuffed animals through an exciting bear-making assembly line that combines experience with purchase.

Build-A-Bear Workshop is the innovator and leader of the make-your-own-stuffed-animal concept for mall-base retailing and currently operates 146 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 (2327) or visit the company's award-winning web site at www.buildabear.com.

About First Book

First Book is a national nonprofit organization with a single mission: to give children from low-income families the opportunity to read and own their first new books. In neighborhoods across the country, First Book Advisory Boards unite leaders from all sectors of the community to identify the most effective community-based literacy programs reaching children living at or below the poverty line and provide them with First Book grants of free books and educational materials at no cost to the child or program. For more information about First Book, or to donate a children's book on-line, please call toll free 1-866-READ-NOW or visit www.firstbook.org.