



Build-A-Bear Workshop® introduces Nikki's Bear to raise awareness and funds for children's cancer

January 9, 2003

ST. LOUIS, MO (January 9, 2003) - Build-A-Bear Workshop® is making a commitment to children with cancer through a nationwide effort launching January 9, at all Build-A-Bear Workshop stores. With the introduction of Nikki's Bear, Build-A-Bear Workshop is establishing its support for the cause of pediatric cancer by donating \$1 from the sale of each bear to research and treatment programs for this disease.

"The introduction of Nikki's Bear allows people nationwide to show their support for the 12,000 children who are diagnosed with cancer each year," said Build-A-Bear Workshop Chief Executive Bear Maxine Clark. "Nikki's Bear sends a message of hope and courage to children with cancer." Nikki's Bear is named in memory of Nikki Giampolo, a 15-year-old honor student, musician, and top competitive swimmer from Connecticut who died January 1, 2002 after a six-month battle with bone cancer. "Nikki's Bear was inspired by the courage and perseverance of a remarkable young woman," said Clark. "Our objective is to help families of children with cancer and give hope to thousands of others who are facing this disease." During the final months of her life, Nikki's positive attitude about her condition and her giving nature toward other kids with cancer was an inspiration to everyone she met. Build-A-Bear Workshop became a place where Nikki often visited when her health permitted, each time making a bear to give to one of her friends, nurses or doctors.

Gail Giampolo, Nikki's mother, hopes all children will benefit from this effort. "Nikki's Bear is a celebration of my daughter's life," she said. "One of Nikki's dreams was for Build-A-Bear Workshop to create a bear to raise funds and awareness for children's cancer. Nikki's wish has been granted, and we hope this bear sends a message of love and courage to children with cancer everywhere." Following Nikki's death, Giampolo began corresponding with Clark about her daughter, and Nikki's vision of a bear to help fight children's cancer, resulting in the creation of Nikki's Bear. "Nikki Giampolo felt kids with cancer should be treated as kids, not medical patients," said Clark. "One of our primary missions is to help children maintain normal lives while they struggle with this disease. We can achieve this by offering memories of love, hope and laughter to families and kids with cancer through the experiences at Build-A-Bear Workshop®."

Funds from the sale of Nikki's Bear will be distributed by the Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation to support children's cancer treatment and research programs.

The Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation is committed to improving communities and impacting lives through meaningful philanthropic programs that support causes for children and families. Proceeds from the sales of Nikki's Bear and affiliated programs will be distributed through the Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation to fund children's cancer research and treatment programs.

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. The company currently operates 109 stores in 34 states, including a very successful e-commerce business and will have over 150 locations in the USA by the end of 2003. Build-

A-Bear Workshop is the innovator and leader of the make-your-own-stuffed animal concept for mall-based retailing. The premier store opened Saint Louis, Missouri in October 1997. For more information, call (888) 560-BEAR or visit the company's award-winning web site at www.buildabear.com.

JPEG images of Nikki's Bear and Nikki Giampolo are available by contacting Casey Kershner (ckershner@beap.com).