



## **BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP® WHERE BEST FRIENDS ARE MADE®, TO OPEN its second location in AUSTIN!**

July 10, 2003

ST. LOUIS, MO (July 10, 2003) - Build-A-Bear Workshop®, Where Best Friends Are Made®, announced it will be expanding soon to a second location in Austin, TX. After opening the premier store in St. Louis, MO with resounding success in 1997 and then in cities throughout the United States over the last five and a half years, Build-A-Bear Workshop® is now bringing its unique entertainment retail concept to a Austin area shopping center, Barton Creek. The new store is scheduled to open in mid July.

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 Builders<sup>sm</sup>, 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 beary special occasions.

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.

With an existing store location at Barton Creek Mall, Clark is looking forward to opening a second Austin store. 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 Barton Creek Mall. We have had many Guests who have visited our other Austin location ask us when we will be opening in their community. Now, we will be able to reach even more of our friends in the Austin 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, Simon Property Group," says Clark. "The Simon organization 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 will include 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 to such new markets as Omaha, NE, Albany, NY and Cleveland, Akron and Dayton, OH,-as well as internationally. The company has been planning its global strategy for the past several years, and opening stores in Japan, Australia and Canada symbolizes a natural extension of its international business growth.

Commenting on the expansion plan, Clark said, "Our decision to open stores internationally is a response to the thousands of requests we have received from our Guests outside the U.S. who have shopped in our stores here 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 Japan, Australia and Canada."

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: National Retail Federation's International 2001 Retail Innovator of the Year; ZD Net Interactive's 2001 Best Places to Work; and St. Louis Business Journal's 2001 Laclede Award: Best Place to Work.

Build-A-Bear Workshop® is an interactive, entertainment mall-based retailer that invites Guests of all ages to create their own customized stuffed animals. The company currently operates 120 stores in 34 states coast-to-coast, including a very successful e-commerce business and plans to have over 150 locations 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 in Saint Louis Galleria in October 1997. For more information, call (888) 560-BEAR or visit the company's award-winning web site at [www.buildabear.com](http://www.buildabear.com).