



Build-A-Bear Workshop® Recognizes Natick, MA Teen as a Huggable Hero

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The Essential Care Packet Project started by Erin Rosen-Watson

ST. LOUIS, MO, (November 2004)-Build-A-Bear Workshop has named 17-year-old Erin Rosen-Watson a Huggable Hero for her efforts on behalf of foster children in her community. This tireless teen has spent endless hours creating and implementing projects to help children in the state's foster care system. Erin's list of charitable accomplishments is impressively long, and it appears there is no end in sight.

Lewis C. Howe, a board member for the Massachusetts Department of Social Services Kids Fund nominated Erin to celebrate her devotion to kids in the Massachusetts foster care system. "Erin has embraced our state's foster children, providing them with desperately needed material comforts while raising public awareness of the plight of these vulnerable children."

Erin recalls how she first heard about how children enter social service care after enduring unspeakable hardships, including severe abuse and neglect. As she learned more about foster children and their challenges, she became more determined to help. "I met with social workers and came up with my second project, The Essential Care Packet Project," she said. She solicited personal hygiene item donations as well as comfort items like books and stuffed animals, and enlisted support from the entire community, creating an organization of more than 300 volunteers. Erin designed bags for the foster children to carry their new items in, and taught her volunteers how to sew the bags.

Her efforts provided more than 4,500 bags to kids in the Massachusetts foster care system, but Erin will not rest on her laurels. While her care packet project is ongoing, she's also assisted one-time causes like Make A Difference Day, where she delivered 1,652 blankets, teddy bears and books to 52 emergency shelters across Massachusetts on one day in 2003. For those efforts, she was honored by The Points of Light Foundation and USA WEEKEND magazine.

Build-A-Bear Workshop® created the Huggable Heroessm program to recognize and honor young heroes across the country that have made a difference in their own neighborhoods, schools and communities by giving of themselves to others.

Erin is one of 10 exceptional children in addition to five outstanding groups of kids to be chosen as Huggable Heroes. This program is in its first year and is extremely important to Build-A-Bear Workshop. "We have always believed that it takes a village to raise a bear and these young people are shining examples of what hard work and commitment can accomplish. We are extremely proud of them, the leadership they have demonstrated and the ways in which they have improved the lives of those in their community," said Maxine Clark, Founder and Chief Executive Bear of Build-A-Bear Workshop. "Each child and group presents an inspirational story, and along with those who nominated them, we are honored to be able to recognize their efforts and dedication to the causes and programs they have supported. They are all truly amazing."

Erin will be showcased nationally in the 2005 Build-A-Bear Workshop Huggable Heroes calendar, which will be available free in Build-A-Bear Workshop stores in late December. Build-A-Bear Workshop will make a donation to the MDDF Kids Fund in Erin's name and her achievements will be celebrated in her hometown.

About Build-A-Bear Workshop

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 process. The first store opened in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1997, and the company now operates over 160 locations in the USA with four stores in Canada. Build-A-Bear Workshop opened its first international store in Sheffield, England in the fall of 2003, recently opened stores in Japan, Korea and Denmark and plans to open its first store in Australia later this year, making it the global leader in the teddy bear business. Based on a survey compiled by Shopping Centers Today, a publication of the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), Build-A-Bear Workshop was one of six retailers chosen and presented with the ICSC "2004 Hot Retailer Award". For more information on the company and its products call (877) 789-BEAR (2327) or visit the company's award-winning web site at www.buildabear.com.