



## **BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP® Opening in Youngstown, Ohio at the mall at Southern Park!**

September 2, 2004

*Guests invited to Operation Stuffed with Hugs to make a free bear for children of military families.*

ST. LOUIS, MO (September 2, 2004) - Build-A-Bear Workshop, Where Best Friends Are Made®, is opening a new location in Youngstown, Ohio at the Mall at Southern Park on Friday, September 24. After opening the premier store in St. Louis, MO in 1997 and then in cities throughout the United States over the last seven years, Build-A-Bear Workshop is bringing its unique entertainment retail concept to its first location in Youngstown, Ohio.

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, Guests choose, stuff, stitch, fluff, name and dress their very own stuffed animals. Hundreds of coordinating outfits and accessories are also available to further personalize new furry friends.

Maxine Clark, Founder and Chief Executive Bear is looking forward to opening at The Mall at Southern Park. 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 Southern Park. One of the reasons that this mall is in the category of premier U.S. malls is the work of its development company, Simon," says Clark. "We have Youngstown Guests who have visited our other stores ask us when we will be opening in their community. Now we will be able to reach even more of our friends in Youngstown and we are thrilled to be here."

As part of the grand opening on Friday, September 24 Build-A-Bear Workshop® invites Guests to participate in Stuffed with Hugs™ and make a bear for free. Two hundred bears will be donated to the USO for distribution to children of military families. By participating in this year's program dubbed Operation Stuffed with Hugs, Guests from age 3 to 103 will give the hug of a teddy bear to children of military families.

### **Friends 2B Made™**

Friends 2B Made is the newest concept launch from Build-A-Bear Workshop, the entertainment mall-based retail leader. The new doll product line offers Guests not only the chance to create their very own fashionable friends but also gives them the opportunity to discover a special personality for their very own doll!

Throughout this interactive process, Guests have the opportunity to create an emotional bond with their doll and have fun choosing from hip fashions and accessories. With sparkly eyes, manicured toes, super hair and most importantly a friendship to last a lifetime, these dolls are the most wonderful friends a girl could ever wish for! Each outfit comes with 2 free charms, one for the doll and one for her best friend, enhancing their collectibility and stylish fun! With this new line of products, the brand continues to offer the highest quality merchandise, marketing and customer service that the Build-A-Bear Workshop brand established in 1997. The merchandise is also value priced with dolls at \$12, accessories \$2 and complete outfits for \$8.

## Community Partners

In 2004, a major focus of the company is its continued commitment to causes that support children and animals. A number of animals in the Build-A-Bear Workshop line provide Guests the opportunity to support these causes by having a portion of the proceeds of their purchase donated. In addition to the cause-related animals, Build-A-Bear Workshop launched the Huggable Heroes<sup>SM</sup> program to recognize and honor young heroes that have impacted their own neighborhoods, schools and communities by giving of themselves to others. Build-A-Bear Workshop searched for young people between the ages of 8-18 who made a difference in the areas of children's health and wellness, literacy and education, helping pets, the protection of endangered animals and their habitat or any other cause. Fifteen Huggable Heroes were selected and will be featured in the 2005 Huggable Heroes Calendar and will receive special recognition during the year. More information is available at all Build-A-Bear Workshop® stores and online at <http://huggableheroes.buildabear.com>.

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](http://www.buildabear.com).