



## **Build-A-Bear Workshop® Recognizes Pelham, NH Youth as a Huggable Hero**

September 1, 2004

*Nine-year-old committed to finding good homes for homeless animals*

ST. LOUIS, MO (September 2004) - Yana Holden, a second grader at Pelham Elementary School, wrote a letter to her schoolmates. She asked them to join her in supporting the Animal Rescue Network of New England (ARNNE), an organization that rescues animals from overcrowded shelters. Yana's concern, compassion and enthusiasm was contagious as 73 kids signed up in the first month, and by the second month, more than 150 kids had joined her animal rescue club. Build-A-Bear Workshop is honoring Yana as a Huggable Hero for her commitment and dedication to others.

Yana's Guidance Counselor, Lisa Belanger, nominated her as a way to honor and celebrate Yana's passion for helping homeless animals. "Yana is empowering the 150 children in her club to help homeless animals in so many ways that are a joy to witness," said Belanger. "She's an inspiration to us all."

When Yana was only four-years-old, she saw a program on Animal Planet about an animal rescue farm and knew that she wanted to lend a hand. "I love animals," said Yana, "and I want to help them find good homes." She has spent countless hours raising money through bake sales and yard sales. To date, Yana's animal rescue club has raised over \$1,000 and collected more than 130 dog collars, 50 leashes, 150 blankets and towels, a wide variety of cat items and various horse supplies.

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.

Yana is one of 10 exceptional children in addition to five outstanding groups of kids to be chosen as a Huggable Hero. 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."

Melanie Holden, Yana's mother, couldn't agree more. "I am very proud of Yana for being a Huggable Hero. She is devoted to helping homeless animals, and has motivated over 150 kids to do the same," said Melanie. "That's pretty special for an eight year old."

Yana will be showcased nationally in the 2005 Build-A-Bear Workshop Huggable Heroessm calendar, which will be available free in Build-A-Bear Workshop stores in late December. Build-A-Bear Workshop will make a

donation in Yana's name to the Animal Rescue Network of New England 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](http://www.buildabear.com).