



July 22, 2010 12:46 PM Eastern Time

Huggable Heroes Bring Solutions to Summer Job Search

Ten Young Leaders Visit St. Louis to Promote Public Service with Build-A-Bear Workshop

ST. LOUIS--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Young people are facing one of the most challenging job markets in 40 years. Thousands of youth are searching for summer employment at a time when they should be acquiring the job skills they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.

That's the problem.

Here's the solution, embodied by 10 youth leaders now on their way to St. Louis:

Public Service.

Ten Build-A-Bear Workshop® Huggable Heroes® are gathering Friday, July 23 at World Bearquarters in St. Louis where they will share inspiring stories of how their volunteer efforts have made the world a better place. These are kids offering advice on how to find something worthwhile to do and help others at the same time.

They are being brought together by Build-A-Bear Workshop, a global company that has taken the lead in investing in young people and encouraging them to volunteer. The Huggable Heroes program is now in its seventh year. Each Huggable Hero will receive \$10,000 USD, \$7,500 in the form of an educational scholarship and \$2,500 USD from the Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation to be donated to the 501(c)(3) charity of the Huggable Hero's choice.

"Our Huggable Heroes program encourages young people by providing incentives and rewards for their great work," said Maxine Clark, founder and chief executive bear of Build-A-Bear Workshop. "Their compassion not only changes the world but inspires others to follow in their footsteps."

This year's honorees have raised funds and collected items valued at more than \$22.5 million. On average they have volunteered more than 650 hours each month to:

- Support U.S. troops
- Advocate for literacy
- Provide medical care to disadvantaged youth
- Help build and fund schools in underdeveloped countries

"Each of these youngsters, ages 11-18, has essentially built a business," said Clark. "The big difference is that they are totally selfless and the funding raised goes entirely to causes closest to their hearts. I believe that once these kids begin to look for paying jobs, employers will take note of their intelligence, their drive, their entrepreneurship and their giving spirit."

"Our Huggable Heroes program encourages young people by providing incentives and rewards for their great work"

Those who will be on hand in St. Louis on Friday are:

Riley Carney, 17, Englewood, CO -- Riley created Breaking the Chain, a non-profit organization designed to break the chains of illiteracy and poverty through education by building schools, creating literacy centers and providing books for classrooms around the world.

Ashlee Smith, 11, Reno, NV -- Ashlee created Ashlee's Toy Closet, a foundation that collects toys and books for kids in need across the United States, as well as in Canada and Haiti.

Melissa Monette, 18, Mililani, HI -- Melissa is president of Kids Helping Kids with Diabetes, an organization that educates, raises funds for research and provides support services to people with Type I diabetes. Melissa also manages A Harvest for Many Inc., a 501(c)(3) that collects food for those in need.

Tatiana Grossman, 15, Palo Alto, CA -- Tatiana works with the African Library Project to help increase early literacy in Africa. She has spoken before thousands of people on two continents about literacy and facilitating the creation of libraries.

Dylan Mahalingam, 14, Derry, NH -- Dylan co-founded Lil' MDGs to help meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. He mobilizes and rallies youth in all parts of the world to work together to raise funds and resources to build schools, dorms, libraries, playgrounds, community gardens and more in several countries such as Uganda, Indonesia, Cambodia, India and Sudan.

Alison Mansfield, 15, Fort Wayne, IN -- Alison has gathered and shipped more than 47,000 items to soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. She also has collaborated with the Fort Wayne Museum of Art and local artists to illustrate a coloring book for Afghan children.

Charles Rappazzo, 17, Castleton, NY -- Charles started Literacy Education for All People, a multi-year initiative to help reduce illiteracy and increase literacy education and awareness both on local and global levels.

Jourdan Urbach, 18, Roslyn Heights, NY -- Jourdan is founder and director of Children Helping Children, which raises funds for cutting-edge research and the eradication of neurological diseases through a national benefit, Concerts for a Cure. He has inspired 700 young professional musicians, to join him in performances and in building satellite chapters.

Matthew Armstrong, 18, Fort Saskatchewan, AB -- Matthew has raised more than \$300,000 to help kids in need. His organization, Matthew's Challenge, has raised money through letter-writing campaigns, selling handmade magnetic bookmarks, hosting galas, walk-a-thons and fundraisers.

Alaina Podmorow, 13, Lake Country, BC -- Alaina founded Little Women for Little Women in Afghanistan, an organization that raises funds to educate girls in Afghanistan. She has helped raise more than \$137,000 through silent auctions, bottle drives and other events. Alaina also speaks to schools and groups to raise awareness about Afghan issues.

Huggable Heroes Program Background

Build-A-Bear Workshop launched the Huggable Heroes program in 2004 to search for and recognize young people making a difference in their communities and/or worldwide. Huggable Heroes are young leaders who demonstrate kindness, compassion and leadership to help make the world a better place.

From Jan. 15 through Feb. 26, 2010, Build-A-Bear Workshop accepted nominations for Huggable Heroes. More than 1,200 young leaders were nominated for their volunteer and community service efforts. Entries were narrowed down to a field of 75 semi-finalists, 25 finalists and ultimately 10 Huggable Heroes.

About Build-A-Bear Workshop, Inc.

Build-A-Bear Workshop, Inc. is the only global company that offers an interactive make-your-own stuffed animal retail-entertainment experience. The company currently operates more than 400 Build-A-Bear Workshop stores worldwide, including company-owned stores in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland and France, and

franchise stores in Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, the Middle East, and Mexico. Founded in St. Louis in 1997, Build-A-Bear Workshop is the leader in interactive retail. Brands include make-your-own Major League Baseball[®] mascot in-stadium locations, and Build-A-Dino[®] stores. Build-A-Bear Workshop extends its in-store interactive experience online with its award winning virtual world website at buildabearville.com[®]. The company was named to the 2009 and 2010 FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For[®] lists. Build-A-Bear Workshop (NYSE: BBW) posted total revenue of \$394.4 million in fiscal 2009. For more information, call 888.560.BEAR (2327) or visit the company's award-winning website at buildabear.com[®].

TRADEMARKS

We would like to thank you for your interest in covering our business. As you write your story, we would ask that you use our full name: **Build-A-Bear Workshop**[®] and that when referencing the process of making stuffed animals you use the word “**make**” not “**build**.”

Build-A-Bear Workshop is our well-known trade name and our registered trademark of **Build-A-Bear Retail Management, Inc. Build-A-Bear Workshop**[®] should only be used in capital letters to refer to our products and services and should not be used as a verb.

Contacts

For Build-A-Bear Workshop, Inc.

Interviews and further information:

Katie Zeidman, 314-727-5700, ext. 107

katiez@blickandstaff.com

or

Kris Brill, 314-780-1332

krbrill@swbell.net

Permalink: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20100722006289/en/Huggable-Heroes-Bring-Solutions-Summer-Job-Search>

