



**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE**  
**December 1, 2007**

**CONTACT: Cindy Dobyns/AboveWater PR**  
**(239) 596-9149**  
[cindy@abovewater.com](mailto:cindy@abovewater.com)

### **CHILDREN'S BOOK AND COMPANION BEAR HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH DIVORCE**

**NAPLES, FL (September 25, 2007)**—B.B. the Bear debuts in a new book that talks to children whose parents have decided to divorce or separate. As narrator, B.B. takes on the difficult subject of divorce in ***You and Me Make Three*** written by Wendy Lokken, Gwendy Mangiamiele, and Edna Cucksey Stephens. Heart-warming and representing genuine family experiences the illustrations depict the lovable, bandana clad B.B. as he travels to both Mom's and Dad's home and being a constant friend and confidante, are rendered by Heather Drescher.

Published by EDCO Publishing, Inc. of Auburn Hills, Michigan, ***You and Me Make Three*** is written for young children to help them cope with the changes and challenges associated with divorce and separation. Cleverly added on each page of the storybook is a "SMILE" tip for parents to remind them how to comport themselves during the transition, especially around their children.

**B.B.'s SMILE Tips for Parents** are taken from a judicial program conceived in a Michigan courtroom to provide education to parents going through divorce, SMILE being an acronym for Start Making It Livable for Everyone. The SMILE© program was created by the Honorable Edward Sosnick, Judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court, Oakland County, Michigan and family law attorney Richard S. Victor of Bloomfield Hills in 1989.

Wendy Lokken came up with the idea for the book and bear after her son Michael came home from school one day and shared what he learned about the ancient tradition of worry dolls. He equated them to his own "Cozy Bear" and announced that every kid going through divorce should have something like a worry doll. Wendy shared the idea

## CHILDREN'S BOOK AND COMPANION

### Page two

with her long time friend, Gwendy Mangiamiele, whose daughter Mia, also had a friend, a big floppy dog named “Sheila” that provided comfort at both Mom’s and Dad’s. Lokken and Mangiamiele realized their children already had versions of the worry doll concept in place. Thus, the genesis of ***You and Me Make Three*** and B.B. the Bear.

Joining forces with retired teacher, children’s author and publisher Edna Cucksey Stephens of EDCO Publishing, the book began to take on a life of its own. Stephens’ vast experience in childhood education, language arts and award-winning education materials opened the door to their current charity campaign of “A. B.B. Book and Bear in Every School in America.” B.B. is manufactured by Build-A-Bear Workshop® with 300 stores worldwide where children and parents create personalized teddy bears of all shapes, colors, and sizes. Build-A-Bear Workshop® owner Maxine Clark agreed to manufacture B.B. after extensive review of the manuscript and illustrations.

Sold as a companion to the book, B.B. the Bear encompasses a warm and wonderful solution to the emotional and social issues faced by children and families torn apart by divorce. A portion of book and bear sales will be donated to the SMILE Foundation and International Kids Alliance Network (IKAN) a non-profit that helps improve literacy and cultural diversity awareness in children by providing high-quality, interactive programs, books and educational materials.

U.S. Census Bureau statistics show that in the United States alone, more than 15 million children have experienced their parents’ divorce. Elementary school teachers will concur that divorce is among the most common problems facing children today, which is why the authors have set a goal to have a B.B. Book and Bear in every school in America. ***You and Me Make Three*** and B.B. the Bear are available for pre-order at [www.bbseries.com](http://www.bbseries.com) .