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BUSINESS WOMEN AND FRIENDS PLAN NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S BOOK RELEASE TO BENEFIT CHARITY

NAPLES, FL (September 25, 2007) – An evening in March at the Ritz Carlton Resort will mark the debut of *You and Me Make Three*, narrated by B.B. the Bear as he talks to children of divorced families. The soft cuddly teddy bear, B.B., is a companion to the book. Collaborating from three different states, the book was written by Wendy Lokken, Gwendy Mangiamiele, Edna Cucksey Stephens, and illustrated by Heather Drescher. The book and bear venture is the culmination of the women's mirrored lives, lasting friendships, and combined business acumen.

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. 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 separate homes. From advice about pitching in to help around the house to being a playful friend, B.B. is a compassionate constant companion who provides comfort and security to children going through this transition.

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 had 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 with her long-time friend, Gwendy Mangiamiele, whose own daughter Mia, also had a friend, a big floppy dog named "Sheila" that provided comfort at both Mom's and Dad's.

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Lokken and Mangiamele realized their children were already practicing the concept of the worry doll. Thus, the genesis of ***You and Me Make Three*** and B.B. the Bear.

From this inspiration, the authors and illustrator formed Caring Creations, LLC and created a companion stuffed bear to be sold with the book. Lokken's background as a successful entrepreneur and co-owner and Secretary of the Board of Lasertec, Inc., Mangiamele's senior level sales and marketing experience with Fortune 500 companies, Stephen's teaching and award-winning writing and publishing background, and illustrator Drescher's artistic and entrepreneurial talents contributed to the development of the first book in the B.B. book series.

Based on their own children's experiences coping with divorce, the authors realized a need to raise awareness of this issue. The first book in the series addresses the emotional and social issues faced by today's children and families. Diligent researchers, they discovered 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 kids today, which is why the authors have set a goal to have a B.B. book and bear in every school. Their mission is to provide support for children and parents as they go through divorce and separation.

In fact, this storybook is not just for kids. Uniquely incorporated on each page is a special tip for parents about 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.

Marketing initiatives are underway and the women are organizing their

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nationwide charity campaign to achieve their mission of a B.B. book and a bear in every school in America. In addition to an endorsement by the founders of the SMILE program, Maxine Clark, Founder and CEO of Build-A-Bear Workshops® with more than 300 stores worldwide, agreed to manufacture B.B. the Bear after extensive review of the manuscript and drawings.

***You and Me Make Three** is a children's book published by EDCO Publishing, Inc. of Auburn Hills, Michigan, written for young children to help them cope with the changes and challenges associated with divorce and separation. The soft cuddly teddy bear named B.B. is sold as a companion to the book. **You and Me Make Three** is endorsed and created in partnership with the co-founders of SMILE, an acronym for Start Making It Livable for Everyone, a program 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. B.B. Bear is designed and manufactured by Build-A-Bear Workshop® with stores located in malls worldwide where children and parents create personalized teddy bears. 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. The first in the B.B. series, **You and Me Make Three** and B.B. the Bear are available for pre-order at www.bbseries.com.*

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