



## **Making Reading Merry**

### ***Adding Toys to Children's Books Makes Eager Readers***

Oakland, CA - (October 27, 2014) - When toys are added, do the books get better?

Clair Frederick, President of MerryMakers, Inc., an Oakland, California-based toy and gift company, explains, "We are adding more joy to the joy of reading. When we add a plush based on the lead character from a children's book, kids become more engaged. A tangible toy brings a deeper relationship with the character in the book."

"The combination of the book with a related toy involves a child in a more meaningful way. It's an additional connection to the story," adds Betsy Foster, VP Sales and Marketing.

Supporting evidence of MerryMakers business plan may be seen in *Pete the Cat*, the popular children's book series by James Dean, published by HarperCollins. Pete the Cat books have sold over 5 million hardcover copies and have regularly appeared at the top of the NYT Bestseller List. The Pete the Cat plush doll is the bestselling product in the MerryMakers line. There seems to be no stopping Pete, with 2.9 million books sold in 2013 alone.

MerryMakers offers a variety of Pete the Cat merchandise, including a Giant Pete the Cat doll, a Pete the Cat backpack pull, a pencil case, a *Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons* puppet and a *Pete the Cat Saves Christmas* doll. In addition, MerryMakers acts as the exclusive licensing agent for Pete the Cat and has signed several licensing deals including University Games, Educational Insights, Colorforms and Wonder-Shirts.



Another popular MerryMakers toy is based on Tom Lichtenheld and Sherri Duskey Rinker's book *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site*, published by Chronicle Books. MerryMakers teamed with Chronicle Books to create a plush Excavator, the lead character in the book. *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* has spent over two years on the New York Times Bestseller List, and MerryMakers's soft excavator is one of the company's top-selling preschool products.

The MerryMakers catalog of plush and other gifts includes items based on Anna Dewdney's *Llama Llama* series, Jane O'Connor and Robin Preiss Glasser's *Fancy Nancy* books, Kevin Henkes's famous mouse Lilly, Ian Falconer's *Olivia*, Nick Bruel's *Bad Kitty*, Judy Schachner's *Skippyjon Jones*, Tedd Arnold's *Fly Guy*, David Soman and Jacky Davis's *Ladybug Girl* and Melanie Watt's *Scaredy Squirrel*.

#### **About the Company:**

Established in 1994, MerryMakers designs, manufactures and distributes a gift line based on bestselling and classic children's books, museum collections, and historical figures. The company's products have earned multiple awards in children's entertainment, literature, parenting and toy categories, including the [Dr. Toy Classic Products](#) and Toy of the Year from Creative Child Magazine. The licensing division was founded in 2012 and represents James Dean, Ashley Wolff, Rosemary Wells and Tad Hills. For additional information, visit the company [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).

#### **For more information, photos or to order dolls please contact:**

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