



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Vermont Teddy Bear Co., American Heart Association Team Up to Comfort Patients, Promote Heart Health**

Shelburne, Vt. – The Vermont Teddy Bear Company announced today its collaboration with the American Heart Association to comfort heart surgery patients with a new Teddy Bear that will also help in the Association’s mission to build healthier lives.

The 15" Love Your Heart Bear will be introduced at a “Life is Why We Give” event on February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Vermont Teddy Bear Factory in Shelburne, Vermont, starting at 11:00am. 20% of sales proceeds from each new Bear will be donated to the American Heart Association, as will income from the day's factory tours.

All visiting Cardiac Kids—children with heart defects and those who've undergone heart surgery—will receive the unique 15" Teddy Bear, created with soft, honey-brown fur and an embroidered 'scar' on its chest. The unveiling will be presented by Vermont Teddy Bear CEO Bill Shouldice and Kathryn Towle, American Heart Association volunteer and mother of a child born with a congenital heart defect. Also, pediatric cardiologist Dr. Nancy Drucker from the UVM Medical Center will be making the rounds to answer questions.

"We are thrilled and honored to have an opportunity to collaborate with an organization that literally saves lives every day," said Shouldice. "Around here, we talk about how Teddy Bear people have such big hearts—well, the dedicated doctors, staff and supporters with the American Heart Association keep them beating strong, so really, they're our true heroes."

"As a parent who has watched my child go through something so traumatic, this kind gesture of giving the children a friend for support and to love for their entire life is so special and meaningful," said Towle. "I can't wait to see the smiles on these children's faces and to be able to provide some comfort in a scary and overwhelming time in their lives. I am so thankful to both Vermont Teddy Bear and the American Heart Association for getting this program started."

The Vermont Teddy Bear Company includes Vermont Teddy Bear, PajamaGram, Addison Meadow and PajamaJeans. Located in Shelburne, Vermont, the VTBC creates personalized gifts that have surprised and delighted for over 35 years.

**About Life Is Why We Give™**

We all deserve to live a long, healthy and happy life. However, heart disease and stroke are robbing too many of us of this chance. The American Heart Association is working to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have a quality of life that they can spend more joyfully with family and friends. When people donate or purchase goods and services from our Life is Why We Give™ cause supporters, we move closer to creating the quality of life we all desire. Life Is Why We Give™ aims to inspire consumers to think about their reasons to live healthier, longer lives and to give to AHA for those reasons. For too long, heart disease and stroke have stolen our precious moments. It's time we fight back together and affirm that we're more powerful than these diseases, because everyone has a reason to live a longer, healthier life, and that reason is why we give.

If you'd like to support the American Heart Association by purchasing a Love Your Heart Bear, please visit [www.VermontTeddyBear.com](http://www.VermontTeddyBear.com) or call (800) 829-2327 (BEAR). In addition to contributing to save lives through Vermont Teddy Bear, donations can also be made directly to the American Heart Association at [www.heart.org/lifeiswhywegive](http://www.heart.org/lifeiswhywegive).