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### BOY HOPES TO BUILD 1,000 BEARS FOR NEEDY CHILDREN

Bridgewater, NJ (September 30, 2009) –Justin Martin of Union Township is not an employee at the Bridgewater Build-A-Bear, but he'll be working hard to stuff bears for needy children at the store.

The 7-year-old plans to be at the store nearly every weekend, for several hours at a time, to make bears that will be distributed to children in financial need in the Newark, NJ area and other towns. Last year, Justin and volunteers created 850 bears. This year, he hopes to raise enough money to give 1,000 bears to children, including those in hospitals and homeless shelters, during the coming holiday season.

This year's goal is not just to make more bears; it's also to get more community involvement.

"I want more children to help build the bears, to show them the importance of giving and sharing," said Justin Martin.

"He builds the bears and I help raise the money," said Quin Martin, Justin's father, adding that they are still raising money to try and reach their goal of 1,000 bears.

Justin has had his own bear since he was born, but when he was 5 ½ years old he realized not all children had bears like him so he wanted to change that, said Martin. So they created The Justin Charity Bear Fund, a nonprofit to collect money to build the bears, and they partnered with the Newark Housing Authority to distribute them. They also have given bears to needy children in hospitals in Watchung and Plainfield.

People can build go to the Bridgewater Build-A-Bear store and host a charity party to build several bears for the fund or simply buy a bear to stuff and give to the charity. Monetary donations also can be made to The Justin Charity Bear Fund, 192 Wilson Avenue, Suite 262, Newark, NJ 07105. All of the money received goes to creating the bears, which will be distributed in mid-December in time for the holidays.

Major sponsors include: Bridgewater Build-A-Bear, HM/Glopak Charity Foundation, Newark Housing Authority, Newark Mayor Cory Booker, Newark Now, Trenk Law Firm, Shauger Group, Constellation Energy & T. Farese & Sons Hauling.

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