



“KINDNESS COUNTS” AT 24-HOUR PRESCHOOL TELEVISION CHANNEL SPROUT®

Network to launch multiplatform prosocial initiative supporting the development of empathy in preschoolers by promoting small acts of kindness that matter big

Philadelphia, PA – July 7, 2011 – This August, 24-hour preschool television channel Sprout will launch a new multiplatform prosocial initiative, “Kindness Counts,” designed to support the development of empathy in preschoolers by promoting small acts of kindness that matter big. The long-term campaign will include a series of PSAs, digital and social media components, programming tie-ins and local extensions – all targeting parents and caregivers of preschoolers – with the ultimate goal of logging one million acts of kindness reported to Sprout from families all across the country.

“As bullying among school-aged children continues to be a growing concern for communities and parents across the nation, it is now more critical than ever – and never too soon – to start building empathy in young, preschool-aged children,” said Sandy Wax, president of Sprout. “Empathy and kindness are a consistent theme with Sprout’s gold-standard programming and trusted characters, so Sprout is uniquely positioned to deliver our ‘Kindness Counts’ message to families of preschoolers all across the country.”

According to a Harris survey of over 1,000 parents nationwide, 67% of parents with children 3-7 years old worry that their children will be bullied (*NY Times, October 2010*); and 83% of Sprout parents surveyed are concerned about their preschoolers potentially being bullied or bullying others. Building empathy with young children can help encourage them to consider other people’s feelings and offer help or expressions of understanding – something as simple as a hug, getting a towel to help clean up a spill, or sharing a box of crayons with a friend.

Earlier this year, First Lady Michelle Obama said during the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention, “As parents, we know we need to make a real effort to be engaged in our children’s lives...but parents aren’t the only ones who have a responsibility. We all need to play a role.” Experts believe that it’s never too soon to start teaching children about respect and kindness for others and Sprout’s “Kindness Counts” campaign will deliver meaningful, fun and simple ideas for being kind that families with preschoolers can share together.

“The early years of life appear to be critical for the development of children’s sympathy and caring behavior,” said Dr. Nancy Eisenberg, Regents’ Professor of Psychology and Editor, *Child Development Perspectives*. “Children who attend to and respond to others’ distress and need in the late preschool years are more likely to be caring and helpful people in adolescence and early adulthood. Thus, it is critical that parents and teachers be aware of ways that they can foster their children’s positive behaviors early in life.”

Launching in August, Sprout's "Kindness Counts" PSAs will feature preschoolers, Sprout characters and even celebrities demonstrating real acts of kindness. Families will be encouraged to visit the "Kindness Counts" microsite at SproutOnline.com to add their child's act of kindness to the Kindness Counter. Various acts of kindness sent in from Sprout families nationwide will be highlighted on the air during Sprout's live morning show, *The Sunny Side Up Show*. Parents will also be able to find articles and expert advice on the value and importance of developing empathy in young children, printable materials that daycare providers or families can use at home or in school to track their own small acts of kindness, and links to games and activities at SproutOnline.com that celebrate the spirit of kindness.

Kindness materials will also be available through the website to local communities, daycare providers and affiliate partners so that children and families can learn more about kindness and track their individual acts. Additionally, Sprout will host several local grassroots events that will take place throughout the year in yet-to-be determined markets featuring Sprout talent.

About Sprout®

Available in over 50 million homes, Sprout is the first 24-hour preschool destination available on TV, on demand and online for children ages 2-5 and their parents and caregivers. The 24-hour digital channel, which launched in September 2005 along with the website (SproutOnline.com), is the only channel that follows the day of a preschooler from breakfast to bedtime with its distinctive, interactive programming and original hosted blocks. Sprout's VOD offering is the #1 on demand service for younger children with over one billion views.

Sprout is a partnership among NBCUniversal, HIT Entertainment, PBS and Sesame Workshop. Its program lineup of gold-standard, curriculum-based preschool shows includes: *Sesame Street®*, *Bob the Builder™*, *Barney & Friends™*, *The Wiggles®*, *Thomas & Friends™*, *Caillou®*, *The Berenstain Bears™*, *Roary the Racing Car™*, *dirtgirlworld* and more.

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