

ECHOAGE AND INDIGO LOVE OF READING FOUNDATION
TEAM UP TO EMPOWER CHILDREN
TO FIGHT THE CANADIAN LITERACY CRISIS

TORONTO, CANADA, November 1, 2009 -- A new partnership between ECHOage and the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation inspires children hosting birthday parties to help put books in the hands of less fortunate children. Birthday parties can be memorable agents of change, thanks to ECHOage.com, an online charity-driven, eco-friendly birthday party service. When a child hosts an ECHOage party, he or she is given the chance to directly help other children in need of basic things, such as food, medical attention, clean water and – now – books.

Annual school library budgets currently allow for less than one-third of a book per child. “We are facing a national crisis where literacy is concerned, with our public school libraries desperately underfunded and understaffed,” says Jennifer Gay, director of the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation, which has distributed \$7.5 million to 70 high-needs elementary schools in order to help them rebuild their libraries. “ECHOage is taking an active role to support literacy in our schools by giving kids the tools put relevant and engaging books in school libraries across the country. The Indigo Love of Reading Foundation is honoured to be a recipient of ECHOage funds.” Other new ECHOage charities include: Autism Speaks, Starlight Foundation and SickKids Hospital.

At an ECHOage party, the birthday boy or girl gets to choose one group gift from all the guests and also makes a generous contribution to a charity of his or her choice from the ECHOage website. “I chose the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation for my ECHOage birthday party because I love to read before bed and I want to make sure kids without books get the same chance as I do,” says Jordan Lis, who recently celebrated his 8th birthday.

“Kids learn through ECHOage that children in their own city don’t have books to read at home or in their school library, and this opens their eyes, makes them feel compassion

and propels them to action,” says ECHOage Cofounder Debbie Zinman. “They can immediately do something about how they feel and help other kids just by hosting an ECHOage birthday party.” Plus, children get to see the impact of their actions and feel the rewards of making a positive change in the world because the money they raise for charity through their ECHOage party is tallied on their own personal ECHOage Tracker.

“ECHOage understands what children want and what they are capable of in this world. Kids want an Ipad or new hockey skates or a guitar for their birthday, but at the same time they are highly attuned to the needs of their community and have their eyes open to poverty, hunger, illiteracy and illness,” says ECHOage Cofounder Alison Smith. “We, as parents, need to give our children opportunities to give to others in tangible ways. ECHOage provides the opportunity as well as the simple tools to make this a reality.”

About ECHOage

ECHOage was created and founded by two mothers, [Alison Smith and Debbie Zinman](#), who believe that children can improve the world one birthday party at a time. ECHOage is a charity-driven, eco-friendly birthday party service where children learn the value of giving and receiving just by celebrating. Instead of bringing wrapped gifts, guests contribute online, with half of the donations going to a group gift for the birthday child and the other half going to a charity that the birthday child has chosen. All ECHOage charities directly improve the lives of children or the environment.

For more information on ECHOage or to arrange an interview with the cofounders or a participating charity, please contact info@echoage.com.

###

For inquiries: debbie@echoage.com or alison@echoage.com