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ANGELINA BALLERINA™ THE NEXT STEPS TAKES CENTER STAGE ON PBS KIDS® IN FALL 2009

World-Famous Angelina Ballerina has a Fresh Look in CG-Animation and All New Adventures in Curriculum-Based Dance Series for Young Children

NEW YORK, NY – April 28, 2009 – HIT Entertainment, a leading provider of quality children’s entertainment, and THIRTEEN, the most-watched public television station in America and a producing station for PBS, are partnering to proudly debut the new CG animated series, *Angelina Ballerina™ The Next Steps* in September 2009. The new series, an extension of the original best-selling Angelina Ballerina books by author Katharine Holabird and illustrator Helen Craig, will be broadcast weekly exclusively on PBS KIDS (check local listings). *Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps* was developed in consultation with a team of accredited choreographers and dance and music instructors, and it fully incorporates a curriculum for young children steeped in the performing arts.

Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps follows the now 8-year-old Angelina, as she puts her best toe forward and embarks on the next stage in her life. Angelina enrolls at Camembert Academy, a school for the performing arts where she meets new friends and experiences an exciting world of dance, music and performance. Each episode stars Angelina and consists of two 11-minute CG animated stories linked with a live-action interstitial segment featuring all types of young dancers and musicians performing and sharing their love of the arts.

“THIRTEEN, an institution dedicated to culture and arts, is the perfect partner with whom to develop *Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps*,” said Claudia Scott-Hansen, Vice President, US Content Distribution, HIT Entertainment. “All children are natural performers – they love to dance and move around to music. This series will teach and showcase many different types of music and dance, inviting children to explore this world, whether they pirouette in their living room or join a rock band.”

“It is so exciting to bring young children an extension of the beloved *Angelina Ballerina* book series that has been a favorite for over 25 years,” said Karen Barnes, Executive Producer, *Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps*. “What’s more, the new CG animation allows us to demonstrate a full-range of dance styles and movements like never before. With the renewed popularity of dance in the US, the dance, music and performance elements of this new series will resonate with children and inspire them to pursue their dreams, just as Angelina Ballerina has always pursued her big dreams.”



"We're thrilled to be co-producing *Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps* and bringing it to the PBS system" said Sandra Sheppard, Executive Producer and Director, Children's & Education Programming for THIRTEEN. "Our mission of education and our dedication to the arts makes *Angelina Ballerina* the perfect fit for THIRTEEN. Angelina and her friends serve as iconic role models, demonstrating that discipline, strength, teamwork and dedication are the building blocks to success."

The new CG-animated series will introduce fans to Angelina's new home on the other side of Chipping Cheddar, a new performing arts school -- Camembert Academy, new friends, a new teacher, Ms. Mimi, and many new adventures. *Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps* celebrates music and brings to life new forms of dance for Angelina including ballet, modern, tap, jazz, classic and ethnic. Angelina always works hard to reach her goals and learns from her mistakes. As kids share in Angelina's experiences, they're inspired to pursue their big dreams too!

By incorporating all genres of dance from ballet to ballroom to hip hop and more, the series introduces children to the art of dance and helps them to understand and appreciate the basic joys of movement, artistic expression, musicality, imagination and coordination. A team of dance instructors and choreographers helped to develop the dance curriculum incorporated throughout the show. In addition, creative consultants from American Ballet Theatre spent time with series producers to help accurately choreograph the dance movements that are animated on the program. The dance consultant team also helped to ensure that all dance moves within the series are age-appropriate for the characters.

Angelina Ballerina The Next Steps is a production of HIT Entertainment and THIRTEEN in association with Nick Jr. UK and WNET.ORG. The series is animated by SD Entertainment and Executive Produced by Karen Barnes from HIT Entertainment. Creative consultation was provided by Ms. Holabird and Ms. Craig along with an accredited team of dance and music instructors. Executive producers for THIRTEEN are Sandra Sheppard and Jill Peters.

About THIRTEEN

THIRTEEN is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *NOW With David Brancaccio*, *Exposé*, *Bill Moyers Journal*, and *Cyberchase* to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, THIRTEEN reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as *New York Voices*, *Reel 13* and *Sunday Arts*. THIRTEEN extends the impact of its television productions through educational and community outreach projects - including the Teaching and Learning Celebration - as well as Web sites and other digital media platforms. More information can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

About PBS KIDS® and PBS KIDS GO!

PBS KIDS, for preschoolers, and PBS KIDS GO!, for early elementary school kids, offer all children – from every walk of life – the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television, online and outreach programs. With positive character role models and content designed to nurture a child's total well-being, PBS's online and community resources - including PBS KIDS online (pbskids.org), PBS KIDS GO! online (pbskidsgo.org), PBS Parents (pbsparents.org), PBS Teachers (pbsteachers.org), PBS KIDS Raising Readers and literacy events across the country - leverage the full spectrum of media, technology and community to build knowledge, critical thinking, imagination and curiosity. Empowering children for success in school and in life, only PBS KIDS and PBS KIDS GO! have earned the unanimous endorsement of parents, children, industry leaders and teachers. PBS is a nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 356 public television stations, serving more than 61 million people each week and reaching 99% of American homes.

About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes properties, such as *Barney™*, *Bob the Builder™*, *Thomas & Friends™*, *Pingu™*, *Fireman Sam™*, *Angelina Ballerina™* and *Rainbow Magic™*. HIT represents Chapman Entertainment's *Fifi and the Flowertots™* and *Roary the Racing Car™* in North America and Japan, as well as *Wallace & Gromit™*, *Shaun the Sheep™*, *Timmy Time™* and Aardman Classics from Aardman Animations. HIT acts as

representative for *The Wiggles*® in the UK. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production, content distribution, publishing, consumer products licensing and live events and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. HIT is a part-owner of US-based preschool channel, PBS KIDS SproutSM, and international preschool channel JimJam, (outside of the US, UK and China). For more information, visit www.hitentertainment.com.

To download artwork, please visit www.hitnewsonline.com.

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