



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Becki Harrington-Davis

PHONE: 978-889-1083

EMAIL: becki@learningexpress.com

LEARNING EXPRESS TOYS STATEMENT FOLLOWING TOYS “R” US’ CHAPTER 11 LIQUIDATION

Devens, Mass., March 22, 2018— The hard lesson to be learned from the Toys “R” Us’ bankruptcy and now liquidation, for all those fast-growing businesses that dream of going public or aggressively expanding using private equity is “Beware!”

Hind-sight is always 20/20, but had Toys “R” Us taken a more conservative growth path, and invested their profits in developing a knowledgeable sales force, remodeling old stores and offering a great in-store experience, Toys “R” Us would be hugely profitable.

Walmart, Target, Kohl’s and other big box stores will likely enlarge their toy departments in hopes of picking up the \$4 billion in US toy dollars left behind by Toys “R” Us.

That said, Isaac Larian of MGA Entertainment has started a funding campaign to save Toys “R” Us and, with various investors, has contributed over \$200 million toward a \$1 billion goal to acquire some or all of Toys “R” Us’ assets through the bankruptcy process. There still may be hope for the iconic brand.

What is bothersome is Larian’s reason for saving Toys “R” Us. Larian recently stated that “If there is no Toys “R” Us, I don’t think there is a toy business.” From a manufacturer’s perspective, Larian’s comment may have validity. However, toy retailers have been in business long before Toys “R” Us ever opened their doors, and thousands of independent toy and toy/gift retailers continue to thrive today. There will always be a toy business, although it may look different in the future. The toy departments in big box stores will expand and independent stores may add select traditionally “mass market” products to their mix to round out their assortments.

For decades, independent toy retailers have offered an intelligent alternative to aisles of pink or black. Sharon DiMinico, founder and CEO of Learning Express Toys, the largest chain of independent toy stores, explains why mom and pop toy stores have survived throughout the growth of mass market retailers and online shopping. “Specialty toy retailers are able to offer an in-store experience and service that can’t be replicated by ‘big box’ stores. It is the product assortment, service, and experience that has enabled independent toy stores to remain successful for all these years.”

Toys “R” Us is an iconic brand that specialty toy stores have co-existed with for over 60 years. And while the Toys “R” Us customer will be saddened, they should keep in mind that the toy business is not going anywhere. Thousands of specialty toy stores are here to help pick out the perfect gift while providing a memorable in-store experience.

Sharon DiMinico
Founder and CEO
Learning Express, Inc.

About Learning Express Toys

Learning Express Toys is the nation's leading franchisor of educational toy stores with more than 110 locations across the country - each one locally owned and operated. Providing an extraordinary shopping experience, Learning Express Toys is best known for its knowledgeable and playful sales staff and its unique product mix (birth – age 14). Believing that everyone who walks through the doors should be WOWED, Learning Express Toys focuses on the customer experience.

A birthday gift registry, free gift wrapping, free personalization, civic fundraising and regularly scheduled children's events contribute to the exceptional customer service and energetic atmosphere.

To learn more about Learning Express Toys, franchise opportunities, or a store near you, visit learningexpress.com.

###

For more information, please contact Becki Harrington-Davis at becki@learningexpress.com or 978-889-1083.