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Kartoon Studios Announces Winnie-The-Pooh Business and Creative All-Star Team on the Heels of Securing \$30m of Non-Dilutive Production Funding

Former Paramount Pictures Executive, Ryan Gagerman, to Lead the Worldwide Consumer Products Rollout; Peppa Pig Writer Sam Morrison to Serve as Head Writer; Multi-Emmy Award Winner Michael Maliani Set to Direct



BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., June 24, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Following **Kartoon Studios' (NYSE American:TOON)** landmark announcement last week regarding the 2025 Christmas Eve premiere of "**Kartoon Studio's Winnie-The-Pooh**," the company today announced a team of proven executives to drive the development, production, retail, and global distribution strategy for the property. The development, production, and growth of the property is funded by a non-dilutive production financing of \$30 million, led by Catalyst Venture Partners.

The global consumer products business will be led by veteran licensing executive, **Ryan**

Gagerman, who has held senior positions at Paramount Pictures, Electronic Arts, and DIC Entertainment. Gagerman, has been appointed Head of Global Licensing for “*Kartoon Studios’ Winnie-The-Pooh*,” responsible for building the brand across all major license categories, including toys, electronics, publishing, apparel, and more.

“*Kartoon Studios Winnie-The-Pooh*,” currently in pre-production, will be directed by multiple Emmy Award-winning director **Michael Maliani**. Adding to the production is **Sam Morrison**, a member of the acclaimed writing team for the hit children’s series, “Peppa Pig,” and serves as Head Writer. Former Managing Director of Disney Channel Worldwide and current President of Cartoon Channel! Worldwide & Head of International Sales, **Paul Robinson**, will drive international sales.

“Content sales are essential, but it is the sale of licensed consumer products that drive outsized returns and truly excites our group,” stated Steven A. Horowitz, Sr. Managing Director of the Winnie the Pooh SPV and its parent company, Catalyst Venture Partners. “During a week where an animated film dominated the global box office for the second week in a row, we are reminded of the importance of proven brands and stories that speak to families and the fundamental appeal of animation. The team Kartoon Studios has assembled to lead this exciting new Winnie-The-Pooh is world class and knows exactly how to make great content for kids, build impactful global entertainment brands, and drive a global consumer products business.”

Kartoon Studios Chairman and CEO, Andy Heyward, added, “Years ago, I had the privilege to work with Ryan Gagerman when he oversaw the global rollout of ‘Strawberry Shortcake,’ which generated over \$5 billion dollars of retail sales under his leadership. He is the perfect executive to spearhead our global consumer products and retail program for this brand. Similarly, Paul Robinson, a renowned industry executive and our head of international, will no doubt deliver on the global distribution, creating global awareness for this new and exciting version of the A.A. Milne classic.”

Gagerman is an accomplished executive with a dynamic career in entertainment and consumer products. Prior to joining Kartoon Studios, Gagerman served as Global Licensing Director at Electronic Arts, where he delivered high-profile partnerships, expanded the global location-based entertainment business, and supported top games like FIFA, Madden, Mass Effect, and Plants vs. Zombies.

Previously, Gagerman was Vice President at Paramount Pictures in the Consumer Products and Recreation Group, where he supported the launch of blockbuster features such as the “**Transformers**” franchise. Additionally, he also helped monetize Paramount’s iconic catalog with films, including “The Godfather,” “Grease,” and “Breakfast at Tiffany’s.”

Gagerman began his career at DIC Entertainment, where he rose to the role of Vice President of Global Consumer Products, working on high-profile brands, including the multi-billion-dollar “Strawberry Shortcake” and leading his division to become the largest revenue generator in the organization.

About Kartoon Studios’ Winnie-The-Pooh

Kartoon Studios’ “*Winnie-the-Pooh*” is based on the designs and stories of one of the most successful brands of all time, A.A. Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh, a property that has generated over \$80 billion dollars in sales over the last four decades and is estimated to currently

generate \$3-\$6 billion dollars per year. The total lifetime revenues exceed those of “Barbie,” “Harry Potter,” “Star Wars,” “Mickey Mouse,” “Peanuts,” “Ninja Turtles,” “Power Rangers,” “Marvel,” and almost every major brand in the world.

The company is currently in pre-production on the animated Christmas movie, set to premiere December 24, 2025, on Amazon Prime Video, through Kartoon Channel!’s \$3.99/month subscription distribution arrangement. Concurrently, the global retail program will kick off with the debut of physical entertainment through Alliance Entertainment Corporation in conjunction with Kartoon Studios rollout of a global consumer products campaign.

Kartoon Studios’ Winnie-the-Pooh animated content is being developed with a unique ‘yarn-based’ design and palette for the characters and backgrounds, along with original modern stories inspired by Milne’s beloved classic books. The beautifully imagined yarn gives the characters a depth and warmth. Additionally, the stories will be told in a ‘Seussian style’ rhyme to provide an enriched dimension to the stories.

About Kartoon Studios

Kartoon Studios (NYSE AMERICAN: TOON) is a global end-to-end creator, producer, distributor, marketer, and licensor of entertainment brands. The Company’s IP portfolio includes original animated content, including the Stan Lee brand, “Stan Lee’s Superhero Kindergarten,” starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, on Kartoon Channel! and Ameba; “Shaq’s Garage,” starring Shaquille O’Neal, on Kartoon Channel!; “Rainbow Rangers” on Kartoon Channel! and Ameba; the Netflix Original, “Llama Llama,” starring Jennifer Garner, and more.

In 2022, Kartoon Studios acquired Canada’s WOW! Unlimited Media, along with its subsidiary, Mainframe Studios, which is one of the most successful animation service houses in the world, producing top brands for 3rd parties, including “Cocomelon,” “Barbie’s Playhouse,” Unicorn Academy,” and “SuperKitties.” Additionally, the company made a strategic investment becoming the largest shareholder in Germany’s Your Family Entertainment AG (FRA:RTV), one of Europe’s leading distributors and broadcasters of high-quality programs for children and families.

Toon Media Networks, the Company’s wholly owned digital distribution network, consists of Kartoon Channel!, Frederator Network, and Ameba. Kartoon Channel! is a globally distributed entertainment platform with near full penetration of the U.S. market. Kartoon Channel! and Ameba are available across multiple platforms, including iOS, Android Mobile, Web, Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV, Amazon Fire, Roku, Pluto TV, Comcast, Cox, Dish, Sling TV, Android TV, Tubi, Xumo, and Samsung and LG Smart TVs. Frederator Network owns and operates one of the largest global animation networks on YouTube, with channels featuring over 2000 exclusive creators and influencers, garnering billions of views annually.

For additional information, please visit www.kartoonstudios.com

Forward-Looking Statements: Certain statements in this press release constitute “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the federal securities laws. Words such as “may,” “might,” “will,” “should,” “believe,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “estimate,” “continue,” “predict,” “forecast,” “project,” “plan,” “intend” or similar expressions, or statements regarding intent, belief, or current expectations, are forward-looking statements. While the Company believes

these forward-looking statements are reasonable, undue reliance should not be placed on any such forward-looking statements, which are based on information available to us on the date of this release. These forward looking statements are based upon current estimates and assumptions and are subject to various risks and uncertainties, including without limitation, our ability to generate revenue or achieve profitability; our ability to obtain additional financing on acceptable terms, if at all; the potential issuance of a significant number of shares, which will dilute our equity holders; fluctuations in the results of our operations from period to period; general economic and financial conditions; our ability to anticipate changes in popular culture, media and movies, fashion and technology; competitive pressure from other distributors of content and within the retail market; our reliance on and relationships with third-party production and animation studios; our ability to market and advertise our products; our reliance on third-parties to promote our products; our ability to keep pace with technological advances; our ability to protect our intellectual property and those other risk factors set forth in the "Risk Factors" section of the Company's most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and in the Company's subsequent filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"). Thus, actual results could be materially different. The Company expressly disclaims any obligation to update or alter statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.

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A photo accompanying this announcement is available at

<https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/18037bec-93be-4c00-985b-195092b60889>



Source: Kartoon Studios

Figure 1



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