

For Immediate Release

## **CARU RECOMMENDS AGKI DZONE TAKE STEPS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN'S ONLINE PRIVACY; COMPANY AGREES TO DO SO**

New York, NY – April 24, 2009 – The Children's Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended that AG Properties, which operates the Website [www.sushipack.com](http://www.sushipack.com), modify the site to better protect children's privacy online. The company has taken steps to do so.

The Website supports the cartoon show "Sushi Pack," which airs on Saturday mornings as part of the CBS Kewlopolis animated cartoon block. The Website came to the attention of CARU, the children's advertising industry's self-regulatory forum, through CARU's ongoing monitoring. Print advertising for the Website was included in a recent issue of Nickelodeon Magazine.

The site features games, videos and other activities attractive to children.

CARU found, upon initial examination, that to register, a child must submit a first name and birthdate. Visitors who entered a birthdate that indicated they were under the age of 13 were sent a page that stated: "Get Permission, since you're under 13 we must email your parent/guardian to get their permission!"

The site allowed visitors to hit the on the back button and change birthdates to reflect an age over 12 and did not verify the identity of those registering as "parents" or guardians"

Following its initial review, CARU determined that the registration did not employ a tracking mechanism to prevent underage children from going back and changing their age to circumvent age-screening as required by CARU's Guidelines and COPPA, and that the language, "Click yes or no if you are a parent/guardian," acted as tip-off language.

CARU also noted that the Website's privacy policy stated: "In order to participate in certain contests, we may ask your child for personally identifiable information such as postal address and full name in order to award prizes." CARU noted its concerns that this could result in the collection of more information more personal information than is reasonably necessary to participate in the online activity. The Website operator agreed to clarify its policy.

In response to CARU's concerns, the Website operator agreed to implement neutral age-screening accompanied by a tracking mechanism. Further, the operator committed to remove any leading language from the registration process and is working to revise the registration area so that personal information is collected solely from a parent. CARU noted that it is pleased with the steps the operator has taken to comply with CARU's guidelines.

The company, in its advertiser's statement, said it is "committed to the protection of children's privacy ... . As a result, AG Properties thanks CARU for bringing these issues to its attention, and appreciates its help in resolving all of the issues contained within the decision."

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*CARU's inquiry was conducted under NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU's decision, and the advertiser's response will be included in the next NAD/CARU Case Report.*

**About Advertising Industry Self-Regulation:** The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and

accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB's National Advertising Division (NAD) and Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children's advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB's sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. Funding for ERSP is derived from membership fees paid to the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit [www.narcpartners.org](http://www.narcpartners.org).