

For Immediate Release

CARU RECOMMENDS DONNERWOOD MEDIA MODIFY WEBSITE TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN'S PRIVACY; COMPANY AGREES TO DO SO

New York, NY – May 28, 2009 – The Children's Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CARU) has recommended that Donnerwood Media implement new measures to better protect the privacy of children who visit the company's Website at www.meez.com. The company has agreed to do so.

CARU monitors Websites for compliance with CARU's *Self-Regulatory Program for Children's Advertising*, including guidelines on Online Privacy Protection, as well as with the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

The site came to the attention of CARU through an anonymous complaint. The Website offers visitors an interactive experience where users can personalize three-dimensional avatars, play online animated games, participate in forums, create profiles and send messages to friends. The Website is colorful, vibrant, contains animated characters, and advertisements for video games.

Upon initial inquiry, CARU found that to create a free account, users were required to enter a username, password, e-mail, date of birth, and country. When a registrant entered a birthday corresponding with an age that is under 13 they received a message that stated: "Sorry, Meez isn't for kids under 13. Please come visit us on your thirteenth birthday."

CARU determined that this was tip-off language that alerted visitors to the age-screening mechanism and might encourage children to possibly misrepresent their ages in order to be able to successfully register. The Website was also missing a tracking mechanism to prevent children who were blocked by the age-screen from being able to change their age to one over 13 and successfully register.

Following CARU's inquiry letter, the operator agreed to develop and implement new privacy practices to ensure compliance with the guidelines. The operator removed the leading language regarding the age threshold from the registration page and added a tracking mechanism to ensure children would not be able to go back and change their ages in order to successfully register.

CARU noted in its decision that it is pleased the operator integrated new privacy measures to bring its Website into compliance with the guidelines through neutral age-screening.

In its operator's statement, Donnerwood Media said it "accepts CARU's decision in its entirety and has modified its Website to comply with CARU's *Guidelines*."

###

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.