

For Immediate Release

CARU RECOMMENDS MGAE MODIFY ADVERTISING FOR ‘RESCUE PETS’ TO BETTER DEPICT ADULT SUPERVISION; COMPANY AGREES TO DO SO

New York, NY – August 12, 2009 – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CARU) has recommended that MGA Entertainment modify advertising for the “Rescue Pets Swim to Me Puppy” to better depict adult supervision of children in a swimming pool.

Television advertising for the toy came to the attention of CARU through its routine monitoring for advertising directed to children. The 30-second commercial features children playing with their “Rescue Pets” – plastic toys that can both swim and walk – in a pool. The commercial featured three brief shots of a woman in the background, reading a book. There were no audio disclosures or supers that stated adult supervision was required. Both the product packaging and the “quick start” and “safety instructions” sections of the product manual stated: “CAUTION: DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO PLAY IN WATER WITHOUT ADULT SUPERVISION.”

CARU strives to assure that advertising directed to children is truthful and accurate, and that it conveys the appropriate safety message when children are shown participating in activities that present the risk of harm.

Following its review of the commercial, CARU determined that the commercial did not adequately depict adult supervision. CARU recommended that the advertiser modify future advertising for “Rescue Pets” to visually depict prominent adult supervision and include a voiceover stating “adult supervision required.” The company, in its advertiser’s statement, said that it was “disappointed” with CARU’s decision. However, the company noted, “children’s safety is our utmost concern and we remain committed to depicting our products in a manner consistent with applicable advertising guidelines. Should we elect to air the ... commercial again, we will make the appropriate modifications to this commercial.”

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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.