



American Girl's New "2008 Girl Of The Year" Encourages A Healthy Approach To Competition And Performance

National Contest Seeks Real Girls with Passion, Dedication, and Spirit

Middleton, WI-January 1, 2008: For millions of girls, the success or failure they experience in sports or other competitive activities has as much to do with their mental preparation as their physical abilities. As competitive pressure and expectations increase for young performers, so does the need for developing their mental skills and attitudes to ensure that their experiences are positive and empowering. To celebrate girls passion for performing and to encourage a healthy approach to competition, American Girl is proud to introduce **Mia, 2008 Girl of the Year.**

Courageous and perseverant, Mia is brought to life with an 18-inch doll, several outfits and accessories, and two books: *Mia* and *Bravo, Mia!* Mia's stories will resonate with girls ages 8 and up as they read how she pursues her dream of becoming a figure skater while learning valuable lessons about winning-and losing-with grace, being a good sport, and believing in herself.

"Like Mia, American Girl's newest Girl of the Year, young female athletes face internal and external pressure to perform," said sports psychologist and former member of the National Figure Skating Team, Caroline Silby, Ph.D. "It's important that parents ensure their daughters are not only physically prepared for competitive activities but mentally prepared as well."

To help spread Mia's message of keeping competition healthy, American Girl has partnered with Dr. Silby for a series of workshops at American Girl Place locations in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Silby will offer tips and techniques to encourage girls and their parents to keep competition fun and to get the most out of their chosen activity. More information about the workshops is available at www.americangirl.com.

Honoring Real Girls Like Mia

In celebration of Mia and her story's inspirational message, American Girl is also honoring real girls and their accomplishments through the **2008 Real Girl of the Year Award**. Beginning on January 1 and ending on February 29, 2008, parents (as well as legal guardians, coaches, and teachers) are invited to enter online at www.americangirl.com and describe the ways in which the girl in their life demonstrates the values that Mia represents-passion, dedication, and a winning attitude. Three grand prize winners will receive a donation of \$5,000 to the organization in which they are involved, an appearance in the American Girl catalogue and Web site, recognition at an American Girl Place location, and Mia's starter collection. Six finalists will receive Mia's starter collection and have their story featured on americangirl.com, along with twelve honorable mention winners.

About Mia

A beautifully crafted 18-inch Mia doll-featuring long, layered red hair, green eyes, freckles, and skating-inspired attire-brings the new character to life for girls. Mia's outfits and accessories consist of everything she needs for her busy life on and off the ice, including a practice outfit and ice rink, a performance outfit for her big skating event, and a pajama set and bedroom furniture to keep her well-rested. And for girls who want to achieve Mia's look, Dress Like Your Doll® outfits are also available.

The Mia books-*Mia* and *Bravo, Mia!*-were written by acclaimed author Laurence Yep and introduce readers to Mia St. Clair, a 10-year-old girl growing up in upstate New York. Mia grew up playing ice hockey with her three older brothers on the pond behind their house, but recently she has decided to pursue her dream of becoming a figure skater. Responsible and hardworking, Mia spends a lot of her time at the ice rink, where she helps out after school in exchange for ice time. Mia starts working with a new coach and discovers just how much it's going to take for her to grow and skate competitively.

A section at the back of each book includes letters from real girls who, like Mia, are learning to develop their talents and to compete in healthy ways, demonstrating to readers that they, too, can achieve their highest aspirations if they believe in themselves.

The Mia doll, books, and accessories will be available on **January 1, 2008**, through American Girl's consumer catalogue, at www.americangirl.com, at American Girl Place® Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, and at American Girl's newest retail venue, American Girl Boutique and Bistro™, in Atlanta and Dallas.

Available for only one year or while supplies last, Mia is the sixth in a series of contemporary characters that give voice to a diverse range of personalities and backgrounds and show girls today that there is no limit to what they can try to accomplish. To request a free catalogue, call **1-800-845-0005**.

About American Girl

American Girl, Inc., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mattel, Inc. (NYSE:MAT, www.mattel.com), the world's leading toy company. Since American Girl's inception in 1986, the company has devoted its entire business to celebrating the potential of girls ages 3 to 12. American Girl encourages girls to dream, to grow, to aspire, to create, and to imagine through a wide range of engaging and insightful books, age-appropriate and educational products, and unforgettable experiences. In meeting its mission with a vigilant eye toward quality and service, American Girl has earned the loyal following of millions of girls and the praise and trust of parents and educators. To learn more about American Girl or to request a free catalogue, call **1-800-845-0005** or visit www.americangirl.com.

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