

Toys & Family Entertainment

What's
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MORE

ENTERTAINMENT MARKETPLACE

14 TOYS & FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT JUNE 2009

OUT OF THE BLUE ENTERPRISES

BY LAURIE HAHN

Alpha Pig, Princess Presto, Wonder Red, and Super Why don't sound like your typical superheroes, but that's just what they are. Well, Super Readers, actually. These four characters are the alter egos of The Littlest Pig, Little Red Riding Hood, Princess Pea, and Whyatt on the preschool series *Super WHY!* and their aim is to help children develop the skills they need to learn how to read. The characters, each with its own literary power, interact with traditional storybooks to find answers to everyday problems.



Super WHY! is the first original program from Out of the Blue Enterprises, led by Angela C. Santomero, the Emmy-nominated co-creator of *Blue's Clues*, and Samantha Freeman, a former Nickelodeon executive. Functioning on the premise that reading is power, *Super WHY!* engages viewers by using interactive literacy games that need kids to play.

Each 24-minute reading adventure begins in Storybrook Village, a 3-D world hidden behind the bookshelves in a chil-

dren's library. The Super Readers solve real-life problems by transforming into literacy-powered superheroes and flying inside books to find out how famous fictional characters (the Big Bad Wolf, Hansel and Gretel) handled similar problems. Once the fictional problem is solved, the Super Readers decode the Super Story Answer on their Super Duper Computer to find out how to realistically solve their own problem.

Since debuting in the U.S. on PBS Kids in September 2007, the show has been one of the top 10 shows nationally with kids ages 2-5, according to Nielsen Media Research. To complement the show's popularity among preschoolers, Out of the Blue began a Super WHY! licensing program that brings the fun of the show to a variety of products. Licensees include Kids Headquarters, Handcraft, Global Design Concepts, H.E.R. Accessories, Pan Oceanic, Berkshire Fashions, The First Years, Disguise, DecoPak, and Giddy Up.

On June 13, the retail launch of master toy licensee Learning Curve's toy line arrives at Toys "R" Us stores. Every Toys "R" Us in the U.S. will host exclusive two-hour Super WHY! events, featuring storytelling, reading-focused games, activities, and giveaways. Additional new products from licensees Grosset & Dunlap, University Games, and PBS Home Video will also be available. In August, Super WHY! toys will roll out to other retailers, bringing the power of reading to kids in new ways.

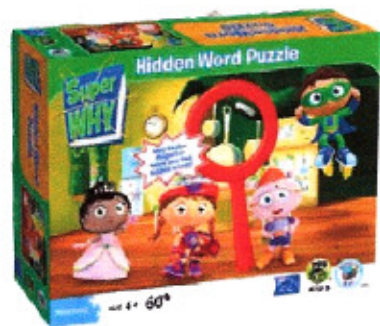


NEED TO KNOW

- Angela Santomero created *Super WHY!* as her master's thesis at Teachers College, Columbia University—before her work on *Blue's Clues*.
- More than 65 week-long Super WHY! reading camps will be held in 20 U.S. markets this summer.
- *Super WHY!* was nominated for a 2008 Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Preschool Children's Series.
- Many families send Out of the Blue photos of homemade Super WHY! cakes, costumes, birthday invitations, and toys.

UNIVERSITY GAMES

Use detective skills to find the hidden words within University Games' 60-piece Super WHY! puzzles. Kids must put together these puzzles and then seek out the 30 words hidden within the puzzle scene using their Why-Finder magnifiers (one is included in each puzzle.) The puzzles measure 10 inches x 13 inches when completed. They are for ages 4 and up.



LEARNING CURVE

As master toy licensee, Learning Curve's line of products based on *Super WHY!* consists of plush, roleplay sets, action figures and dolls, vehicles, and electronic learning aids. Take Super Why along on a reading adventure as he comes to life in this plastic action figure. Super Why comes with his signature Why Writer that spins, a detachable Super Duper Handheld Computer, and a detachable super hero cape. The action figure is for ages 3 and up.



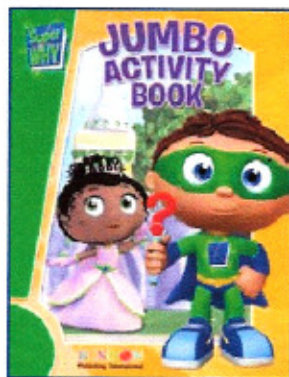
PBS HOME VIDEO

Kids can follow the adventures of the Super Readers whenever they want with Super WHY! DVDs from PBS Home Video, distributed by Paramount Home Entertainment. *The Three Little Pigs & Jack and the Beanstalk* DVD features two episodes—"The Three Little Pigs," and "Jack and the Beanstalk."



BENDON PUBLISHING

Bendon Publishing will produce a variety of activity books that include stickers and posters. Also in the lineup are card games with reward stickers. Bendon will also produce a Reward Sticker Activity Book that includes learning activities and certificates, as well as more than 100 stickers.



GROSSET & DUNLAP

Grosset & Dunlap, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group, will produce Super WHY! books. *Jack and the Beanstalk* includes three gatefolds with fun literacy activities. Other books include *Little Red Riding Hood* and *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. The books are for ages 3-5.

