



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kids of the World, Unite: Play Online & Help Plant Real Trees

TORONTO (June 16, 2010) – A new virtual world for kids launches today that not only entertains with fun games and activities, it also delivers a real world benefit in the form of more trees for Planet Earth.

As kids play on www.arbopals.com, tree-plantings are funded in 21 countries. And in recognition of the recent earthquake in Haiti, users can go on a special virtual world “quest” that, when successfully completed, will result in trees being planted in that devastated country. Arbopals is hoping to plant some 10,000 trees in Haiti.

Arbopals has teamed up with Trees For The Future (TFTF) in this special initiative. “We are thrilled to partner with Arbopals on the *Haiti Tree Quest* because it will engage young people everywhere in helping to address a very critical situation,” says Leandro Monteiro of TFTF. “The country is in desperate need of forest and fruit trees to support its people.”

The brainchild of Peter O’Brien, Arbopals has its roots in his experience in the re-forestation movement and in his daughter’s passion for online games. “We believe there is a strong desire – among kids, parents and teachers internationally – to connect online games and social networking with real world activities that help the environment. We want to make tree-planting as easy as child’s play,” O’Brien explains.

Arbopals is hoping to plant millions of trees in dozens of countries as the site becomes a favourite destination for an increasing number of children throughout the world.

In this online playground, children create avatars that safely interact with one another, enjoy games, participate in creative activities, and learn about the trees and forests of the world. The site is designed for kids 5 to 10 years of age, although users of all ages are encouraged to visit the site. Trees get planted when specific adventures and games are played, when users subscribe, and when merchandise is purchased through the site.

Arbopals is at the forefront of a new generation of international for-profit “social ventures” that provide goods in the market for the purpose of creating both a social and financial return.

Recognizing that many virtual worlds and websites for kids focus on consumerism and, as users get older, on violence, Arbopals presents a welcome alternative. “The site is a great way to encourage young people around the world to get involved with important environmental issues,” notes Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers* and one of the world's leading environmentalists.

According to the United Nations, 14 billion trees need to be planted every year for 10 consecutive years to compensate for the damage that modern societies have done to the environment.

Arbopals Inc. is based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The developer of the site is InfiniteSpaces, the Virtual World Design Centre at Loyalist College in Belleville, Ontario.

Arbopals also benefits from the advice and direction of a “green-ribbon” Advisory Council of international experts including Australia-based Tim Flannery (noted above), Anne Collier (based in Salt Lake City, UT, Anne is co-chair of the Online Safety & Technology Working Group appointed by the Obama administration), Dave Deppner (Founder of Trees For The Future, based in Silver Spring, MD), Josephine Okot (Founder and Managing Director of Victoria Seeds, based in Uganda, which delivers quality seed to small-hold farmers in various African countries), Ingrid Lemman Stefanovic (Director of the University of Toronto Centre for Environment), and Geoff Cape (Executive Director of Toronto-based Evergreen).

For the media:

***Special Media Passes* are available that provide unrestricted access to all areas of the virtual world. And if you’ve got kids aged 5-10, have them check it out too! Please call or email the contact below.**

For our media kit, which includes downloadable Arbopals logos, go to www.arbopals.com/media.

For interviews with Arbopals CEO Peter O’Brien and TFTF spokesperson Leandro Monteiro, contact:

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