



## **Project Play Announces Children's Contest To "Become A Character" in the Next Book**

*Winner's character will star alongside the "Edgebrook Gang" as they  
inspire kids to get out and play nostalgic backyard games*

**NILES, Illinois, January 4, 2010**—Project Play, a movement inspiring kids to get off the couch and into the backyard through a series of lively children's books, today announced its "Become A Character" contest. Open to children ages 6 through 12, the contest encourages kids to create an interesting character in their own likeness and submit an entry detailing their funniest story about a favorite backyard game.

The contest winner, announced in June 2010, will see his or her character illustrated and brought to life in a book in author Marlene Byrne's engaging Project Play series. The winner will also receive \$100 and a signed copy of the series of books.

"The Edgebrook Gang characters in the Project Play stories each have colorful personality traits and strengths that children can really relate to," said Byrne, who has currently published four books in the series. "Readers of all ages are bursting with ideas for games based on what they like to play with their friends. This contest is a chance for them to see themselves brought to life as one of the Edgebrook kids."

The mother of two young children, Byrne realized that electronic models of play, organized sports and extra-curricular activities were quickly taking over classic, backyard games and began the series to demonstrate the value of simple, yet critical unstructured play.

Said Byrne, "Old-fashioned games like 'kick the can' and 'ghost in the graveyard' teach children so much about teamwork, creativity and having fun, and most importantly, get them off the couch and active with their friends. The characters in the books show kids how to play these games, round up their friends and start their own backyard adventures."

Beginning January 4, 2010, children and their parents can visit [www.ProjectPlayBooks.com](http://www.ProjectPlayBooks.com) to download and print the entry form and contest rules. All entries must be completed and postmarked by May 15, 2010. One winner will be announced at a Project Play event in June and will be notified upon selection. Entries will be judged by a panel of five judges using a combination of criteria. No purchase is necessary to enter, and the winner's legal guardian will be required to sign a contest waiver if their child's entry is selected. The winner will be required to submit a photo of themselves. Complete rules are available on the website.



### **About the Author**

With more than 20 years of industry experience as an advertising agency owner, Byrne is well-versed in the art of creativity. She attributes her success to education (she received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), great mentors and the creativity of her youth. In 2008, Byrne began brainstorming ways to help families understand the importance of unstructured playtime and feeling good, not guilty, about their kids just playing in the backyard. She is driven by her belief that it is as equally important to be creative as it is to be smart, and that creativity begins developing during playful childhood experiences. Project Play is a new way to spark creativity on a daily basis and inspire a new generation of courageous leaders and thoughtful problem-solvers.

### **About Project Play**

Founded in 2008, Project Play is about teaching children traditional backyard games in order to encourage play that fosters the imagination and sparks creativity. Through a series of lively children's books, the project introduces nostalgic games to today's kids, inspiring them to get out and play the way the characters do—by modifying the rules, coming up with new playing strategies, and supporting one another in backyard play. Each book comes with the matching game rules and features Sam and the Edgebrook gang as they use their imaginations and creativity to navigate growing up together. The series is split into two age groups: hardcover picture books for toddlers and paperback, chapter-books for slightly older children. For more information about the books and how to order, visit [www.ProjectPlayBooks.com](http://www.ProjectPlayBooks.com).

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