

## 2009 Is The Year To Get 'Happy Squared' As Nickelodeon Celebrates 10 Years Of SpongeBob SquarePants

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif., Jan 09, 2009 -- Year-long Celebration of Pop Culture Icon will Include Production of SpongeBob SquarePants Documentary; First-Ever Live Cast Performance; New SpongeBob Vertical Online Site; Episode Premieres; and "Seinfeld-esque" TV Movie in November Yellow is the new black in 2009 as Nickelodeon plans to make fans 'Happy Squared' all year long in honor of SpongeBob SquarePants' 10th anniversary. Since its launch in July 1999, SpongeBob SquarePants has emerged as a pop-culture phenomenon with 70 million viewers monthly, and has been the number-one animated program with Kids 2-11 for more than seven consecutive years. The show is seen in 171 markets in 25 languages and is the most widely distributed property in MTV Networks' history.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090109/NY57222-a>)

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090109/NY57222-b>)

Top-ranked kids' show SpongeBob SquarePants will make its dry-land debut in Park City, Utah, during the 2009 Film Festival with the first-ever SpongeBob live cast performance, on Jan. 18. Nickelodeon will keep the honors flowing with a new fan website for all things SpongeBob; a first-ever SpongeBob documentary; a new SpongeBob and water conservation-themed element to the network's The Big Green Help pro-social campaign; special TV events; and new lines of apparel, jewelry, toys, games and DVDs.

"SpongeBob has been a gift that keeps on giving to kids and adults alike with its infectious sense of humor, joy and boundless optimism," said Cyma Zarghami, President, Nickelodeon and MTVN Kids and Family Group. "After 10 years, the show remains on top of its game and at the top of the ratings, and we're paying tribute with all kinds of content across our platforms to give our audience ample opportunity to enjoy SpongeBob throughout the year."

SpongeBob SquarePants' voice-actors will perform a live reading of a never-before-seen episode, "SpongeBob vs. The Big One," accompanied by a visual presentation and celebrity guest appearances, for invited guests at the Village at the Yard venue in Park City, Utah on Jan. 18. Also to mark the anniversary, Nickelodeon has commissioned the first full-length original TV documentary which will chronicle the beloved character's evolution to international pop culture icon status. The documentary will be telecast across MTV Networks' various TV platforms to commemorate the anniversary of the series' first episode. Over the last 10 years, the porous brainchild of creator Steve Hillenburg has grown from a single Saturday morning kids' show to a certified pop culture maverick that has inspired nothing less than fun and frenzy around the world. Soaking up everything from clothing to controversy, the show has inspired people to deeply identify with the characters, to adorn themselves with SpongeBob tattoos, to use SpongeBob products to save lives and even, occasionally, to vandalize and politicize the character; but most of all, to kick back, laugh and relax.

Additionally, today (Jan. 9), Nickelodeon will launch a new vertical SpongeBob fan site in beta -- <http://www.spongebob.com> -- the ultimate online destination where fans of all ages around the world can soak up all things SpongeBob. Both adults and kids will find an abundance of absorbing activity on the site including: an age-appropriate community, complete with personalized profiles, chat features and playlists; the ability to search for favorite SpongeBob moments or comment on the funniest videos; or a new mini-game every week. More than 300 searchable SpongeBob video clips from every episode of the series will be available on the site at launch, as well as a selection of full-length episodes from each season and brand-new episodes immediately following their on-air premieres. Fans can also participate in the backstage area featuring a creator's blog and interviews; play the more than 100 SpongeBob-themed games; or subscribe to the "Daily Affirmation," providing SpongeBob's thought of the day.

Nickelodeon's celebration will continue with new episodes throughout the year. A week of new premieres will air in March including "Grandpappy The Pirate," featuring guest-star Dennis Quaid as Mr. Krabs' grandfather. In April, the half-hour TV special, "SpongeBob vs. The Big One," follows SpongeBob, Patrick, Squidward and Mr. Krabs as they find themselves stranded on a remote island. The pals travel to the heart of the island where they meet an enigmatic surf guru named Jack Kahuna Laguna (voiced by guest-star Johnny Depp) who tells them that the only way back to Bikini Bottom is to surf the legendary wave -- The Big One. And in November, Nick will debut an hour-long TV movie event which finds SpongeBob, Patrick, Squidward and Mr. Krabs locked inside a giant freezer on the night of the Krusty Krab's anniversary celebration. While trapped, the friends look back on shared memories with "shocking" reveals -- similar to the iconic Seinfeld episode.

SpongeBob will also be featured as part of Nick's ongoing pro-social campaign, The Big Green Help. This year, the campaign will devote much of 2009 to raising awareness about the oceans and water conservation through SpongeBob and You Save the Big Blue -- in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Save the Big Blue public service announcements will air on Nickelodeon throughout 2009 and educational activities and programs will take place at various aquariums and zoos across the country this summer. NRDC and NWF also will raise awareness with their members and incorporate Save the Big Blue messaging into their local grassroots activities.

SpongeBob SquarePants is executive produced by creator Stephen Hillenburg, who previously worked as a writer, director and

creative director on Nickelodeon's animated series Rocko's Modern Life. Hillenburg graduated from the California Institute of the Arts with a master's degree in experimental animation and studied marine biology and art as an undergraduate.

Paul Tibbitt served as a director and writer on SpongeBob SquarePants for its first three seasons and is currently executive producer. He wrote some of the show's most memorable episodes such as "Ripped Pants" and "Mermaid Man & Barnacle Boy." Tibbitt was one of the co-writers and storyboard artists on The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie. SpongeBob SquarePants is a Nicktoons Production and is produced at the Nickelodeon Animation Studios in Burbank, Calif.

Nickelodeon, now in its 30th year, is the number-one entertainment brand for kids. It has built a diverse, global business by putting kids first in everything it does. The company includes television programming and production in the United States and around the world, plus consumer products, online, recreation, books, magazines and feature films. Nickelodeon's U.S. television network is seen in more than 98 million households and has been the number-one-rated basic cable network for 14 consecutive years. For more information or artwork, visit <http://www.nickpress.com>. Nickelodeon and all related titles, characters and logos are trademarks of Viacom Inc. (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B).

SOURCE Nickelodeon

<http://www.nickpress.com>