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**PBS KIDS Announces CARL THE COLLECTOR, Its First Series Centering on**

**Autistic Characters**

*New Animated Series Created by* New York Times *Bestselling Illustrator and Author Zachariah OHora to Debut in Fall 2024*

**Arlington, VA, November 9, 2023** – [**PBS KIDS**](http://www.pbskids.org/) today announced **CARL THE COLLECTOR**, an animated series for children ages 4-8and its first show featuring a lead character on the autism spectrum. The new series was created by *New York Times* best-selling illustrator and author Zachariah OHora (“My Cousin Momo!”) and is produced by Fuzzytown Productions and Spiffy Pictures. Through its stories, the series celebrates the diverse ways kids think and express themselves, while helping them develop a strong sense of self and community. **CARL THE COLLECTOR** is slated to premiere in Fall 2024 on PBS KIDS.

“**CARL THE COLLECTOR** values inclusion and empathy, while modeling relationship-building and social skill development, wrapped up in humor, heart, and incredible visual design,” said Sara DeWitt, Senior Vice President and General Manager, PBS KIDS. “We are excited for children to get to know Carl and his group of friends, who believe that the best experiences occur when we honor the things that make each of us unique.”

"My hope for Carl and his diverse group of Fuzzytown friends is that they will inspire neurodiverse and neurotypical kids alike to foster a world in which neurodiversity is not only recognized as a benefit to society, but is celebrated as exemplifying the full spectrum of what it means to be human," said Creator and Executive Producer, Zachariah OHora.

**CARL THE COLLECTOR** follows the everyday adventures of Carl, a warm-hearted autistic raccoon who loves collecting things. His talents – a laser-focus pursuit of his goals, attention to detail, and a distinctive way of looking at and experiencing the world around him – have helped him amass a collection for just about every occasion (e.g., the perfect fake mustache or a soft plushie for a friend in need), and come in handy for solving problems around the neighborhood with his friends. Carl has a lot of energy and is logical and precise, yet he often struggles with anxiety in new situations and has difficulty when things don’t go according to plan. Like all of his friends, he is learning that there is no right or wrong way to be himself.

Carl’s friends include both neurotypical and neurodiverse characters, each with different traits, behaviors, learning preferences, and challenges. In Fuzzytown, everyone is coming to understand something about themselves and each other. Carl’s best friend, Sheldon, is a beaver who is a flexible thinker with a knack for connecting people and looking out for the underdog. Lotta, a quiet and self-assured fox, artist, and musician, is also autistic. She experiences hypersensitivity to loud sounds, powerful smells, and certain food textures. Nico and Arugula are twin bunny sisters who, despite being identical in appearance, couldn’t be more different in personality. And Forrest, a hyperactive and impulsive squirrel with a tree nut allergy, is always up for an adventure – the more unexpected, the better.

“In today’s world, inclusivity and representation in programming is more important than ever, especially for the youngest of viewers,” said Caroline Bandolik, Supervising Producer and Vice President of Production for Spiffy Pictures. “We instantly fell in love with this beautiful Fuzzytown world Zachariah created, filled with engaging and relatable characters and funny, heartfelt stories.”

**CARL THE COLLECTOR** was created by Zachariah OHora and is produced byFuzzytown Productions and Spiffy Pictures (DONKEY HODIE, NATURE CAT). The series is animated by Emmy®- and Annie Award-nominated Yowza! Animation (WELCOME TO THE WAYNE, GREEN EGGS AND HAM). Caroline Bandolik (NATURE CAT, DONKEY HODIE) is Supervising Producer. Jesse McMahon (NATURE CAT, CYBERCHASE, MAGIC SCHOOL BUS RIDES AGAIN) is Content Producer. Adam Rudman (NATURE CAT, DONKEY HODIE, SESAME STREET), Emmy®-winning writer and co-founder of Spiffy Pictures, is Head Writer. The team of contributing writers include the Emmy®-nominated television and picture book writer Samantha Berger, advocate and actress Ava X. Rigelhaupt, the Emmy®-winning writer, director, and puppeteer Joey Mazzarino, and award-winning children’s book authors Kelly DiPucchio, and Bob Shea.

The series brings together a diverse production team of neurodiverse and neurotypical writers, advisors, and voice talent. Advisors include Dr. Geraldine Oades-Sese, Ph.D, a licensed psychologist, children’s book author, and Adjunct Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; Dr. Stephen Shore, Professor at Adelphi University and adjunct professor at New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development; and Deborah Farmer Kris, M.A., educator, author, parenting columnist, and consultant for PBS KIDS for Parents.

“As an autistic person, I continue to be amazed at the level of detail and effort the team expends to assure that Carl and Lotta are authentic to the autistic experience,” said Dr. Stephen Shore. “In addition to being an interesting series, **CARL THE COLLECTOR** will become a great tool for both autistic and non-autistic people to gain insight on autism. Although designed for young kids, I plan on using relevant excerpts to supplement my university teaching and presentations around the world.”

“It is about time for a children's show like **CARL THE COLLECTOR**, which embraces the diversity of children's experiences and showcases an inclusive and relatable world,” said Dr. Geraldine Oades-Sese, Ph.D. “The show doesn’t shy away from having its main characters experience common mental health challenges such as anxiety, fear, sadness, and the need for acceptance and belonging. Carl and his Fuzzytown friends take viewers on fun and humorous adventures that will help them understand and empathize with the characters, and ultimately, extend that understanding and compassion for others.”

**About PBS KIDS**

PBS KIDS believes the world is full of possibilities, and so is every child. As the number one educational media brand for kids, PBS KIDS helps children ages 2-8 learn lessons that last a lifetime. Through media and community-based programs, PBS KIDS wants children to see themselves uniquely reflected and celebrated in lovable, diverse characters who serve as positive role models, and to explore their feelings and discover new adventures along the way. Families can [stream PBS KIDS for free anytime](https://help.pbs.org/support/solutions/12000004780), no subscription required. A large collection of mobile apps and [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/) provide accessible content that spark kids’ curiosity. PBS KIDS and local stations across the country support the entire ecosystem in which children learn and grow – including their teachers and caregivers, parents, and community – providing resources accessible anytime and anywhere. For more information, visit [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom), or follow PBS KIDS on [Twitter](http://twitter.com/pbskids), [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/pbskids) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/pbskids).

**About Fuzzytown**

Is the production company for film and tv projects that are a natural and fuzzy outgrowth of the creative mind of New York Times bestselling illustrator Zachariah OHora. He is the author and illustrator of a number of award winning books including *The Today Show* featured parent trap for cats epic *Niblet & Ralph, My Cousin Momo!*, *The Not So Quiet Library,*and *Fuzzy, (Inside & Out).*He created the Rivian Gear Guard™ character seen in Rivian electric vehicles the world over, and his illustrations have appeared in The New York Times, The Atlantic, NPR, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and for campaigns for public libraries and the National Park Service. For more information, visit [www.fuzzy.town](http://www.fuzzy.town).

**About Spiffy Pictures**

Founded by brothers, David Rudman and Adam Rudman, Spiffy Pictures is a creative development and production company specializing in both animated and live-action puppet-based entertainment for kids and families. Known for its whimsical humor- and music-filled shows, the inventive award-winning Chicago-based company has created, produced, written, and directed series for PBS KIDS, Nickelodeon, Disney, MTV, Comedy Central, Sesame Street and Warner Brothers. Their projects include PBS KIDS’ critically acclaimed Donkey *Hodie*, a co-production with Fred Rogers Productions; PBS KIDS' Emmy® Award-nominated and Environmental Media Award-winning animated series *Nature Cat;* Nick Jr.'s Emmy® Award and Prix Jeunesse-nominated *Jack’s Big Music Show;* Disney's Emmy® Award-nominated *Bunnytown;* and Nick Jr.’s Parent’s Choice Award-winning *Curious Buddies*. The company's additional credits include Warner Brothers' *Scooby-Doo! Adventures: The Mystery Map* and Nick Worldwide's *Frankie and Frank*. For more information, visit [www.spiffypictures.com](http://www.spiffypictures.com).

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**Contacts:**  
Lubna Abuulbah, PBS KIDS; 703-739-8463; [pbskidspr@pbs.org](mailto:labuulbah@pbs.org)   
Alison Grand, Grand Communications; 212-584-1133; [alison@grandcommunications.com](mailto:alison@grandcommunications.com)  
Gabrielle Torello, Grand Communications; 917-312-2832; [gab@grandcommunications.com](mailto:gab@grandcommunications.com)