



The **WALT DISNEY** Company  
Europe, Middle East & Africa

## **DISNEY JUNIOR GREENLIGHTS NEW ANIMATED ORIGINAL PRODUCTION THE HAPPY HUGGLEMONSTERS**

**19 December, 2011-** Disney EMEA today announced that it has greenlit a brand new CG animated pre-school series, *The Happy Hugglemonsters*. Set to premiere on Disney Junior from autumn 2012 and air in more than 150 countries worldwide, the series follows the adventures of fun-loving, five-year-old Henry Hugglemonster, the middle child in a happy, wacky close-knit monster family – The Hugglemonsters.

Produced by twice Oscar-nominated animation studio, Brown Bag Films in Dublin, Ireland, *The Happy Hugglemonsters* is the latest series being developed and produced by Disney's London based production hub. Led by Beth Gardiner, Vice President, Production, Disney Junior, the Disney team is working with Brown Bag Films to deliver the 52 x 11 minute series - developed from a series of books created by Niamh Sharkey called "I'm a Happy Hugglewug" and published by Walker Books. The illustration style of the books is retained in the series' CG animation.

Each 11 minute story transports preschoolers into the world of Henry Hugglemonster as he guides the preschool audience through the ups and downs of being part of a loving, bustling monster family. The series is directed by Emmy Award winning director Norton Virgien (*Rugrats*, *Doc McStuffins*), the lead writer is Sascha Paladino (*Wonder Pets*, *Ni-Hao Kai-Lan*) and the series is produced by Gillian Higgins (*Doc McStuffins*, *The Octonauts*).

Beth Gardiner Vice President, Production & Development, Disney Junior EMEA, comments:

"We are thrilled to welcome The Happy Hugglemonsters to the Disney Junior fold. Seen through our five year old hero Henry Hugglemonster's eyes, the series delivers comedic and emotional storytelling with a monstery twist that pre-schoolers can really relate to; perfect for Disney Junior."

Cathal Gaffney, co-founder and CEO of Brown Bag Films said:

"We are delighted to announce the production of this series, it is great to work with home grown talent like Niamh Sharkey and to bring an original idea like this to a global Disney Junior audience is hugely satisfying for all involved", "This series will see over 40 additional staff employed full time in Brown Bag Films over the coming 18 months and demonstrates how the creative economy has such an important role to play for Ireland."

Niamh Sharkey said

"I am thrilled to be working with Brown Bag Films to bring my characters to life; the creativity, enthusiasm and care they bring to the project is mind blowing. Making this show for Disney Junior is a dream come true, and to be able to create this show in Ireland is the icing on the cake. I know my monster family is in safe hands!"

Created in May 2007, the EMEA production hub drives the investment in and development of long form animation outside of North America, for both European and global distribution. It has already achieved great success with series such as UK-produced *Jungle Junction*, which has proved to be a huge hit with Disney Junior audiences internationally. The series has now rolled out in more than 150 countries worldwide winning a BAFTA nomination and 22 million viewers in EMEA alone.

## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About Disney Junior:**

The newly branded, learning-focused Disney Junior reflects the emotional connection generations of consumers have to Disney storytelling and Disney characters, both classic and contemporary. Disney Junior's programming invites mum and dad to join their child in the Disney experience of magical, musical and heartfelt stories and characters, while incorporating specific learning and development themes designed for kids age 2-7. Disney Junior's animated and live action series blend Disney's unparalleled storytelling and characters kids love deeply with learning, including early math, language skills, healthy eating and lifestyles, and social skills. Through its combination of animated and live-action programming, Disney Junior inspires learning through play, from early maths and language skills, to healthy lifestyles with an emphasis on social and emotional development. It celebrates childhood by encouraging children to laugh, sing, dance, and above all – have fun. From the earliest phase of programme development, Disney employs education and child development experts who review every premise and script before the development phase. Working closely alongside parents, the Disney Junior brand vision was created and ensures all content is mum-approved.

### **About The Walt Disney Company in Europe Middle East and Africa:**

The Walt Disney Company (TWDC) is a leading diversified international family entertainment and media enterprise with five business segments: media networks, parks and resorts, studio entertainment, consumer products and its interactive media group.

### **About Brown Bag Films:**

Brown Bag Films® is an award-winning animation studio, producing high quality character animation and is located in the heart Dublin city, Ireland with an office in Los Angeles, California. In 2002, their short film *Give Up Yer Aul Sins* was nominated for an Academy Award® and this was repeated in 2010 when *Granny O'Grimm's Sleeping Beauty*® was also Oscar® nominated for Best Animated Short.

Brown Bag Films® have worked on a number of high profile international series with recent productions including *Noddy in Toyland*, *Olivia* and the BAFTA nominated *The Octonauts*. Established in 1994 by Cathal Gaffney and Darragh O'Connell, and as a result of this production Brown Bag Films employ now over 100 full time staff. Brown Bag Films® have a slate of original television and family feature properties in active development. [www.brownbagfilms.com](http://www.brownbagfilms.com)

### **About Niamh Sharkey**

Niamh Sharkey is an award-winning author and illustrator of children's picture books. Her books have won numerous awards including the prestigious Mother Goose Award and The Bisto Book of the Year. Niamh's books have been translated into over twenty languages. Her current titles with Walker Books include *The Ravenous Beast*, *Santasaurus* and her new title *On the Road with Mavis and Marge* which won the Junior Book of the Year at the Irish Book Awards. Niamh lives in Dublin, Ireland with her family. More info about Niamh's past, present and future can be found at [www.niamhsharkey.com](http://www.niamhsharkey.com)