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**NEW JERSEY INVENTORS CREATE NEW GAME
THAT AIDS SPECIAL NEED CHILDREN**

Local Inventors Mary and Gregg Pembleton create Thumball™ that has proven highly effective for children with Autism and Learning Difficulties

Maple Shade, New Jersey- June, 2007- Mary and Gregg Pembleton announce the positive effects of their invention- Thumball™, on children with special needs.

Thumball™ is a “pleasingly squeezable” ball with something printed on each of its panels. Players throw it, catch it, look under their thumb, and then react to it- by answering a question or identifying what’s printed on the panel under their thumb. Thumball™ transforms the ball, a toy everyone knows and loves, into a playful interactive tool.

Students with learning challenges and conditions including autism, emotional disturbance and communication impairments successfully respond to Thumball™ with increased verbal expression, improved social interaction and better mood and focus.

“Special needs children need to work longer and harder than other children,” states Mary Pembleton, creator of Thumball™. “Utilizing Thumball™ makes lessons fun and reduces the frustration that can build up. All children love playing with a ball, especially special needs children who find Thumball™ to be an exciting way to communicate and learn.”

Children with autism can have difficulty with social interactions, understanding subtle vocal and facial cues and maintaining eye contact with others. Education and communication can become stressful but using Thumball™ allows these children to interact in a non-threatening way. While Thumball promotes ball skills, turn taking and soothing sensory input, it does so without requiring direct or continuous eye contact. Children can feel more independent and in control and can choose to use the Thumball

independently for the valuable input on each panel or they can seek out others to interact with. There are endless adaptations that can be tried to suit all players needs. This translates into positive interactions and increased opportunities for learning and communicating.

“The Emotion Mania ball has been particularly successful,” says Gregg Pembleton, co-creator of Thumball™. “Children with emotional problems opened right up while playing it and by getting other people to act out the facial expressions and gestures all children can learn them too!”

The Thumball™ Range

The Pembletons and their company, Answers in Motion, LLC, have created a diverse range of Thumball™ models for different age groups, with 13 currently being sold in various retail stores across the country. New lines are constantly being developed, including collectible and limited edition ranges.

Thumball™ for **grown-ups** includes an Ice Breaker ball and Category ball to help people get to know partners and friends better, get people talking and improve relationships. There is also an Answer Mania ball that is Thumball™’s fun way to get answers to serious or fanciful questions.

Thumball™ for **early learners** includes ABC, Numbers, Shapes and Animals balls to improve early learning skills in vocabulary, coordination and visual perception. The bright colors used have been known to stimulate a child’s brain and cognition, and the soft design with no removable parts ensures safety.

Thumball™ for **kids and young adults** includes a children’s version of the Ice Breaker ball called Who Are You?, an Emotion Mania ball that makes it easy to teach young children about different feelings, and a Soccer mania ball that helps teach key soccer terms and moves. Brothers & sisters, parents and children also play Thumball™ at home, connecting in a fun new way without gadgets or gizmos.

About the Pembletons

Mary Pembleton (née Miller), a speech therapist for students with special needs and learning disabilities for over 22 years, came up with the Thumball™ concept in class one day when she realized her students were bored with the daily lessons and how much time was lost in policing behavior. Seeking to add an element of fun, Pembleton introduced a home-made ball with categories written out in marker and the reception it received was tremendous.

As business partners, and now spouses, Gregg and Mary Pembleton developed the concept & patent, and found a way to have Thumball™ manufactured, making different versions to promote other skills including speech sounds, nouns, verbs, adjectives and grammar skills. They have even auditioned the Thumball™ game for QVC and the Oprah Winfrey show!

For more information, visit <http://www.thumball.com/press> or call 732-267-7792.

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