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## **Sharpie(R) Ups Its Game to Provide the Ultimate Autograph Experience**



**Sharpie unveils its exclusive "celebrity edition" marker worth \$10,000 Friday in Miami, to provide consumers with the ultimate autograph experience prior to football's biggest game. Featuring 1,300 Swarovski crystals and 65 perfect-cut diamonds, the marker will be auctioned for charity starting Feb. 6. The debut marks the launch of Sharpie's Autographs for Action program, which enlists celebrities and others to collect one million autographs in exchange for \$1 million in funding and supplies to charity. (PRNewsFoto/Sharpie)**

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**Exclusive 'Celebrity Edition' markers unveiled in Miami to launch Sharpie 'Autographs for Action' campaign**

OAK BROOK, Ill., Jan. 29 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Ready for the ultimate autograph experience? Sharpie(R) is offering an opportunity to connect with the stars -- literally. The popular brand of permanent markers known as the autograph pen of choice plans to unveil a one-of-a-kind Sharpie marker worth more than \$10,000 in Miami during the week leading up to football's biggest game. Featuring more than 1,300 Swarovski(R) crystals and 65 perfect-cut Hearts on Fire diamonds, the "Celebrity Edition" Sharpie will be auctioned off for charity starting February 6.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20070129/CLM063>)

The new Celebrity Edition Sharpie is being introduced as the brand launches its "Autographs for Action" program, which aims to secure one million autographs nationwide. In exchange, Sharpie will donate \$1 million in supplies and funds to charities, community organizations and schools across the country. The Autographs for Action program enlists celebrities and professional athletes to inspire the public to make their mark for positive, permanent change.

"From celebrities to fans, Sharpie markers are a memorable part of giving and receiving autographs," said Howard Heckes, president of Sanford, maker of Sharpie. "And what better place to announce this program than in Miami, just before the big game, where fans -- and Sharpie -- will be seeking autographs all weekend."

**Sharpie Makes its Mark on Miami**

In conjunction with America's most watched sporting event, Sharpie is teaming up with Ocean Drive magazine to host a suite at one of the most highly anticipated hospitality events on South Beach -- the Style Villa. The two-story glass structure will entertain a variety of celebrities, athletes, recording artists and trendsetters who will be the first to see the Celebrity Edition Sharpie unveiled by Green Bay's All-Pro wide receiver Donald Driver.

"A simple autograph can make a huge impact," Driver said. "Together, we can improve people's situations and change lives -- all with a signature. Throughout the year, other celebrities will rally together with Sharpie to host Autographs for Action events across the country."

Driver will be the first Sharpie ambassador to submit his autograph for the collection by signing Sharpie's giant Autographs for Action wall on Friday, February 2 at Style Villa. Other celebrities and athletes who donate their signature throughout the weekend will receive their own limited edition, crystal-studded Sharpie.

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Earlier in the week, a fleet of all-terrain vehicles sponsored by Sharpie will blanket Miami collecting autographs. Pittsburgh wide receiver and 2005 big game MVP Hines Ward will solicit autographs, and Driver will host an autograph session with Miami-area school children at the NFL's Youth Education Town to announce the donation by Sharpie of \$10,000 in funds and school supplies to the local educational and recreational facility for youth in at-risk neighborhoods.

Sharpie Leaves its Signature in the Community -- and Across the Country

The Sharpie Autographs for Action program includes a host of activities and presence at high profile events throughout the year. From football's championship and entertainment award shows, to NASCAR races and local festivals, Sharpie will be on hand collecting autographs from celebrities, sports figures and the public. People can also submit their virtual signature at <http://www.sharpie.com> to benefit the cause.

In 2007, the presence of the Sharpie brand in local communities includes visits to 150 schools where Sharpie will award school supplies to students and teachers nationwide. The grassroots efforts will feature the Sharpie mobile tour delivering the products, interactive games, and official entry forms for an education-based signature collection effort. Complete sweepstakes rules and entry methods can be found at retailers nationwide and at <http://www.sharpie.com>.

Inspired in 2002 after wide receiver Terrell Owens pulled a Sharpie marker from his sock during an impromptu end-zone autograph session, Sharpie has been bringing motivation, funds and supplies to local schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other organizations for more than four years. Sharpie celebrity ambassadors have included Dallas wide receiver Terrell Owens, Pittsburgh wide receiver and MVP Hines Ward, NFL Hall of Famers Howie Long and Steve Young, former supermodel turned entrepreneur Kathy Ireland, and country music star Jo Dee Messina, among others.

About Sharpie(R)

For more than 40 years, Sharpie has been the popular brand of permanent marker associated with the autograph experience. Sanford, maker of Sharpie, is a Newell Rubbermaid company, a worldwide leader in the manufacturing and marketing of writing instruments, art products and office organization, including such well known brands as Paper Mate(R), Sharpie(R), DYMO(R), Parker(R), Waterman(R), EXPO(R), Focxy(R), uni-ball(R), and Rolodex(R), among others. Sanford makes more than 6,000 products, ranging from markers, pens and pencils to professional art products, fine writing instruments and office organization products. Visit [sharpie.com](http://sharpie.com) for more information.

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