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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Minde Herbert  
678.907.9073, [minherbert@gmail.com](mailto:minherbert@gmail.com)

**BIGTENT ENABLES GROUPS TO SHARE AND ORGANIZE ONLINE**

**Site users include parents' clubs, neighborhoods, schools, hobbyists, alumni**

**New navigation and design unveiled this week**

Today BigTent opened its doors to the general public and invites all groups to gather under its big tent! BigTent provides a free online gathering place for real world groups such as parents clubs, schools, non-profits, professional associations, alumni, church groups, hobbyists and more. Founded just two years ago, BigTent is now in all 50 states and every major metropolitan area. The easy-to-use online tools include membership management (full rosters with varying degrees of privacy available), discussion forums (via e-mail and online message boards), calendars and event planning with an RSVP function, dues payments and group-specific classified ads. Groups who adopted BigTent have grown an average of 20% within a year, while leaders spend significantly less time on administrative tasks.

"Active community members are stretched to manage the flood of email, websites, paperwork and snail mail it takes to stay 'in-the-know.' They deserve useful technology that simplifies their involvement and encourages participation. We give people a streamlined, one-stop-shop to stay connected with the groups they care about," explained Laney Whitcanack, company founder and social entrepreneur. Laney previously founded the Princess Project, a non-profit group that supplies thousands of prom dresses to girls who need them. Laney knows firsthand how volunteer-powered organizations suffer from a lack of affordable tools.

**BigTent simplifies and saves time**

BigTent addresses technological and administrative challenges for groups of 20 to 5,000 members, including privacy and security, member confusion over multiple log-ins and email fatigue. It automates routine tasks such as membership renewal and dues collection, saving many hours for busy volunteers. Unlike competitive offerings from MSN, Yahoo! or meetup.com that are individual group destination sites, BigTent gives active community members the ability to interact and participate with multiple groups in one easy-to-access website.

"Our transition of 3,000 members from Yahoo! Groups to BigTent went quite smoothly," shared Noopur Pandey, co-president of the Palo Alto-Menlo Park Parents' Club. "It is exciting to see the members using the new features

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such as the classifieds section, which now has almost 800 items for sale, in addition to our lively and informative discussion forums," added Allison Chao, co-president.

The user-friendly interface provides many opportunities for groups and individual members to personalize their BigTent experience. This includes the ability to manage multiple groups and events through BigTent's integrated online calendar; participate in discussion forums; seek and offer recommendations, and buy and sell personal items through online classified ads. Members can choose to participate online or entirely over email through individual messages, daily digests or the "BigTent Blink" newsletter.

### **FREE customer service, streamlined design**

BigTent is the only service of its kind that offers free customer support via e-mail or phone, including offering a "BigTent Coach" to any group who wants one. Coaches are group leaders who help new groups transition, adding valuable insights from their own experience. The company encourages user testing and feedback and strives to meet the needs and desires of its groups, even creating a special BigTent Group for group leaders. After many months of culling feedback and comments, BigTent streamlined its most popular components and unveils a new, cleaner design and more intuitive navigation this week.

"We are excited about BigTent's opportunity and the success they have had so far," commented Nancy Schoendorf, BigTent board member and General Partner at Mohr, Davidow Ventures (MDV). "We believe this has the potential to be the next generation major group platform," added Sonja Hoel Perkins, board member and General Partner at Menlo Ventures. MDV and Menlo are two top tier Venture Capital firms located in Silicon Valley.

Free to its groups and their members, BigTent is supported by advertising and sponsorships. The company offers several programs to local merchants and advertisers who want to reach BigTent's audience with tasteful, value-added information.

### **About BigTent**

BigTent is where trusted groups connect online. The free platform for family-friendly organizations strengthens group involvement and simplifies group management. By combining the best of today's social networking features with group management tools, BigTent helps real-world communities share, communicate and organize online and in-person. Founded in 2006, the company is headquartered in San Francisco and currently hosts parents groups, PTAs, schools, neighborhood groups, hobby clubs, professional and alumni associations, and other community groups nationwide. For more information about BigTent, please visit: [www.bigtent.com](http://www.bigtent.com)

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