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## The Furniture Trust hosts 6th Annual Eco-Carpentry Challenge

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Boston, MA The Furniture Trust, a nonprofit committed to the responsible reuse of excess office furniture, held an exhibition of up-cycled products designed and built by local high school students during their 6th Annual Eco-Carpentry Challenge at District Hall. The Eco-Carpentry Challenge is The Furniture Trust's annual event designed to promote creativity and recycling. Every year, used office furniture donated by local businesses is delivered to high schools and students are encouraged to use teamwork, imagination and carpentry skills to transform these materials into new products.

People's Choice Award winners: Just A Start – Youthbuild

At The Eco-Carpentry Challenge, students had an opportunity to network with industry professionals and peer schools, present their work to the judges, and answer questions from the crowd admiring the up-cycled innovations displayed throughout District Hall. A presentation by each school provided

additional details on each contending project, the materials they used, and what they learned from the experience.

The nine participating schools at The 2016 Eco-Carpentry Challenge included: Medford Vocational Technical High School, Full Circle Alternative High School Somerville, Minuteman High School, Northeast Metro Regional Vocational High School, Hopedale High School, Worcester Alternative School, Just A Start – Youthbuild, East Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, and Whittier Regional Vocational High School.

A panel of judges comprised of industry professionals including Karen Whiteknact of Liberty Mutual Insurance, Cheryl Lieteau of New England Carpenters Training Fund, Peter Boyce of Spry Moving, Francine Buck of Haworth, and Malisa Heiman of Biogen reviewed each project, and after extensive deliberation announced the winning projects of the 6th Annual Eco-Carpentry Challenge:

- 1st Place, Large Shop went to Hopedale who was awarded \$2,000;
- 1st Place, Small Shop went to Worcester Alternative School who was awarded \$2,000;
- Runner Up went to Whittier Regional Vocational High School who was awarded \$1,000; and
- People’s Choice Award went to Just A Start – Youthbuild who received a free lunch of their choice for their entire class.

The additional five schools each received \$250 for their upcycled projects.

All participating teams were congratulated for their innovative efforts by Christine Mosholder, the founder of The Furniture Trust.

“It’s not only amazing to see what these students create each year from a truck load of used furniture; new products like dog houses, outdoor patio furniture, and a ping pong table and paddles, but the pride they have in their projects and their competitive spirit is my favorite part of the evening.”

This year, The Furniture Trust assigned each team a mentor to provide guidance, feedback, and technical expertise throughout the design and construction of their projects, which the students had three months to complete. Professionals from the architecture, construction, project management, facilities and furniture industries were mentors for the 2016 Eco-Carpentry Challenge and included: Shaun Lover and Jared Crowley of Columbia Construction, Mike Clancy of Creative Office Pavilion, Brian Connearney of Carpenter’s Union, Andrew Ercolano of OMR Architects, Alexandra Dupnik of Dyer Brown Architects, Bill Olson of Wise Construction, Joe DeVeau of officeworks, Karen Bala of Dyer Brown Architects, and John Lorusso of Agero.

“The Eco-Carpentry Challenge ties in perfectly with Agero’s sustainability initiative,” said John Lorusso, who served as a mentor of the Medford team, “Mentoring was an extremely rewarding experience, and is something I would love to do again next year.”

The event had a significant impact on each student who participated. Whether new to carpentry or an avid builder, every student learned from the experience, and gained a new appreciation for reusing resources. In the words of one of the students, “Recycle, reuse, reduce, we’re looking for gold and we’re taking it home!”.

The Furniture Trust is a nonprofit organization driven to make a difference by rethinking office furniture removal and reinvesting it back into the community. The Trust provides companies of all sizes with a proven process for decommissioning that maximizes the value of unwanted office furniture and reduces landfill waste by connecting the products with local schools and nonprofits. Since their founding in 2008, The Trust has connected more than \$8,000,000 worth of office

furniture with over 450 organizations.

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