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AIARI's award-winning Canstruction RI sculptures benefit R.I. Community Food Bank: major donors of event include Kasabian Construction, R.I. Associated General Contractors and Taco Inc.

May 10, 2012 - Rhode Island

The generosity of companies and individuals alike made the fourth biennial Canstruction Rhode Island sculpture exhibit at the Providence Place Mall a resounding success. The design competition helped to raise awareness about the issue of hunger in Rhode Island and resulted in a donation of more than 22,000 pounds of food to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

A recent Canstruction RI gala honored the teams of architects, contractors, engineers and other volunteers who found sponsors, then designed and built spectacular sculptures from canned foods. The two-week juried exhibit drew the attention of thousands, many of whom snapped photos or voted on the Providence Place Mall website for the "People's Choice" award. After "de-canstruction" and transportation of the canned goods to the Food Bank, photos of the sculptures were set to go on display in the Providence Place Mall Skybridge Concourse for several weeks. Digital photos of those receiving juried awards were submitted to the Canstruction International Competition (<http://canstruction.org>) for judging at the May convention of the American Institute of Architects.

At the gala, where selected sculpture teams received their awards, Andrew Schiff, chief executive officer of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, cited the Canstruction effort as a "model for how the community can cooperate to give, and help people in need.

"It comes at a critical time for us, when our network of food pantries across the state serves more than 60,000 individuals a month. That represents the highest level of need in the history of the Food Bank," he said. "If we're going to meet that demand, we need people and businesses to come together like this, recognize the need, and make sure that no Rhode Islander goes hungry."

Special guest Lynne McCormack, Providence's director of arts, culture & tourism, attending on behalf of Providence mayor Angel Tavares, cited the "design community's incredible generosity," and noted the part played by the business community. Expressing the mayor's gratitude to all who participated and all the sponsors who donated, she also noted how appropriate the exhibit was in a city that is known for combining its arts and other activities.

Presenting the awards were Canstruction RI co-chairs Drayton Fair, AIA, ALA, LEED AP, a partner at LLB Architects, Pawtucket, and Michael Busam, new business development manager at Gilbane Building Co., Providence, and a member of the Young Constructors Forum of the R.I. Associated General Contractors (RIAGC), Providence. The awards, sculpture themes, the firms whose employee teams created them, and selected comments of the jurors, are:

Best Meal, Jurors' Favorite and People's Choice - TUG Away Hunger

A tug boat "to tug away hunger from Rhode Island and out to sea for once and for all" and a nearby

lighthouse by Saccoccio & Associates Architects, DiPrete Engineering and E. Turgeon Construction, all Cranston firms, and WEEI-103.7 FM. This is the third time out of the four biennial Canstruction RI events that the Saccoccio-DiPrete team, this year joined by Turgeon Construction, has won Jurors' Favorite and the second time they have earned Best Meal. It is the first time the team has won People's Choice. Among the jurors' comments: "Liked how they did the water." and "It's a complete meal with a lot of variety."

Best Use of Labels - New England CAN Bake

A lobster and clam bake on the beach with a lobster peeking out from the lid of a pot above a wood fire and a freshly shucked corn cob ready for cooking with tongs nearby. Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels, Inc., and GTECH, both Providence firms, with Odeh Engineers, North Providence. Among jurors' comments: "Nice creativity, very imaginative." and "Good details with ties to New England." Creation of this sculpture can be seen in a time-lapse video on You Tube at <http://youtu.be/OrBn6m57zWg>.

Structural Ingenuity - CANdozingHunger

A CANdozer "to bulldoze hunger and pave the way to a better future ... with healthy foods such as beans, clams, carrots, green beans and peaches." Jo Ann Bentley Architect, Inc., Fall River, with Gilbane Building Company and the Young Constructors Forum of the R.I. Associated General Contractors, both of Providence. Among jurors' comments: "You know it is a bulldozer." "Structurally daring." and "Good detailing and well thought-out."

Honorable Mention - Pooh can't bear hunger - and neither CAN we!

"Winnie the Pooh says it best... "A little CANSideration, a little Thought for Others, makes all the difference." Dimeo Construction Company, a third-time participant, and Vision 3 Architects, a fourth-time participant, both Providence companies, created the "soup and sandwich" sculpture of Winnie largely from peanut butter, a much sort-after staple by the Food Bank, and honey, along with cans of brown bread and soup. Among jurors' comments: "A top concept. I liked the idea."

Honorable Mention - CANgry Birds

LLB Architects, Pawtucket, and Shawmut Construction Co., Providence, both fourth-time participants, emphasized two things about this take-off on a popular video-slingshot game: "First, these birds will stop at nothing to end hunger in Rhode Island. Second, they can only do it with help from people like you. And if I were you, I wouldn't want to be on the wrong end of Mr. Bombbird, if you know what I mean." Among jurors' comments: "Clean and aligned with nice use of color."

In addition, a sixth team created a sculpture in honor of the R.I. Community Food Bank's 30th anniversary. Titled "CAN a cupcake help fight hunger?," the giant CANcake with CANDle on top was designed and built by Michael Warner Architect, Providence, C.A. Pretzer Associates, Inc., Cranston, and Design Built, Inc., Warwick, all first-time participants as were their 15 sponsors.

Jurors for the event were: Kyle Adamonis, senior vice president, Taco, Inc., Cranston; David Brussat, architecture columnist and editorial board member, The Providence Journal; Mark Dunbar, general manager, Providence Place; Peter Kasabian, president, Kasabian Construction, Inc., Providence; Lucie Searle, president, AS220, Providence; Clark Shoettele, executive director,

Providence Revolving Fund; and John W. Smith, director, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence.

"We hope the exhibit has inspired many individuals to contribute more to the Food Bank this year, and additional architects and contractors to join our 2014 Canstruction RI event. We will start planning it and asking for commitments in the fall of 2013," said Fair. He is a past-president of the American Institute of Architects, Rhode Island chapter which initiates each Canstruction RI exhibit as part of AIA support of the Society for Design Administration's nationwide and international Canstruction community service project.

Busam attributes successive improvements in each sculpture competition to the "the incredible commitment and motivation of the team members and their team sponsors, and the great team spirit it helps companies build within their own organizations."

In addition to AIARI, major donors helping to cover the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Canstruction RI's expenses for the event include: Kasabian Construction, Providence; the R.I. Associated General Contractors (RIAGC), Providence; and Taco Inc., Cranston. Other event sponsors include: Furniture Consultants, Providence and Boston; Norman Feinstein-Branch Avenue Shopping Center, Providence; Stack Design Build, Providence; Teknion, Providence and Boston; and UNFI, Providence, as well as the Carpionato Group, Johnston; Coastway Community Bank, Cranston; Horner Millwork, Somerset, Mass.; Maloney & Co., Guilford, Conn.; North-Eastern Tree Service, Cranston; and the Providence area R.I. Construction Specifications Institute.

In-kind donors included: Branch River Plastics, Smithfield, and the Providence area ARC-RI for collateral materials and printing, Rhode Island Rentals, Warwick, and Narragansett Brewing Co., Providence, for gala donations, and Providence Place Mall and many of its retailers for gala door prizes ranging from about \$25 to \$250 in value.

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