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## **The Furniture Trust celebrates 4th Annual Eco-Carpentry Challenge**

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The Furniture Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing sustainable solutions for the disposition of unwanted office furniture, hosted an event to celebrate its 4th Annual Eco-Carpentry Challenge at District Hall. The event drew a crowd of more than 200 guests, including local high school students, their parents and teachers, as well as industry leaders who gathered to network and celebrate.

As part of the challenge, students from throughout the state were tasked with creating new products using gently used furniture donated by local corporations. Students had five months to design and create their entries. With the help of their shop-class teachers, students were permitted to use woodworking and metal tools, biscuits, glue, screws, hardware, stain, sandpaper and paint to transform the old furniture pieces into new products. The Furniture Trust delivered a suite of used office furniture to each school, and in an effort to inspire creativity, allowed students free reign to develop their own projects. The schools that participated included: Hopedale High School, Leominster High School - Center for Technical Education Innovation, Medford Vocational Technical High School, Northeast Metro Vocational High School, Somerville- Full Circle High School, Taunton High School and YouthBuild in Lawrence.

At the event, students showcased their finished projects which ranged from a potting bench with tool storage and seat to a game room with modern gaming chair and dart board. Projects were judged during the event by a distinguished panel of industry experts in four categories: Best in Class, Maximum and Best Reuse of Raw Materials, Best Commercial Application, and Most Unique and Creative Product Produced. Winning schools were awarded a total of over \$6,000. This year, The Furniture Trust launched the People's Choice category, which allowed attendees to vote for their favorite projects.

### **The Winning Projects:**

- \* Best in Class: Hopedale High School - School cafeteria fixture for condiments and utensils.
- \* Maximum and Best Reuse of Raw Materials: Taunton High School - Game room set which included a skee ball set, wall art and gaming chair all in Taunton Tiger black and orange.
- \* Best Commercial Application: Medford Vocational Technical High School - Full service bar with two stools and electric TV stand.
- \* Most Unique and Creative Product Produced: Youthbuild Lawrence - Gardening table with chair, memorial bench and "solitude seat" for studying.
- \* People's Choice: Medford Vocational Technical High School.

"This was a record turnout for the Eco-Carpentry Challenge," said Christine Mosholder, founder of The Furniture Trust. "I'm always amazed by the innovative products the students design and build from used furniture; a solitude seat for studying created from a file cabinet, a classic skee ball game

complete with the Taunton High School tiger, built from an old wood desk and door. The students were proud to showcase their upcycled products Thursday night and have a new appreciation for creative recycling."

"The Eco-Carpentry Challenge is a great opportunity for these students to come together, combining their different vocational skills, to create something that they can call their own," said Paul Donato, Massachusetts state representative. "Vocational schools are becoming more and more popular as they allow students to hone in on the skills they need to perform a particular job."

In addition to showcasing their work, students had the opportunity to network with leading business professionals. Peter Boyce, general manager at Casey & Hayes Movers, Dave Leonhardi, instructor for the Carpenters Union Trade School, Richard Christiano, professor of facilities planning and management at Wentworth Institute of Technology, Francine Buck, senior business development manager at Haworth Furniture and Greg Porfido, chief operating officer at Mark Richey Woodworking were among the professionals in attendance, who also served as judges for the challenge. Additionally, George Foreman, founder of The Club by George Foreman III, served as a judge to support companies in his neighborhood making a difference, like The Furniture Trust.

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