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68 YEARS

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AIA-RI and RIAGC's CLC spearhead Canstruction RI exhibit

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The story of steadily increasing hunger in Rhode Island again has prompted teams of architects, general contractors, engineers and their supporters to produce remarkable Canstruction RI sculptures from canned goods at the Providence Place Skybridge concourse. The recent competition and exhibit resulted in a major contribution of more than 28,340 pounds of non-perishable foods to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. It also helped to raise public awareness of the problem of hunger.

The Food Bank needs increased contributions to continue serving more than 68,000 people each month through its statewide network of 223 member-agency sites. The need for food assistance has grown significantly since 2008, when the Food Bank was serving 37,000 Rhode Islanders.

"In every corner of our state, many families are still continuing to struggle to keep food on the table," said Andrew Schiff, chief executive officer of the R. I. Community Food Bank. "What's especially heartbreaking is the fact that one-third of the people we serve are children under the age of 18. Many of them have parents who have been unable to find work or are trying to make ends meet on low-wage or part-time jobs.

"Every month, it's a challenge for us to keep up with the persistently high need for food assistance. That's why Canstruction is so important - it reminds people that hunger is something we must address all year long, and we need everyone's help," he said. "The contribution of food from the project will be put to use immediately feeding people right here in Rhode Island."

Canstruction has become one of the largest and most consistent canned food contributors to food banks in the world. Since 1992, events organized through American Institute of Architects chapters in cities in North America as well as Australia, South America, Europe and Asia have raised more than 21 million pounds of food.

The non-profit 501 (3) (c) Canstruction RI's sculpture competitions have showcased the ingenuity of Rhode Island's design and construction community since 2007, with biennial events in even years after that. AIA-RI and the Construction Leadership Council (formerly Young Constructors Forum) of the Rhode Island chapter of the Associated General Contractors have spearheaded each event with generous support from Providence Place and the cooperative efforts of the R.I. Community Food Bank. In addition to substantial contributions from AIA-RI and RIAGC, major sponsors of the event this year included Providence Place, the mall's Dave & Busters, Taco Inc., and an anonymous donor. Many other essential contributors helped stage the event, including: Coastway Community Bank, Maloney & Co. LLC, Pannello Systems, Teknion, Arc Document Solutions, Branch River Plastics, Gasbarro's Wines, Horner Millwork, Inkwell Communications, Pezzuco Construction Inc., Branch Avenue Associates LLC, R.I. Construction Specifications Institute, Rose & Kiernan and Waltham Lumber. Teams also raised funds from other sources to buy the canned goods required to build the sculptures.

The Canstruction RI awards, selected by a panel of independent jurors, were presented to teams at a March 20 gala held at Providence Place. Digital photos of sculptures receiving Best Meal, Best Use of Labels, Structural Integrity and Jurors' Favorite awards later were submitted to the Canstruction International Competition for judging at the June convention of the American Institute of Architects. The awards, sculpture titles, teams and themes were:

Best Meal - Shedding Light on Hunger

Team: Durkee Brown Viveiros & Werenfels Architects, GTECH Corporation, Herrick & White, and Odeh Engineers.

Best Use of Labels - Can-nibals

Team: LLB Architects, Shawmut Design and Construction, and Fuzion Design. The Can-nibals team created a tall cup of Del's Frozen Lemonade as an R.I. symbol of "growth, success and even happiness" to represent the possibility of ending hunger in Rhode Island.

Structural Integrity - Going Bananas because Hunger is No Game

Team: Dimeo Construction Co. and Vision 3 Architects. A whimsical design depicts Donkey Kong breaking free from his two-dimensional, early-Game Boy world.

Jurors' Favorite - Dis-Spelling Hunger

Team: Northeast Collaborative Architects, Veri Waterman Associates, Building Engineering Resources LLC, and Kasabian Construction Inc. Fire glows under the cauldron while a recipe from the Spell Book boils inside. The ladle symbolically invites people to step up and stir the cauldron to continue the momentum of the Dis-Spelling recipe.

People's Choice and Honorable Mention - Strike Out Hunger

Team: Construction Leadership Council of the R.I. Chapter of Associated General Contractors and C.A. Pretzer Associates Inc. With the final score of the 2013 Red Sox win of the World Series on the scoreboard, this Fenway Park sculpture appeals to Rhode Islanders to rally to end hunger just as the Red Sox rallied for its championship win.

Honorable Mention - Keepin' an Eye on Hunger

Team: Saccoccio & Associates Inc. Architects and DiPrete Engineering. Movie character Stuart, the most trusted minion of Super Villain Gru, is standing guard with a shrink ray to help eliminate the hunger problem in Rhode Island. The Canstruction® RI team that created him, with good nutrition in mind, asks visitors to the canned goods sculpture exhibit at the Providence Place Skybridge Concourse to "Look for him in shopping bags everywhere making sure people in the community are taking care of one another."