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The Furniture Trust hosts Eco-Carpentry Challenge

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Boston, MA The Furniture Trust, a nonprofit committed to responsible reuse of unwanted office furniture, held its annual event, the Eco-Carpentry Challenge, designed to promote the circular economy and up-cycling while providing students with professional skills critical to their future.

At the Challenge, held May 2nd at District Hall, students networked with industry professionals and peer schools, as they showcased their up-cycled innovations to a panel of judges.

The ten participating schools of the 2019 Eco-Carpentry Challenge include students from: Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational High School (Upton), East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School, Essex Technical High School (Danvers), Hopedale High School, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School (Boston), Nashoba Valley Technical High School (Westford), Next Wave and Full Circle Alternative School (Somerville), Northbridge High School (Whitinsville), Shawsheen Valley Regional Technical High School (Billerica), and Worcester Alternative School.

The 2019 Eco-Carpentry Challenge winners:

- Runner Up: Madison Park Technical Vocational High School – \$1,000 prize;
- 1st Place, Small Shop: Northbridge High School – \$2,000 prize;
- 1st Place, Large Shop: Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational High School – \$2,000 prize

- People's Choice: Shawsheen Valley Regional Technical High School

“My favorite part is definitely who we’re helping,” said Jimmy Casey, a senior at Hopedale High School. “Just being able to help anyone is awesome, and that’s what I really love about the Challenge: taking used things, making them better, repurposing things, just helping someone in the community.” Jimmy and his team created a mock room for Hopedale’s special education department to help teach them life skills, including folding and hanging up clothes, making a bed, and maintaining a room.

The Furniture Trust assigned each team a mentor from the architecture, construction, project management, facilities, and furniture industries to provide guidance and technical expertise throughout the design and construction of their projects: Corinne Maleski, AHP Architects; Chelsea Snow, AIS; Tom Murphy, Amundi Pioneer; Shirley Ng, Brown University; Alicia Kosasih, Vannepha Luangaphay, Tim Nistler, Emily Ottinger, and Maria Stoyanova, CBT Architects; Jared Crowley and Neal Swain, Columbia Construction; Alex Sanda, COP; Alexandra Dupnik, Dyer Brown; Jackie Falla, Elaine Construction; Joe DeVeau, Furniture Consultants, Inc.; Christina Arlin, Walter Kucharski, and Brendan McCue, Fort Point PM; John Greene, Margulies Perruzzi; Brian Duffley and Katrina Eliadis, Nelson; Brian Leahy and John Miller, OfficeWorks; Kevin Compher, Payette Architects; Michael MacLean, Peabody Office; Ryan Eisenhauer and Joseph DiClemente, Structure Tone; Nicole Solera and Elizabeth Spatola, Unispace; Hannah Ginley, Valerie Lausier, Laura Player, and Amr Raafat, Windover Construction; and Bill Olson, Wise Construction.

Katrina Eliadis of Nelson served as a mentor for the Worcester team and had valuable advice for the students: “Be true to yourself and your team. Creativity comes in many forms and it’s easy to get side tracked, but always follow through with your team and your responsibilities, and make sure everyone is working toward the same goal.”

After thoughtful deliberation, the panel of judges comprised of industry professionals – Sean Anderson, vice president, Mass Mutual Financial Group; Stephen Bertolami, senior vice president, Liberty Mutual Insurance; Laura Keenan, corporate sustainability officer, VP, communications and change management, Fidelity Real Estate Company; Chris Plante, manager, Mark Richey Woodworking; and Sarah Turner, president, North Bennet Street School – announced the winners.

“I’m blown away by the generous sponsors, furniture donors, and especially these students who have created something they’re so proud to give back to the community,” said Christine Mosholder, founder of the Furniture Trust, “Reinvesting excess office furnishings back into the community has a proven multiplier effect, the positive impact of which can be seen in our youth, community, and across our sustainable network.”

This year's event, emceed by WROR's Hank Morse, featured presentations by: Rosalin Acosta, Massachusetts state secretary of the executive office of Workforce and Labor Development, spoke about the state of the economy and what these high school students face upon graduation; Hattie Arsenault-Larosa, program manager with Liberty Mutual Insurance's Real Estate Group detailed her experience hiring The Furniture Trust and what an impact it has made on her firm and personal life; and Tom Belland, director of vocational technical education at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational High School discussed the positive effect donated furniture had on his school's students and faculty.

Sponsors of the 2019 Eco-Carpentry Challenge include:

Gold sponsors: Creative Office Pavilion, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Fort Point Project Management, and Pinnacle Office Solutions

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