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MILLION DOLLAR CHARITY CHALLENGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Art Van Furniture Giving Back, Touching the Lives of Over 100,000 People

$50,000 Still up for grabs in 2011 Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge

Warren, MI – September 14, 2011 – Something remarkable happened at five Art Van Furniture stores this week. Fifty Michigan nonprofits, collectively serving well over 100,000 people, were awarded grants in the Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge. During news conferences held on Tuesday and Wednesday, the awards ranging from $5,000 to $50,000, were announced for selected charities that focus on children, health and human services programs.

Press conferences announcing the awards were held in Warren, Saginaw, Lansing, Grand Rapids and Traverse City. The grants are designed as challenge gifts in order to encourage others to donate and maximize fundraising opportunities. In the past two years, the Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge has raised an impressive $7 million.

"People who know me know how passionate I am about community work," said Art Van Elslander, founder and chairman of Art Van Furniture. "It's just what we're supposed to do. All of us at Art Van Furniture feel the same way.

People helping people, that's what it's all about – strengthening lives, making homes, building communities."

There were many special moments at each of the gatherings. Representatives and supporters of the winning charities filled the stores with the joy and anticipation of children on Christmas morning. During the Metro Detroit news conference in Warren, Reverend Faith Fowler, executive director of Cass Community Services, addressed the crowd of some 200 people with very memorable words.

“We all know businesses that get involved with philanthropy for business purposes – advertising, marketing, reputation,” said Fowler. “Art Van doesn’t do it for any of those reasons.

He doesn’t have to.

Besides, the average age of a homeless person is 10.

Our clients are not his customers.

The help he has given our clients through this effort and many others in the past is amazing.”

“Art Van Furniture helps people make beautiful homes in more ways than one” she continued. “ These grants give agencies such as Cass Community Services the ability to help houseless people live in shelters that reflect the comfort and safety of home so they are no longer homeless.”

Just when it seemed it couldn’t get any better, the Bonus Challenge was announced. In addition to the challenge awards, all 150 Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge recipients (this includes the 100 awardees from the past two years) can compete to win an additional $25,000, $15,000 or $10,000 bonus.

“We want to continue to make the dollars go further, and we wanted to do it in a way that would create fun and excitement,” said Gary Van Elslander, president of Art Van Furniture. “These awards will be granted to the top three charities that receive the most votes from the public.”

The public is encouraged to vote for their favorite charity during a two week period from September 15 to September 30 at www.artvan.com .

The events also included the debut and introduction of the Art Van Charity Bear, an adorable, cuddly stuffed animal that will retail at all Art Van Furniture locations for $39.95, with total proceeds benefiting any of the 150 Million Dollar Charity recipients of the owner's choice.

The 2011 Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge grant recipients are:

Metro Detroit

Active Faith Community Services

JARC

Crime Stoppers of Michigan

Lighthouse Path

Anti-Defamation League Macomb Co.
Rotating Emergency Shelter

Beyond Basics Macomb Co.
Warming Center, Inc.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan Monroe Co. Child Advocacy
Center

Boys Hope Girls Hope of Michigan, Inc. Neighborhood
Services Organization

Cass Community Services Oakwood
Healthcare Foundation

Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corp. Open Door Outreach
Center

Common Ground Presbyterian
Villages of MI, Inc.

Covenant House Michigan Samaritan Center,
Inc.

Detroit Institute for Children Samaritan House

Focus Hope Special Kids,
Inc.

Gabby's Ladder, Inc.

The Community House Association, Inc.

Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit

The Detroit Police Athletic League

Horatio Williams Foundation

The Renaissance Chapter of Links, Inc.

West Michigan

Conductive Learning Center

Every Woman's Place, Inc.

Parent to Parent of SW Michigan

Pine Lake Fund

Ronald McDonald's House of Western Michigan

Women's Resource Center

Lansing

Girls on the Run of Southeastern Michigan

Greater Lansing Housing Coalition

Hannah's House

Haven House

North Star Reach

Women's Caring Program

Mid Michigan

Midland County Child Protection Council, Inc.

Old Newsboys of Flint, Inc.

Robert E. Weiss Advocacy Center for Children and Youth

Rose Hill Center, Inc.

Northern Michigan

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan

Hospice of Northern Michigan

Little Traverse Bay Humane Society

Michael’s Place, Inc.

For more information contact Diane Charles at (586)983-3022 office - (586)850-7332 cell

About Art Van Furniture

Art Van Furniture is Michigan's largest furniture retailer and America's largest independent furniture retailer. The company operates 34 stores in 33 communities throughout Michigan, a full service e-commerce website, plus four freestanding Art Van PureSleep bedding stores in Canton, Troy, Rochester Hills, and Brighton, Michigan. Founded in 1959, the company is family-owned and headquartered in Warren, Mich. Check out artvan.com for more information.

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