

WARREN, MI – October 3, 2011 – The suspense is over. The votes have been tallied and the winners have been notified. For the past two weeks, 150 Michigan non-profits have crusaded to win one of three bonus awards totaling \$50,000. After a tense and lively campaign the top three winners were announced by Art Van Furniture.

As part of the Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge, \$50,000 was earmarked for bonus prizes. Each of the 150 Art Van Charity recipients had an equal opportunity to win additional money. The catch: each organization had to encourage its friends and supporters to vote for them on the Art Van Furniture website. After the two week contest the votes are in. Senior Neighbors in Grand Rapids was the top vote-getter and will receive the first place prize of \$25,000. Second place, Seedlings Braille Books for Children in Livonia, earned an extra \$15,000, and North Star Reach in Livingston County was awarded the third place purse of \$10,000.

“We strive to think of ways, exciting ways, to make the charity dollars go further,” said Gary Van Elslander, President of Art Van Furniture. “So we turned it into a competition between each charity and its supporters allowing them to vote to determine the top three bonus challenge winners.”

Last month, Art Van Furniture awarded \$1 million in grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to fifty charities that focus on children, health and human services. This brings the total to \$3 million that has been donated to this campaign by the state’s largest furniture chain since the program’s inception in 2009. The \$50,000 bonus challenge was designed to raise awareness and funds for each of the non-profit recipients.

Bob Barnes, President of the winning organization, Senior Neighbors, is ecstatic. “It’s no secret the economy is taking a toll on charitable organizations,” he said. “We’ve lost some crucial funding. This extra money will allow us to continue our programs and provide transportation to our centers. That makes us very happy.”

More than 60,000 votes were tallied to determine the winners.

First Place, \$25,000 -- Senior Neighbors, which promotes the health and well-being of older adults in Kent County, MI. The organization helps approximately 4,000 seniors, aged 60 and over, remain healthy and independent.

Second Place, \$15,000 -- Seedlings Braille Books for Children, is dedicated to increasing the opportunity for literacy by providing high quality, low cost Braille books for children. It was founded by Debra Bonde in 1984.

Third Place, \$10,000 -- North Star Reach, a camp experience for children, and families of children, with serious or life-threatening health challenges.

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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 five freestanding Art Van PureSleep bedding stores in Canton, Troy, Rochester Hills, Brighton, and Ann Arbor, 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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