

14 Teams to Create Huge Structures Out of Canned Food to Help End Hunger at 3rd Annual Orange County Canstruction® Design Competition at South Coast Plaza

3rd Annual Orange County Canstruction® design competition and event at South Coast Plaza from Sept. 3 - 26th: 14 teams will assemble and exhibit elaborate structures constructed entirely out of canned food to benefit local Food Bank. The event is being held in conjunction with the ninth annual Festival of Children®.

August 20, 2010 (FPRC) -- COSTA MESA, CALIF. - Fourteen teams, made up of local architects, designers, engineers and related industry professionals, will work feverishly throughout the night on Friday, September 3, 2010, after the close of business at the South Coast Plaza, to assemble elaborate structures that are constructed entirely out of canned food items as part of the third annual Orange County Canstruction® design competition and event. Creative and often quite complex, these canned food structures can be as tall as eight feet and as wide as 10 feet. The event, which is being held in conjunction with the ninth annual Festival of Children®, also serves as a food drive for the Orange County Food Bank so the teams are motivated to create sizeable structures that, when de-constructed on September 26th, will feed as many people as possible.

Awards are given for the Best Use of Labels, Best Meal, Structural Ingenuity, Jurors' Favorite and Honorable Mentions. This year, a new award was added, "the People's Choice" award. People will be able to vote online for their favorite structure. Judging will take place prior to the Awards Gala, which will be held on Sunday, September 19th, at South Coast Plaza's Garden Terrace, from 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. The winning Canstruction® entries will participate in an international competition during next year's Society of Design Administration (SDA) Convention in Las Vegas. The structures, which are located throughout both sides of South Coast Plaza, will remain on display through Sunday, September 26.

The public is encouraged to bring canned food items when they visit South Coast Plaza to view the exhibits. Children can receive a free carousel ride with each can donated at South Coast Plaza concierge counter. After the exhibit, the cans of food from the competition will be donated to the Orange County Food Bank.

"We are very pleased to see so many teams this year," said Orange County Canstruction® Event Chair Louie Garcia, Associate AIA, with Dougherty + Dougherty Architects LLP. "This is the highest number of participants that we have had to date and, with the public's help, we hope to break last year's record and collect more than 60,000 cans for the Orange County Food Bank."

"Many people do not think Orange County is a place with thousands of struggling individuals," Garcia said. "With the economic challenges that we have been experiencing over the couple of years, the number of individuals who are food insecure only continues to rise. There are over 500,000 people in Orange County that are considered food insecure."

Garcia added, "Despite that one out of three architects in Orange County is unemployed and one out of two contractors is out of work, the design and construction industry still wants to do what they can to help and Canstruction is a great way to have fun, show off some amazing creativity and

engineering, and help feed those in need. Last year, Orange County Canstruction® brought in over 50,000 cans (35,000 lbs.) of food but this year we are hoping to collect 60,000 cans or more. We know that every can helps."

Companies like KTGy Group, Inc. have gotten their staff, friends and clients involved with the Canstruction® event. "As a company we look for ways to help others and foster fun and team building. Whether it is Build Day at Habitat For Humanity, assisting with HomeAid projects or Canstruction®, we enjoy giving back to the people in the communities where we work, and we have encouraged those that we work with to do the same," said one of KTGy's Canstruction® team members Benjamin Kasdan, AIA, LEED AP and project designer.

"The past year, for our industry has felt like a trip down Alice's rabbit hole, but it seems like the picture might be clearing a bit and this leaves us grinning," Kasdan stated. "So, this year KTGy is building a giant Cheshire Cat out of cans. The structure will contain more than 6,000 cans of food and will be over five feet tall."

In addition to KTGy, the following companies are scheduled to participate in the Orange County Canstruction® event: CH2MHill, Disneyland Design & Engineering, Suffolk, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM), LIONAKIS, HPI Architects, FLUOR, Dougherty + Dougherty Architects LLP, HMC Architects, Ware Malcomb, RBF Consulting, MHP Structural Engineers and Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.

"We have as much fun participating in the Canstruction® competition as we do admiring the creativity of our fellow Canstruction® competitors," Kasdan noted. "We hope the public will enjoy the displays and want to bring canned food items to donate to the Food Bank."

According to Mark Lowry, director of the Orange County Food Bank, "Since January 2009, the requests for food assistance from the Food Bank have more than doubled, which has stretched our resources beyond our capacity. Events like Orange County Canstruction® go a long way in helping us serve those that are in need, one can at a time."

Lowry stated that last year the Food Bank distributed over 19,000,000 pounds of food. In addition to the 23,000 people that the Food Bank serves directly each month, it provides food and personal care items to nearly 400 local charities, including churches, senior centers, shelters, soup kitchens, and social service agencies. These organizations serve the homeless, disabled persons, seniors on fixed incomes, the unemployed and the working poor. Approximately 18,000 Orange County Food Bank volunteers assist in the sorting, packing and distribution of food.

"Whether it is donating canned items, money and/or your time, you CAN make a difference in the lives of others," Lowry added. See www.ocfoodbank.org.

Orange County Canstruction® occurs every September in conjunction with the Festival of Children at South Coast Plaza. The very first Canstruction® event was held in 1992 in Seattle, Washington. The Seattle Chapter of the Society of Design Administration (SDA) held a food drive among architectural and engineering firms in the Seattle area. A team of architects and engineers was chosen to build something out of all the cans assembled. Staring at a sea of cans, they decided to make a topographical map of the state of Washington. All of the food collected from the food drive was donated to the Seattle Second Harvest Food Bank, Food LifeLine. Their efforts resulted in a full range of coverage in the Seattle newspaper and the term "Canstruction"® was coined.

In order to generate more enthusiasm for the food drive concept in the design industry, the New York and Denver chapters of the SDA took the concept and tweaked it, turning it into a full-scale design/build competition in 1993. Under this framework, architectural and engineering firms entered teams to compete in designing and building structures that would be judged and awarded. The larger their structure, the more food would get donated.

Awards were given for the Best Use of Labels, Best Meal, Structural Ingenuity, Jurors' Favorite and Honorable Mentions. To this day, these are the same awards that are given out at Canstruction® Galas around the world.

In 1999 Canstruction® obtained 501(c)(3) status as a charitable organization, with over ten million pounds of food having been donated to aid in the fight against hunger. Typical hosts include local chapters of SDA, AIA, and Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS). Orange County Canstruction® is hosted by these three organizations together. One hundred thirty competitions are scheduled to take place in 2009/2010 so far, with more cities signing up each month. See www.canstruction.org.

South Coast Plaza is located at 3333 Bristol Street in Costa Mesa, Calif. Hours of operation are from Monday through Friday, from 10:00 am - 9:00 pm; Saturday 10:00 am - 8:00 pm; and Sunday 11:00 am - 6:00 pm.

About Canstruction®

Canstruction® is an international community service project by the design and construction industry to benefit local food banks where teams of architects, engineers, designers, contractors and/or those professionals mentoring students, associations or business compete by designing and building structures made entirely out of canned foods. For more information about Canstruction®, see www.canstruction.org or the website for Orange County Canstruction® at www.CanstructionOC.org.

Festival of Children®

The 9th annual Festival of Children® is a month-long celebration of the wonders of childhood with activities, celebrity appearances, workshops, performances and fun for kids of all ages. Over 80 children's charities participate. For more information, call (714) 438-3286 or visit www.festivalofchildren.org.

Contact Information

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