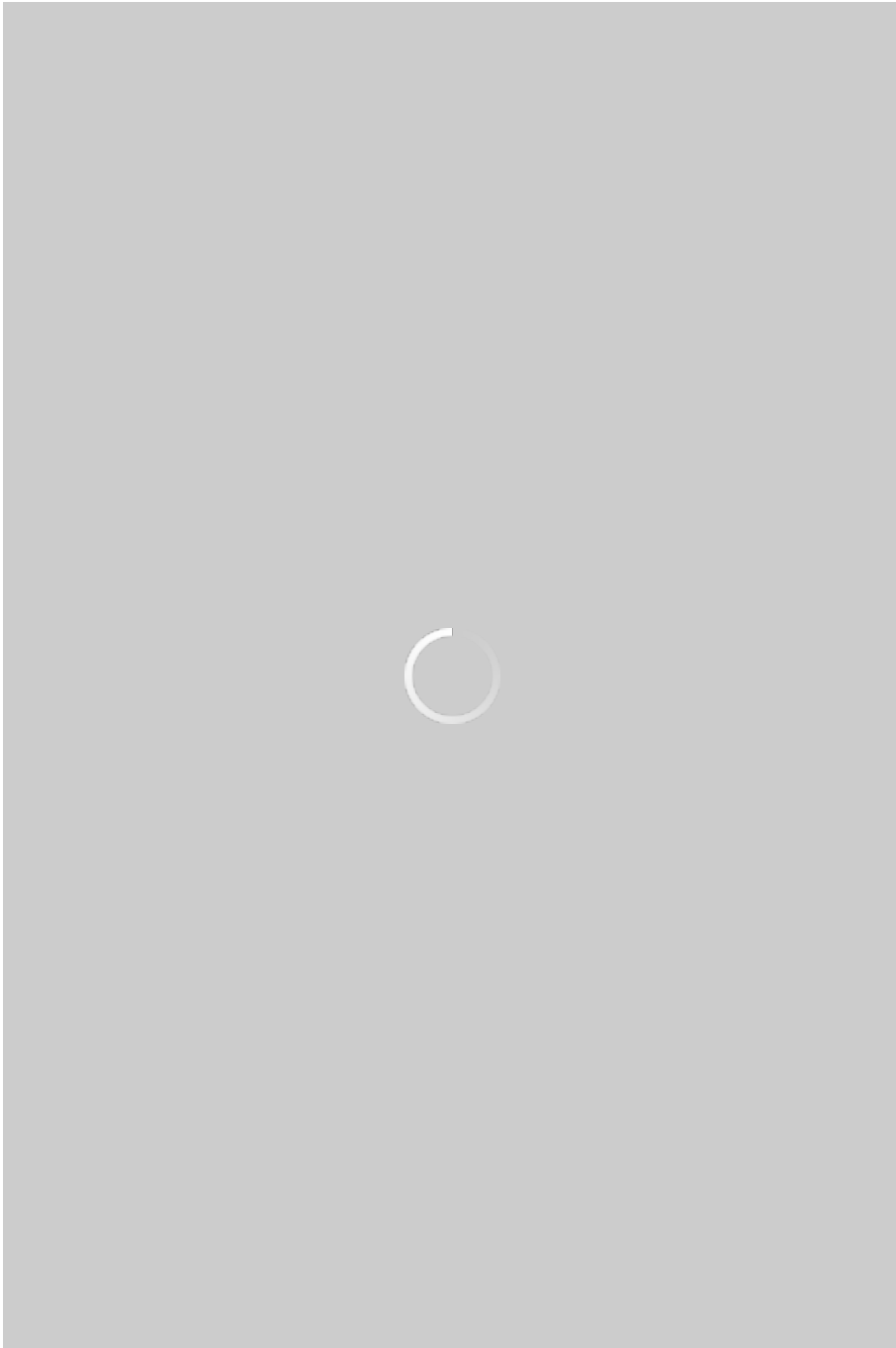


FIGHTING HUNGER WITH ART



CREATIVE CANNED FOOD BUILDING IS GIVING NEW MEANING TO ARTISTS WITH A CAUSE.

By MICHELLE VAZQUEZ

CANstruction Long Beach returns for its third annual competition with six local architectural and engineering firms participating in the event.

Terri Henry will be organizing the event and says she has never represented a nonprofit organization until she found out about CANstruction.

"I found out it was [happening] across the country," Henry says. "I just figured it was the perfect event to bring to Long Beach."

The sculptures created by the participating firms will be held in the Landmark Square Building lobby in downtown Long Beach from September 15 to September 25. This year's theme: "It Doesn't Take a Superhero to End Hunger."

The structures will be made up entirely of canned goods. Some of those canned goods came from sponsors that donated to the firms. All sculptors combined are weighing in at over 20,000 pounds. For the finale, the structures will be dismantled and the food will be donated to Food Finders, a food bank in Signal Hill.

Teams will be pressed on time on the build day, as they will only have 12 hours to complete their sculptures.

Henry, who is seeing growing support and traction for the event, reflected on its first year's hiccups. She and her business partner Greg Sabin, called various architectural, engineering, design and construction teams three years ago to see if they wanted to participate.



"People were like 'What? You build what out of food? Is the food open?'" she recalls. "Nobody got the gist of it, so the first year was very difficult."

That first year, only four teams participated. The following year, five teams joined and now, six are set to compete – and they're all local.

Those years participants include Moffatt & Nichol, C/A Architects, Environ Architecture partnering with California Resource Corp, DPR Construction partnering with HDR Architects, and Kamus + Keller Interiors | Architecture and Alta Vista Solutions. The first three teams are returning and the other three will compete for the first time.

One of those first year participants won't have to travel too far to their destination considering it's literally under their feet. Kamus + Keller has relocated its office to the Landmark Square Building says Chandra Johnston, marketing manager of the firm's Long Beach office.

"We've always had an eye toward helping the community and charitable efforts," she says. "This is a perfect combination of that Long Beach community as well as

Egg Breaking Over a Pan (2015) designed by Moffatt & Nichol.

Photo courtesy: Terri Henry Marketing

charitable spirit we try to participate in.”

Johnston says the idea for their sculpture, which she did not disclose, is made up of five to six thousand cans and was voted on by the firm.

Another returning firm is Environ. Willetta McCulloh, vice president and director of design at Environ said the first year was great, and her team built a sculpture around the theme of “Green Eggs and Ham” by Dr. Seuss.

McCulloh and her team this year are not only helping to combat hunger, they’re bringing awareness to another important food-related issue through their art: ugly food and waste.

“They’re foods and vegetables that don’t conform to the ideal shape,” says McCulloh.

She says people won’t eat something that doesn’t look like what they think it should look like, which contributes to further food waste.

“Ours is called ‘Eat Ugly,’” she says of her team’s theme.

The public will be allowed to choose a winner by bringing in canned foods and placing them next to their structure, which will count as a vote. It will be called “The People’s Choice Award.” A separate panel of judges will give out additional awards: Structural Ingenuity, Best Use of Labels, Most Cans, Best Meal and Juror’s Favorite.

Henry says having an event like this in Long Beach will bring awareness to hunger in the community.

“I’m thrilled to be bringing attention to that cause,” she says. “This is also to alleviate the issue in my own city.”

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