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THREE ARTISTS FOR HUMANITY YOUTH AWARDED PRIZES IN MERIDA RUG DESIGN CONTEST

BOSTON (December 2, 2009) – Today, [Merida](#) announced the three winners of their Tufted Rug Design Contest. The winners are Kelsey Arbona, Massiel Grullon, and Alland Torchon. The three designers, who are youth apprentices in [Artists For Humanity's](#) (AFH) graphic design program, will each receive a 5'x8' tufted [area rug](#) based on their winning design; each design will be developed and manufactured in Merida's Fall River, MA weaving facility for launch in early 2010; and Merida will make a \$5,000 donation to AFH to support their innovative art apprenticeship programs.

The contest, which was announced in early October, challenged AFH's young artists to design sustainable textiles for Merida's tufted area rug line, which is made from 100% New Zealand Wool in Fall River, MA. For inspiration, the participants were asked to think about what sustainability means to them as young people and as designers.

The final submissions were evaluated by a select panel of interior, graphic, and product designers who support the missions of both Merida and AFH. The designs were scored on a number of criteria, including clear expression of the contest's sustainability theme, originality, color and style trends, and marketability.

"Merida and AFH represent leaders in innovation, connectivity to community and bringing art and design to the younger generation," said contest judge Denise Korn of Korn Design. "I believe in these organizations and we are lucky to have them here in Boston!"

Merida, a designer of sustainable natural fiber textiles, and AFH, a nonprofit that works with teens to provide paid employment in the arts, developed the rug design contest out of both organizations' desire to combine the creativity and enthusiasm of the young AFH designers with Merida's expertise in sustainable textile design to create beautiful, inspiring products with a compelling story.

"We have found amazing synergy with Artists For Humanity in our shared passions of art, design, sustainability, and social responsibility," said Catherine Connolly, CEO of Merida. "I am truly impressed to see the maturity and creativity these talented young people have displayed in their designs."

Susan Rodgerson, AFH executive and artistic director said, "AFH is thrilled to be partnering with Merida and giving our youth a real-world experience. This collaboration reinforces AFH's mission to bridge economic, racial and social divisions by providing underserved youth with the keys to self-sufficiency through paid employment in the arts."

The three winners and their designs will be showcased at "For the Love of Art," AFH's annual Holiday Open house on December 15 from 3:00 pm – 7:00 p.m., and the winning rugs will be sold through Merida's new e-commerce web site, [MeridaHome.com](#) starting in early 2010.

For additional photos, a list of the judges, quotes and/or interviews, please contact ckabat@meridameridian.com.

About Merida Meridian

Merida Meridian is a design-driven company, passionate about creating innovative and fashionable floor coverings that help solve interior design challenges. Inspired by the textures and aesthetics of natural fibers, Merida uniquely customizes its products through sizing, colors and patterns and a selection of over 300 different edge finishes. Merida area rugs can be created in sizes and shapes to fit most room décors. We are committed to a tradition of integrating the finest quality natural fibers with innovative textile design and floor covering style. Merida is headquartered in Boston, Mass., maintains a manufacturing facility in Fall River, Mass. and partners with leading manufacturers and suppliers around the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.meridameridian.com>.

About Artists For Humanity

Artists For Humanity's mission is to bridge economic, racial and social divisions by providing under-served youth with the

keys to self-sufficiency through paid employment in the arts. AFH has been providing design services since 1991. The organization's unique creative products and services capture the voice, vision and virtuosity of Boston's youth artists. Visit the AFH website for more information www.afhboston.com.

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