



[January 10, 2011 11:00 AM Eastern Time](#)

The Next Big Give Finalists Announced

National contest honors small businesses with outstanding community generosity

DALLAS--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Dallas Market Center, the world's most complete wholesale resource, today announced the 10 finalists for The Next Big Give, a national search for small businesses that give back in their communities. The finalists are retailers that are involved in a variety of ways through volunteering, raising funds or donating goods.

"Congratulations to The Next Big Give finalists"

"Congratulations to The Next Big Give finalists," said Bill Winsor, president and CEO, Dallas Market Center. "We thank each of you for the difference you make in your communities and hope your stories will encourage even more retailers to do the same."

The Next Big Give 2011 finalists are:

[Barre Electric & Lighting](#) – Berlin, Vt.

Owner Greg Isabelle has a program at his lighting store called Lights On To Help Others. Barre offers special deals on select lighting with the opportunity for the customer to donate half the proceeds to their charity of choice. To date, 14 charities have benefited from the program including Relay for Life, Vermont Foodbank, and Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity.

[Brown](#) – Houston, Texas

Under the leadership of Owner Jill Brown, this home furnishings retailer put its entire 2010 advertising budget towards two incredible events raising funds for Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Yellowstone Academy. The event Brown hosted benefiting FFA was specifically targeted towards the chapter at Lamar High School, which is located near the store.

[Gigi's Fabulous Kids' Fashions & Toys](#) – Rosemary Beach, Fla.

Geri Golding Higgs, owner, holds a lemonade stand at her store each Saturday afternoon during the summer months. Higgs provides the supplies and local children volunteer to work at the stand. All the proceeds are donated to Alaqua Animal Refuge, the area's only no-kill animal shelter. Children also paint pictures of adoptable animals and the paintings are sold to benefit the shelter. Gigi's has donated more than \$7,500 to Alaqua Animal Refuge.

[Grigsby's Boutique](#) – San Angelo, Texas

Since 2007, Owner Dana Calhoun has been hosting a luncheon called Catwalk for a Cure. The luncheon includes a fashion show in which the models are all cancer survivors. Catwalk for a Cure had 700 attendees in 2010. Grigsby's also hosted a new event in 2010 called Tee Off for Tatas, a golf tournament for men and women. Through the funds raised by these two events and partnering with the local hospital, Calhoun created the Cancer Empowerment and Resource Center. Grigsby's is a clothing and accessory retailer.

[Island Breeze](#) – Sunset Beach, N.C.

With more than \$10 million raised for various charity organizations to date, Owners Ronnie and Clarice Holden involve each of their employees in deciding where they will donate their time and money. One special event hosted by Island Breeze called Cure by Design is a fashion show featuring cancer survivors benefiting cancer research. Island Breeze offers customers an array of apparel and shoes.

Leon & Lulu – Clawson, Mich.

After hosting more than 50 cause-related events per year at the home and gift retail store since 2009, Owner Mary Liz Curtin has no intention of slowing down. One event in 2010 was a Girls' Night Out which raised \$9,500 for Bishop Foley Catholic High School. Another notable event held at the store was In the Eat of the Night. Attendees sampled some of the area's best food and drink and the fundraiser grossed \$15,000.

Morgan Fitzgerald's – Bryan, Texas

The Twin City Mission has always been close to the heart of Owner Nancy Pride. After meeting with the director of the Mission, Pride wanted to help with one of the organization's greatest needs—twin bed sheets. Morgan Fitzgerald's hosted a Toga Party, where the admission was two twin bed sheets. There was also a raffle at the event, and all proceeds were donated to Twin City Mission. Morgan Fitzgerald's is a jewelry and accessories boutique.

SimplySoles – Washington, District of Columbia

Spurred by a passion for recycling, Owner Kassie Rempel asks that customers mail in their gently worn pairs of shoes, which are then donated to Suited For Change, a local non-profit that provides professional clothing and accessories for women transitioning from homeless shelters, jail and drug rehabilitation programs. SimplySoles has donated more than 2,000 pairs of shoes so far. SimplySoles is a shoe and accessory retailer.

Stuff – Kansas City, Mo.

The gift and accessories retailer is owned by sisters Sloane and Casey Simmons. Stuff holds Wings of Hope, a holiday open house benefiting The Susan Henke Miller Breast Cancer Research Fund. The store also raises funds for the Kansas City AIDS Walk through a party called Grab Bag, as well as sponsoring a team during the walk.

Tea & Magnolias – Tulsa, Okla.

Each Christmas, Owner Susan Ponville hosts a Christmas Home Tour at her gift and accessories shop, giving all the proceeds to Pathways Adult Learning Center, a local school for special needs adults. The store sells crosses that are handmade by a group of special needs adults in order to fund the group's activities. Tea & Magnolias also sells jewelry and purses made by Peruvian women with all of the proceeds going back to help the women support their families.

The Next Big Give winners (two) will be announced on February 14, 2011 and receive a complimentary trip to the March 24-27, 2011 wholesale market in Dallas including round-trip airfare from anywhere in the continental U.S. and three nights hotel stay.

While at Market, The Next Big Give winners will be recognized during The Inspired Event, a cocktail party and silent auction benefiting a charitable cause. The winners will share their stories of giving back in hopes to inspire others to do the same.

Retailers either nominated themselves or were nominated by a manufacturer, a sales representative, buyer or customer. The finalists were selected by a panel of industry experts and Dallas Market Center representatives.

For additional information on the contest, visit www.dallasmarketcenter.com/give or e-mail thenextbiggive@mcmcmail.com.

Dallas Market Center holds four Total Home & Gift Markets and five Apparel & Accessories Markets each year. Retail buyers are offered new lines and products at Dallas Market Center throughout its permanent showrooms and temporary exhibition space.

About Dallas Market Center

Founded in 1957, Dallas Market Center is the world's most complete wholesale marketplace. Within its marketplace of more than five million square feet, retailers from around the globe source products ranging from home furnishings, gifts, decorative accessories and lighting to textiles, fashion accessories and men's, western, women's and children's apparel. With more than 50 markets each year attended by more than 200,000 retail buyers from all 50 states and 78 countries, Dallas Market Center offers hundreds of events

and seminars geared toward helping retailers expand business and increase profits. As a result, more than \$8 billion in estimated wholesale transactions are conducted annually within the Dallas Market Center complex. The Dallas Market Center website is available at www.dallasmarketcenter.com.

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Permalink: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110110005150/en/Big-Give-Finalists-Announced>