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## **Institute of Music for Children Wins The IKEA Life Improvement Challenge and Receives Complete Makeover**

**Elizabeth, NJ March 17, 2015** –The Institute of Music for Children in Elizabeth, NJ was awarded a complete IKEA makeover of two of its classroom spaces from the IKEA store (Elizabeth). The makeover will enable students to benefit from a beautiful and productive space to learn, as well as provide an opportunity to expand on-site fundraising and outreach events.

Executive Director, Alysia Souder, is thrilled about the makeover saying, "We are so grateful for this one of a kind opportunity from IKEA. We know that this transformation will make an enormous impact on our organization. In addition, the Improvement Challenge has generated a great deal of support and excitement from our members and our community. We all can't wait to see the results."

IKEA wants to play a part in creating a better life for the many people, as well as communities touched by IKEA business. While IKEA works on a global level to improve the lives of people in developing countries, IKEA also wants to be a good neighbor in its local communities. The IKEA Life Improvement Co-worker challenge is one way to make a difference closer to home.

### **How the IKEA Life Improvement Challenge Works:**

Each year, IKEA receives many inspiring proposals from IKEA co-workers as candidates for the campaign. Then the IKEA steering committee - at each store - selects up to three organizations for co-workers and customers to vote online (this year's voting period was February 16 - March 2). The charitable organization, from each store market, with the highest number of online votes becomes the winner, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners receive IKEA gift cards.

IKEA US started the IKEA Life Improvement Challenge in 2011, and since then over 120 local charities have received over \$1 million in IKEA products, design expertise, and manpower.

For more information on the winners, read here:

[http://www.ikea.com/ms/en\\_US/img/ad\\_content/FY15\\_IKEA\\_Life\\_Improvement\\_Challenge\\_Winners\\_List.pdf](http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_US/img/ad_content/FY15_IKEA_Life_Improvement_Challenge_Winners_List.pdf)

**Contact: Porché Hardy, Assistant Director- Institute of Music for Children**

**About Local Charity:** The Institute of Music for Children, New Jersey's fastest-growing arts-based youth development organization believes that artistic expression and the creative process prepare children for success, endow them with life skills and self-confidence, and realize our vision of **H.A.R.M.O.N.Y - Helping Achieve Responsible Motivated Optimistic Neighborhood Youth**. A recipient of a 2014 Citation of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Institute provides over 600 children annually with high-quality, economically accessible, year round arts training in a wide-range of art forms including piano, guitar, drums, acting, singing and dancing and visual arts.

### **About IKEA Group**

The IKEA vision is to create a better everyday life for the many people. Our business idea supports this vision by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them. There are currently 315 IKEA Group stores in 27 countries. Additionally, there are 40 IKEA stores run by franchises. There are 40 IKEA stores in the US. In FY 14, IKEA Group had 716 million visitors to the stores and 1.5 billion visitors to IKEA.com. IKEA incorporates sustainability into day-to-day business and supports initiatives that benefit children and the environment. For more information, please visit [www.IKEA.com](http://www.IKEA.com), [facebook.com/IKEAUSA](https://www.facebook.com/IKEAUSA), [@IKEAUSANews](https://twitter.com/IKEAUSANews), [@IKEAUSA](https://twitter.com/IKEAUSA), <http://pinterest.com/IKEAUSA/>, [www.youtube.com/IKEAUSA](https://www.youtube.com/IKEAUSA), [www.theshare-space.com](http://www.theshare-space.com), [www.theshare-space.com/en/Blog](http://www.theshare-space.com/en/Blog)