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## **Charleston Auto Auction Named Southern Chapter Auto Auction of the Year**

*National Auto Auction Association's Award Recognizes Excellence in Public Service*

FREDERICK, MD—Charleston Auto Auction (CAA), a member of the XLerate Group, has been named the National Auto Auction Association's 2017 Southern Chapter Auto Auction of the Year for its outstanding public service. The Moncks Corner, South Carolina, business was chosen for its depth of commitment that went beyond financial support to taking a very active role in making the local school principal's dream of a residence for homeless students a reality.

The auction will be one of four finalists representing NAAA's Eastern, Midwest, Southern and Western chapters competing for the top honor of NAAA's "Auto Auction of the Year Award for Excellence in Community Service." Each of the contenders will be recognized at the association's annual convention in November with a crystal trophy. They will also get a photo in NAAA's member publications and \$5,000 payable to a charity of the auction's choice.

"As we celebrate National Auto Auction Week I'm proud to announce Charleston Auto Auction as our candidate for NAAA's Auto Auction of the Year," said NAAA Southern Chapter President Doug Rodriguez. "All our entrants deserve recognition for their public service, but none touched us more than Charleston Auto Auction. Their dedication to helping homeless teens, who were couch surfing or sleeping on benches at the mall and had no idea where their next meal would come from, have a safe place to live so they could focus on school was heartwarming."

Charleston County School District nominated the auction to be honored for its work addressing the problem of 21 homeless students at R.B. Stall High School with its ongoing support of then Principal Kim Wilson's vision of a house, staffed by surrogate parents, that would provide stability and consistency as well as a bed and meals through his plan called Project H.O.M.E. (Helping Others Mirror Excellence").

After a news story about the proposed project aired on TV, Wilson got an email from Jason Moritz, assistant general manager at CAA, saying, "Looking forward to raising some funds to help with your efforts!!!"

"I was dumbfounded; here was a guy I didn't know representing a business I never heard of wanting to help these kids," recalled Wilson, now the executive director for the school district's secondary education community. "And help they did!"

The auction immediately organized a special month-long sale, partnering with its dealers to donate a percentage of every vehicle bought or sold. The response was so positive the dealers donated more money above the original agreement. Next the business reached out to the general community soliciting contributions. Additional fundraising during the year collected more than \$26,000 to get the home under construction with the goal of housing students this fall.

“They continue to be a driving force behind this project,” Wilson noted. “They have taken an active role in making this home their mission with the auction’s General Manager Laura Taylor and Jason joining our board of directors. They also speak to businesses and groups in the community to encourage involvement. It’s people like the management and employees at Charleston Auto Auction who see a need and take action that make a difference in this world.”

Taylor said working with the H.O.M.E. team has been a pleasure because “they have huge hearts,” adding, “We’re excited about giving students an environment so they can concentrate on academics and sports and not on where they’ll sleep at night. Charleston Auto Auction and its customers plan on continuing donations to ensure Project H.O.M.E.’s success.”

In addition to that project, Charleston Auto Auction assists a variety of other causes, including a local food bank, orphan group, animal shelter and camp program for seriously ill children.

NAAA established the annual awards in 2016 to recognize the many charitable acts auctions already perform and to encourage even greater volunteer involvement. The winner of the “Auto Auction of the Year Award for Excellence in Community Service” receives a large crystal loving cup, a cover photo and feature story in both NAAA’s On The Block magazine and annual Membership Directory, plus \$20,000 payable to the auction’s chosen charity that’s in addition to the previous \$5,000 prize as a chapter finalist.

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