

News Release

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Inclusive, Sustainable STEM Education for 4,000 Kids

Makers Faire & Science Festival will feature a submarine, Makerspace, FirstBIKE donation and more!

[WASHINGTON, JULY 24, 2014] – What can you do with old water bottles, popsicle sticks, newspapers and a little paint? Create robots, Rube Goldberg machines and self-propelled vehicles! Thingamajig® is a catalyst for strategic thinking and creative expression for the same demographics lacking access to STEM education. With over 50 workshops, 15 invention challenges and one-on-one time with STEM experts, over 4,000 kids will leave with a profound belief that they could be the next great.

“We understand that STEM is our students’ future – the technological age in which we live, the best career options and the key to wise decisions,” shares Angie Reese-Hawkins, President & CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. “Making science and math fun and interesting will not only help students learn, but can grow into a rewarding STEM career.”

Only 16% of high school seniors are proficient in mathematics and interested in STEM. Yet, STEM shapes our everyday experiences and is designing our future. Thingamajig® taps into kids’ natural curiosity while humanizing the misconceived notion of a scientist. In its 20th anniversary, the event will feature a simulated Operating Room, a stop-motion animation workshop, an 8 Foot Submarine with the ONR, astronaut school with the FAA, forensic sciences and more. We’ll also have a donation of 300 balance bikes by FirstBIKE, an innovative balance bike that encourages children 22 months to 5 years old to enjoy hours of activity.

“To be able to see kids excited about a science convention is refreshing to me,” shares Lena Alston of the National Science Foundation. “It’s interesting to see the informal learning methods that other hosts come up with. To help kids learn one-on-one and explain to them that these are things they can actually have a career in – is just outstanding.”

At the YMCA, summers full of inspired learning STEM from Thingamajig®. For 20 years, we’ve sparked the inventive, creative minds of children through hands-on workshops, challenges and exhibits. Starting out with 143 kids in 1994, it has grown to over 4,000 participants in its 20th year. In 2013, over 400 resourceful, recyclable inventions were submitted, and 57 vendors led interactive in STEM education. In addition, 426 volunteers were there to recognize and reinforce kids for their analyses and original ideas. Thingamajig is free and open to the public.

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About the Y

The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the DC region, 18 Ys engage over 200,000 men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. The Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver lasting personal and social change. For more information, visit ymcadc.org, like us at facebook.com/YMetroDC or follow us at twitter.com/ymcadc.