

## News Release

Contact: Jackie Dilworth  
Director of Communications  
YMCA of Metropolitan Washington  
(240) 593-5529; [Jackie.Dilworth@ymcadc.org](mailto:Jackie.Dilworth@ymcadc.org)

### **Luring Thousands of DC-Area Youth to Earth Sciences**

*YMCA DC's STEM Festival to reach 4,000 local youth, 400 volunteers and 9 major U.S. cities!*

**[WASHINGTON, JULY 23, 2015]** – How can you use old water bottles, popsicle sticks and newspapers? Design robots, Rube Goldberg machines and fashion accessories. Today, the YMCA of Metro Washington's [Thingamajig® Invention Convention](#) will create a generation of creative, earth-friendly and active tinkerers from low-income youth who lack access to quality STEM education. With 50 workshops and 15 invention challenges, over 4,000 kids will learn that science is fun and practical with the help of 400 volunteers and Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker. Starting next week, STEM invention programs inspired by Thingamajig® will be launched in 9 major U.S. cities.

"The event [is] bursting at the seams with creativity, positive reinforcement and fun," shares volunteer Caroline Struggs of United Way Worldwide. "I get so excited about Thingamajig because it's the best thing in my life next to Christmas," depicts a 9-year old camper from YMCA Alexandria. "It's so much fun and you get really cool prizes for the things you do."

Thingamajig® taps into natural curiosity while illuminating the role STEM has on our everyday experiences. In its 21<sup>st</sup> year, the event features an astronaut school with the FAA, fitness challenges, makerspace with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, farmer's market with Giant Food and other workshops led by the Crime Museum, American Chemical Society and others. Volunteers from PEPCO, Washington Gas, M&T Bank and more will support the event.

"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 physical activity fun and interesting will not only help kids learn, but will help them grow into happy, productive adults."

For 21 years, the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington has validated curiosity and creativity through hands-on STEM workshops, challenges and active play. Starting out with 143 kids in 1994, the Thingamajig Invention Convention [has grown](#) to over 4,000 kids and 400 volunteers. In 2014, it featured over 400 youth-created inventions and 53 interactive STEM workshops. It will be launched in Rochester, San Antonio, San Francisco, Charlotte, St. Louis, Birmingham, Jacksonville, Seattle and Salt Lake City in summer 2015. Thingamajig is free and open to the public. Learn more at [www.ymcadc.org/Thingamajig](http://www.ymcadc.org/Thingamajig).

###

#### **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, 17 Ys engage over 250,000 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](http://ymcadc.org), like us at [facebook.com/YMetroDC](https://facebook.com/YMetroDC) or follow us at [twitter.com/ymcadc](https://twitter.com/ymcadc).