

News Release

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The Next Great Invention - from the Mind a 6 Year Old

YMCA-DC's Thingamajig inspires a new generation of 4,000+ innovators through science, invention challenges and more

[WASHINGTON, JULY 25, 2013] – Every year, hordes of consumers are first in line for Apple's latest game-changing innovation. But imagine if the next big thing was invented by a 6-year old. Today, over 4,000 DC-area youth are stretching their imagination and creativity at the Y's Thingamajig Invention Convention. Peaking months of designing and constructing, hundreds of [eco-friendly inventions](#) are debuted with hopes of winning their category – which includes prizes, praise and a party at the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office. In addition, kids engage in workshops and challenges such as LEGO Robotics, FAA Smart Skies, Siemen Mars Rover Replica, YMCA obstacle course, career-focused games with Miss America 2013, Giant Food Pea Pod and more.

"We made a robot that does whatever you want it to do," spurt Giada and Darya, 6-year old Y campers. "I would use it to store secret things – 'cause it does that too. Thingamajig is fun because we get to make stuff that people might actually use. I didn't know how to make anything at first, but now I do."



"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. I'm glad I can be there and plant that seed, spark an interest."

The Y's Thingamajig Invention Convention creates a full-summer of inspired learning that culminates into one day. Starting out with 143 kids in 1994, it has grown to over 4,000 participants in its 19th year. Through interactive workshops and challenges, this event validates kids' natural creativity and curiosity, allowing them to develop self-confidence, self-expression and healthy habits. In 2012, 426 resourceful, recyclable inventions were submitted, and 52 interactive workshops (lead by 25+ leading organizations) engaged kids in [STEAM education](#). In addition, over 400 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 region, 17 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.