



# SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

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## San Gabriel Unified Students Promote Innovation at Middle School Invention Convention

**SAN GABRIEL, CA** – Seventh-grader Vicki Lam was so fed up with constantly dropping her phone and having her arms go numb while watching videos that she invented the Amazing Phone Stand, a 3D-printed tool that does all the tedious work of holding a cell phone.

Lam's concept was one of more than 600 inventions that filled the Jefferson Middle School gymnasium during the school's second annual Invention Convention, all aimed at accomplishing one objective: invent a solution to an everyday problem.

"It's a fun way to express your creativity and your ideas," Lam said. "It's not every day that a teacher asks you to invent something that would help people, so I just wanted to express my creativity to solve a problem for myself and many other people."

The April 26 event had students dressed in their best personal attire and showing off ideas that included protective foam shoe covers, 3D-printed skewers wrapped in Silly Putty for removing sand from car seats and even a hands-free umbrella that wears like a hat.

The Invention Convention culminated months of student work as part of the school's project-based learning curriculum, initiated by eighth-grade language arts teacher Heather Wolpert-Gawron.

More than 40 judges, including representatives from JPL, Cal Tech, 3D printer materials supplier MatterHackers and various San Gabriel Unified educators, evaluated the student work and selected winners for the most creative inventions and best presentations.

Seventh-graders Thomas Yu, Claudio Gomez and Kyra Yoshita won first, second and third place in "Best Presentation," respectively. Seventh-grader Scarlet Gillings won first place for "Most Creative," while eighth-grader Andrew Deatrick and seventh-grader Jolie Ngo won second and third place, respectively.

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Judges evaluated projects based on the identification of a problem, the viability of a solution, evidence of research, solution creativity, prototype creativity, presentation board quality, website quality and persuasiveness of the pitch.

“I love that the entire District got to see the overview of the talent and brains of these students and it’s amazing to be able to show what every classroom has been doing,” Wolpert-Gawron said. “I feel privileged to have been a part of so many students’ ‘eureka!’ moments and how we get to share the culmination of that work. The pride I feel in these students makes me get a little choked up.”

Twelve winners were selected for each category; the top six winners for each category received trophies with 3D-printed toppers, while the remaining convention winners received 3D-printed medals.

“The opportunity to solve real-world problems by using critical thinking skills and ingenuity can provide students a strong foundation for future academic and professional success,” SGUSD Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. “Congratulations to all of our winners and participants in this year’s Invention Convention for their hard work and innovation.”

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**050117\_SANGAB\_INVENTION1:** Jefferson Middle School eighth-grader Eunice Kay presents her website detailing her invention of a device that cleans sand from car seat crevasses called the “SandMan,” for judge Coyla Grumm during the school’s second annual Invention Convention, an event that celebrates student innovation through project-based learning.

**050117\_SANGAB\_INVENTION2:** Sixth-grader Nathan Kan gives retired JPL Project and Task Manager Dick Grumm an explanation of his sound-amplifying “Mega Speakers” during the second annual Invention Convention at Jefferson Middle School on April 26.

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