



January 17, 2012

Contact:

Sue Hanson

763-657-0987

Global Kid Inventors Honored by ePals and Smithsonian

K-12 kid innovators from India, Turkey, Canada and U.S. win Invention Challenge with products that improve daily life, add fun and efficiency.

Washington, DC — ePals Corporation (TSX-V: SLN), an education media company and leading safe social learning network, and the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation are happy to announce the 15 student winners of their international K-12 Invention Challenge. Coinciding with Kid Inventors' Day, which commemorates the January 17th birthday of inventive founding father Benjamin Franklin, today's unveiling of winning products showcases a range of unique student inventions, including a cycle umbrella, cell phone radiation shield, portable spot cleaner, overnight pet feeder, cherry slicer, and more.

With an invitation to think, explore, sketch and create, the Invention Challenge encourages kids to discover the key steps of the invention process and a range of higher-order thinking skills from identifying a need, through researching, building, refining and marketing their products. Students were able to use up to five common household items, such as bottle caps, buttons, playing cards, sponges, tape, cardboard, and kitchen utensils in their inventions and had the option to submit final projects in video, PowerPoint or document form.

Notre Dame Academy Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) kindergarten teacher Patricia Genovese, two of whose students were among the winners, says her students reacted "with awe and excitement" to the Invention Challenge, and adds, "What has been most rewarding is the students' realization that they can make a difference in our world." And teacher Rob Potter, whose four-student team of seventh graders at Cameron Street Public School (Collingwood, Ontario, Canada) invented a winning dog vacuum, says he hopes their recognition "will inspire other students throughout the school to pursue scientific excellence."

Among the criteria ePals and Smithsonian educator-judges looked for were originality, effectiveness, creativity, and technical quality.

Tricia Edwards, Education Specialist at the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation and Invention Challenge judge, says, "We were thrilled with the quality of the inventions students entered. The kids were very engaged in the process and excited about their projects."

The Invention Challenge this year recognizes 10 winners and five runners up from around the globe and represents students in grades kindergarten through 11.

“At ePals, we’re so happy to be supporting teachers and students with opportunities such as the Invention Challenge that encourage creativity and innovation, while also reinforcing critical science and literacy skills,” says ePals Co-Founder, Tim DiScipio. “This kind of applied learning experience helps plant the seeds for important Science, Engineering, Technology and Math (STEM) skills, but is also just plain fun for the whole class.”

A full list of Invention Challenge winners and runners up includes the following:

Winners:

- **Ashuni P.** --- Cycle Umbrella; Navrachana School, Vadodara, Gujarat, India
- **Aadesh S.** --- Radiation Shield; Navrachana School, Vadodara, Gujarat, India
- **Ailis E.** --- Overnight Pet Feeder; Castle Park Elementary School, Port Coquitlam, BC, Canada
- **Ciara L.** --- Amazing Foot Warmers Invention; Notre Dame Academy Elementary School, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- **Dahmir B.** --- Wonder Sweeper; D.U.E. Season Charter School, Camden, NJ, USA
- **Haley W., Ezra T., Asia T., Joe S.** --- The Dog Vacuum; Cameron Street Public School, Collingwood, Ontario, Canada
- **Mara B. and Luis H.** --- Cherry Slicer Invention; Ellis Elementary School, Manassas, VA, USA
- **Metehan K.** --- Handy Gadget; Ozel Sariyer Doga, Ilkogretim, Okulu, Istanbul, Turkey
- **Senolcan** --- Amazing Invention ; Ozel Sariyer Doga, Ilkogretim, Okulu, Istanbul, Turkey
- **Shreyam** --- Indicator in Gas Cylinder; Navrachana School, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Honorable Mentions:

- **Benjamin M.** --- Safety Straw; Notre Dame Elementary School, Los Angeles, CA, USA
- **Camden T.** --- Indoor Dog Exerciser; Jeffreys Grove Elementary School, Raleigh, NC, USA
- **Gabriel L.** --- Bustinator; John Young Elementary School, Kanata, Ontario, Canada
- **Ipek C.** --- Night Lamp; Ozel Sariyer Doga, Ilkogretim, Okulu, Istanbul, Turkey
- **Zen Z.** --- Water Lily Tablet Inserter; Winamac Community Middle School, Winamac, IN, USA

ePals has dedicated a resource center in honor of the Invention Challenge (http://www.epals.com/projects/info.aspx?divid=Smithsonian_InventionChallenge_Winners). It includes winning student projects and a host of classroom resources for teachers wishing to commemorate Benjamin Franklin’s contributions to innovation.

About ePals Corporation

ePals Corporation (TSXV: SLN) is an education media company and the leading provider of safe social learning networks (SLN). Focused on the K-12 market, ePals offers elementary and secondary school administrators, teachers, students and parents worldwide a safe and secure platform for building educational communities, providing quality digital content and facilitating collaboration for effective 21st century learning. ePals' award-winning products include: the ePals Global Community™; SchoolMail®365; LearningSpace®; and In2Books®, a common core eMentoring program that builds reading, writing and critical thinking skills. ePals customers and partners include International Baccalaureate, Microsoft Corporation, Dell Inc., IBM Corp., National Geographic and leading school

districts across the United States and globally. ePals serves approximately 700,000 educators and reaches millions of teachers, students and parents in approximately 200 countries and territories. For the ePals Global Community, visit www.epals.com. Corporate information is available at www.corp.epals.com.

About the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation

The Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation (<http://invention.smithsonian.org/home/>) is part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Its mission is to document, interpret, and disseminate information about invention and innovation, to encourage creativity in young people, and to foster an appreciation for the central role of invention and innovation in the history of the United States.

###