

For Immediate Release

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## **INSPIRING FUTURE SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS WITH THE REGION'S LARGEST ECO-FRIENDLY COMPETITION**

**The YMCA's 17<sup>th</sup> annual Thingamajig Invention Convention engages and stimulates nearly 4,000 local children in the largest learning carnival of its kind**

**Washington, D.C., July 28, 2011** – As advances in technology and our way of life emerge on a daily basis, it's essential that today's youth can imagine the future with unbound energy, technology, utility, and environmental respect. Today, local YMCA campers and youth took over the Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, MD to exercise their imagination and gain experiential knowledge of science, technology, and the environment. Through this full day of stimulating, hands-on challenges and activities, our kids will become stakeholders and active contributors to the changes we all wish to see in the world.

"Thingamajig is a unique approach to building community around the entrepreneurial spirit and creativity of children," describes Angie L. Reese-Hawkins, President and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. "Young innovators bring and showcase their inspiring ideas, giving them a say in the future amidst community leaders, organizations, and volunteers. The diversity, energy, and anticipation are magical... something you have to see to believe."

At the Y's Thingamajig Invention Convention, local youth will become eco-friendly innovators, using recycled materials to create a variety of inventions, including a competition for on-the-spot creations! The arena will be filled with recyclable robots, fashion ensembles, fitness gear and equipment, flying machines, and much more. Not only will children explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), they will also have the opportunity to learn about organic gardening, showcase their talents through performing arts, talk to specialists in aeronautics and engineering, sample health foods, and take part in active fitness and play. This event is sure to pique any child's interest and help them discover a hidden passion.

In its 17<sup>th</sup> year, the Y's Thingamajig Invention Convention has grown from 20 kids in a backyard to over 3,800 participants last year. This free event taps into and harnesses the creativity of local youth, giving them a more practical sense of the world through education and engagement. Last year, the Y received over 900 recyclable invention submissions, and engaged the youth participants with 48 interactive workshops. In addition, over 400 volunteers served as judges, activity leaders, and assistants to bring the event to life. This year, the Y plans to expand our reach even further, nurturing the potential of our region's youth and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

### ***About the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington***

*The YMCA of Metropolitan Washington has been providing vital programs and services for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility for nearly 160 years. We are one of the largest social service agencies serving Washington, DC, suburban Maryland, and northern Virginia, having touched the lives of 265,000 people last year through our 17 branches and program centers. The Y is committed to growing our community and ensuring that everyone has access to spiritual, mental, and physical growth, regardless of their ability to pay. For more information, visit [www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org).*

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