



IMAGINE IT.
INVENT IT.
CHANGE THE WORLD.

THINGAMAJIG

FREE EVENT!
CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES!
AGES 5-14

32ND ANNUAL YMCA THINGAMAJIG® INVENTION CONVENTION

AUGUST 5, 2026 | The Show Place Arena, Upper Marlboro, MD | Volunteer • Sponsor • Participate



CHALLENGES

CALLING ALL INVENTORS!
Create unique inventions from recyclable materials in the categories below.



Trash to Flash

Turn everyday throwaways into high-fashion runway masterworks! Raid the recycling bin to design, engineer, and wear an eco-friendly outfit or accessory that proves sustainability is always in style.

Cardboard Craze

Transform ordinary cardboard into an extraordinary structural marvel! From towering skyscrapers and wearable armor to intricate vehicles, test the limits of your imagination and engineering skills to see how far a simple box can take you.

Critter Hideout

Step into the shoes of a wildlife architect! Design a cozy, clever, and safe sanctuary where a real or imaginary creature can hide, rest, and stay protected from the elements. Think about comfort, camouflage, and survival.

Trick Maker

Master the art of disguise! Invent a clever gadget, hidden compartment, or optical illusion that completely fools the eye—it looks like one ordinary object on the outside, but secretly holds a totally different surprise within.

School Power-Up

Hack your school day! Design a brilliant classroom companion, locker organizer, or study tool that takes the stress out of schoolwork, boosts your brainpower, or injects a massive dose of fun into the school day.

Chore No More

Put an end to household boredom! Engineer a creative gadget or mechanical assistant designed to conquer your daily chores. Whether it's making your bed, sweeping the floor, or cleaning your room, let your invention do the heavy lifting.

Mission Machine

Focus on functionality! Build a specialized mechanical device or chain-reaction machine with one ultra-specific mission. Focus on precision, moving parts, and reliable engineering to make sure your machine gets the job done every single time.

Hang Tight

Defy the laws of physics! Experiment with counterweights, centers of gravity, and structural balance to build a mind-bending, gravity-defying sculpture or apparatus that hangs, tilts, or balances in a way that seems completely impossible.

Snack Track Attack

Don't just eat your food—engineer its journey! Design a wild, whimsical, and unpredictable track, ramp, or coaster that sends a favorite snack on a thrilling, gravity-powered ride before it reaches its final destination.

Mini-Me Remix

Celebrate who you are through mixed-media art! Construct a vibrant, 3D self-portrait using repurposed and recycled materials that tells the story of your unique personality, favorite hobbies, and creative spark.

Robot Ruckus

Bring a recycled robot to life! Use your imagination and discarded components to engineer a stationary or moving robot helper. Will your robotic creation solve a real-world problem, show off a cool trick, or save the day?

Learn more about THINGAMAJIG and register for the competition:
ymcadc.org/programs/thingamajig

