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For immediate release:
May 10, 2016

Imagination not Remediation:

*KID Museum's Invention Studio Offers Creativity, Confidence and Possibility
to Middle-School Students*

In an era of high-stakes testing, KID Museum is offering middle-school students something new. The museum has partnered with Minority Scholars programs at local Montgomery County middle schools to create the *Invention Studio Program*, now in its second year and growing. "This is imagination rather than remediation," says KID Museum Founder, Cara Lesser. "Rather than giving students more worksheets, we're activating kids to think creatively and discover their capacity for learning and making."

Invention Studio students choose a field of interest (ie. aerodynamics, robotics, digital music, or circuits and 3D design) and then create something of their own over a series of visits to KID Museum. The program emphasizes creative thinking and expertise through experiential learning, alongside developing socio-emotional skills like collaboration and self-confidence.

The culmination of this year's program takes place on Sunday, May 22 at KID Museum. It's a public event, where the students from Parkland and Westland Middle Schools will be featured as young inventors (as part of the museum's *Meet the Inventors* series), to display their creations and discuss the invention process.

Shawaan Robinson, Assistant Principal at Westland Middle School and developer of Westland's Minority Scholars Program, states: "For some of our students, this has been a life-changing experience. They've gained an incredible self-confidence; they really know the meaning of teamwork and collaboration."

KID Museum currently partners with seven middle schools in Montgomery County, either at the museum's Davis Library location, or on-site at the school. The success of these programs has led to increased demand, and a number of other local schools hope to take part in the coming academic year.

Cori Daniel, whose daughter is a member of the Westland Scholars Program, says, "Sometimes, unfortunately, minorities are overlooked. This program highlights minorities, saying we see you, we recognize you, and we know that you can do a great job. This program instills in the kids the power of learning, the power that they can *do*, that they can *be*."

"Anyone who questions whether this is valuable time spent just needs to see a glimpse of these students in action," adds Alison Serino, Principal of Westland Middle School. "Their brains are firing on all cylinders, they're so creative, they're working collaboratively... everything about this program ended up being perfect."

For most of the Invention Studio students, this is their first exposure to intensive, hands-on STEM learning, which translates into new possibilities. The mother of an Invention Studio student described her amazement when her daughter, who'd always said she wanted go into theater when she grew up said, "Well, Mom, I like the sciences now."

Graduates from last year's pilot program with Parkland had similar responses. Their end-of-program reflections highlighted a discovery of their own abilities and a newfound interest in science. Immediately following their experiences at KID Museum, five Parkland students applied and were accepted into the competitive GEMS program run by Army Research Laboratories.

As explained by a Parkland 8th grader, "I built a house with a 3D printer and put lights on the house. This made me discover, if I just think for a moment, the impossible is possible."

Meet the Inventors: Invention Studio Celebration takes place on Sunday, May 22, 12:30 to 2:30pm, at KID Museum, lower-level of Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd, Bethesda, MD.

About KID Museum

KID Museum is a new kind of museum in the DC metro region that inspires elementary and middle school-aged children to "explore the world, invent the future" through unique, interactive experiences that integrate hands-on science, technology, engineering, art and math learning with an exploration of world cultures and global citizenship.

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