

## Keefe Tech, McAuliffe School students' art unveiled at Natick dealership

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NATICK – Sophie Brandt loves superheroes.

And, the Christa McAuliffe Charter School sixth-grader thinks she has designed a car that superheroes will love.

“You can be as creative as you want, but you also have to be innovative,” Brandt, 12, of Ashland, said as she proudly displayed a drawing of her creation. After all, the car has to be useful.

Brandt’s design brings a classic superhero car into the future with a night-vision windshield, a way to see 10 miles ahead on the road and other features.

Brandt and many of her Christa McAuliffe Charter School sixth-grade classmates made drawings of cars as part of a partnership between the school and Mercedes-Benz of Natick. The Herb Chambers dealership also worked with Keefe Regional Technical School, whose students tackled pottery by creating coffee mugs, miniature cars and other items.

The schools and dealership unveiled students’ work at an event Thursday at Chambers Motorcars Pre-Owned at 157 West Central St., Natick. Judges representing the military, artistic and other communities evaluated students’ work, which is on display this month at the dealership.

As part of the projects, students connected with people working in science and design fields, such as Mercedes-Benz’ Monika Kossok.

The event and art projects are a way to show the dealership's commitment to education and supporting the neighborhood, said Carolyn Love, loyalty manager for Mercedes-Benz of Natick.

Love said the projects brought science and art together.

McAuliffe School design teacher Angela Ackerman said her students worked on different categories such as green, sporty and trendy cars. They put their research and drawing skills to the test, she said.

The project challenged students to "think outside of the box and become innovators," Ackerman said.

Many of the Keefe Tech students who took part had little experience with pottery before, said teacher Gregory Lamb.

"It's really important they learn to express themselves," Lamb said.

Bradley Kadets envisioned a camper-like vehicle that people could take on a trip and sleep in rather than bringing tents, the 12-year-old McAuliffe sixth-grader said.

The design includes seats that turn into beds and a windshield that displays GPS information.

Kadets, of Framingham, thought designing a vehicle would be easy. But, it turned out to be much harder and helped him realize all the work that goes into designing cars on the road, he said.

"I definitely think about cars differently now," he said.

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