



For immediate release

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Photo: (1) Palos West Elementary 4th grade students, (L-R) Kaylie Smit and Lucy Pater with their 'Most Innovative Pet Toy' winner the 'Puppy Piñata.' **(2)** Palos East Elementary 4th grader, Juliana Zagata, with her 'Most Creative' category winner 'Kawaii Corners.'





Palos 118 Students Win at 2021 Young Inventor Challenge

Students from Palos School District 118 took home two top prizes at the 2021 Young Inventor Challenge which was held virtually in November. The program gives students ages 6 to 18 an opportunity to develop and pitch their original inventions to toy and game companies and other industry professionals.

Palos West Elementary 4th grade students, Lucy Pater and Kaylie Smit, won in the 'Most Innovative Pet Toy' category with their toy the 'Puppy Piñata' which gives dogs who play a chance to tug on a rope that hopefully reveals a treat inside.

Palos East Elementary 4th grader, Juliana Zagata, won in the 'Most Creative' category with her game, 'Kawaii Corners' which includes a magnetic 3-dimensional board with cards she drew based on a Japanese style artwork she learned about in school. A player wins the game by being the first to have placed all their cards on the board.

The students developed their toys and games as part of the District's Accelerated Learning Program for Students (ALPS), according to Palos West teacher Carrie Martinez who teaches the program along with Palos East teacher Julie McNamara.

Mrs. Martinez said that their entries are the culmination of a unit on inventions that the classes started at the beginning of the school year with students learning about famous inventors and engaging in the engineering design process to create their own original toy or game.

Students researched, planned, sketched out designs, created a prototype, and tested their products before building a final prototype to submit to the contest. Students also used higher-level thinking skills to advertise their toy/game by creating a video pitch for the competition.

According to their website, the Young Inventor Challenge is designed “to inspire the next generation to use creativity, critical thinking, and STEAM skills in the invention and innovation process.”

“We are very proud of all the students who participated in this challenge,” said Mrs. Martinez and Mrs. McNamara, “It is an experience they will remember for years to come.”

About Palos School District 118

With a mission focused on providing the best education possible for children, Palos School District 118 seeks to create a safe, orderly, and caring learning environment in order to maximize the educational potential of every student, creating confident, adaptive, and successful life-long learners capable of reaching their full potential.

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