# Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, "Solving Problems Through Technology."

In this unit, we'll be reading about famous inventors like Thomas Alva Edison and George Washington Carver, as well as lesser-known figures like Mary Anderson, who invented the first windshield wiper, and George de Mestrel, the inventor of hook-and-loop fasteners. We will also read how robots help children who cannot attend school feel like they are with their peers.

As we read our selections, we will be studying the impact of different inventions, and we'll also be looking at how various inventions helped people solve problems. It's an exciting unit that will hopefully make inventions—and inventors—come alive for our children, and help them look at the world about them with fresh eyes. Maybe your child will become the next inventor to solve a problem through technology!

# Solving Problems Through Technology

In this unit, we will read about inventions and think in depth about the question "Where do ideas for inventions come from?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about inventions, inventors, and technology. I hope you'll not only build on the skills and concepts your child is learning in school but also enjoy the process of learning together.

Topic Connection

## Who Made That?

Compared to the lives of our grandparents and great-grandparents, our own lives are full of technological advances. Together with your child, look around your home and community. Think about all the devices that save time or effort or that make our lives more enjoyable. Pick one and research it together on the Internet. Find out how it came to be.

Vocabulary Connection

## Observe and Invent

In this unit, we will read about how some inventors came up with their ideas by observation of the world around them. Or they saw opportunities to make improvements to others' inventions, creating benefits for all. In fact, *observation, opportunities, improvements,* and *benefits* are a few of the new vocabulary words your child will learn in this unit. Discuss the meaning of these words and how they can be applied to your everyday lives.

Comprehension Connection

## Getting Down to Basics!

For this unit, we will be reading several informational texts. An important comprehension skill is to be able to summarize the important facts and details, especially when reading for information. To review this skill, read any nonfiction text with your child—it could be a newspaper article or a poster for an upcoming event. Ask your child to sum up what he or she has read.

Phonics Connections

## Oy and Ow Sounds

In our phonics instruction, students are reading words words that have the vowel *"o"* paired with another vowel or letter. The letter combinations *oi* and *oy* are pronounced "oy"(as in boy); the combinations *ou* and *ow* are pronounced "ow" (as in how). To help your child master this skill, look around your home or through printed materials and add to the list of words below from the unit.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **coin** | **enjoy** | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| **sound** | **now** | _____ | _____ | _____ |