



Invention Convention Alumni Spotlight Starring: Lindsey Hoell



Lindsey Hoell participated in Invention Convention in 1995-96, when she was a 6th grader at Pickerington Middle School, in central Ohio. She went on to share her fun invention, which solved a problem indeed, on national television with David Letterman.

Lindsey is currently a Pulmonary Perfusionist at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center and CEO of Kinda Fancy, a San Francisco Surf Company. She identified a problem for women surfers, being a surfer herself, and solved it by designing a new surf bikini with her fashion designer sister and digital designer/videographer brother.

Lindsey's entrepreneurial/problem solving spirit is an inspiration and we are thrilled to see she is still using those ever-important STEAM skills every day! Thanks for sharing your story with us Lindsey. Make sure to check out the video of her sharing her "Spaghetti Trough" on The Late Show with David Letterman.

Lindsey's surf wear is available at www.kinda-fancy.com

Check out Dr. Claire's Interview with Lindsey

Dr. Claire: What did you invent and what problem did it solve?

Lindsey: I invented the spaghetti trough. It was a silly way to eat spaghetti so that the noodles wouldn't fall off your fork. They were instead funneled into your mouth.

Dr. Claire: How/where did you find your problem to solve?

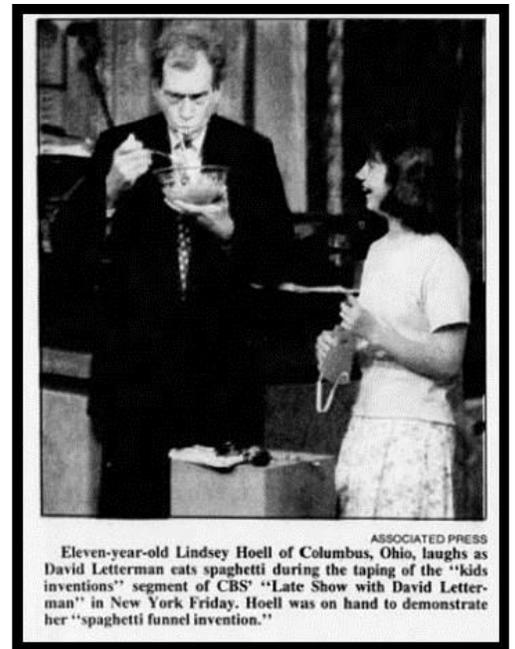
Lindsey: We had a spaghetti luncheon at Pickerington Middle School and we were all to figure out a way to eat spaghetti.

Dr. Claire: How did being part of the program impact your life?

Lindsey: Well, the Invention Convention led me to the David Letterman Show, where I was featured along with three other kid inventors. There was a lot of pressure during the auditioning process because I knew my entire hometown had their fingers crossed that I would make the cut. I think more than anything, the experience of the Invention Convention was my first introduction into performing under pressure, and learning how to turn fear into motivation to succeed.

Dr. Claire: Could you please share some highlights in your life since being part of Invention Convention?

Lindsey: Since the Invention Convention, I was awarded the Battelle Scholarship at The Ohio State University where I attended my undergraduate studies. Following that I went to Perfusion School at OSU as well, where I graduated with Honors and presented my research at our national conference. I moved out to San Francisco and fell in love with surfing, and have since begun designing my life to allow myself a little more freedom than the average 9-to-5. This motivated me to start my business, Kinda Fancy along with my siblings, which is a line of surfing and athletic bikinis with a pocket! We applied for a provisional patent on the design and then launched a Kickstarter Campaign, where we raised almost \$20,000. We are now entering our second year in business.



Dr. Claire: When did you begin your business and what inspired you create your Kinda Fancy suit?

Lindsey: I started the business in concept almost 2 years ago. I had just spent three months volunteering at a clinic in Nicaragua, and a girlfriend and I traveled down to Costa Rica. Since it was just the two of us, we had no guy with us to stash our hotel key or money when we went out surfing and we thought, “Why doesn’t any bikini have a pocket?” So the idea was born. It was really tough at the time to find a good bikini to surf it, as most of them fall off the minute a wave hits you. I came back to the states and proposed the idea to my sister who is a fashion designer by trade, and my brother who is a digital designer and great at videography. They came on board, and the ball started rolling!

Dr. Claire How did you come up with name for your suits?

Lindsey: My brother was on a dating site and one of his matches described herself as “Kinda Fancy.” We thought it was funny, so we changed our original business name “Luchadora” to Kinda Fancy, because we thought it was a bit more whimsical and appropriate for our brand of humor.



Dr. Claire: What were some of the challenges you discovered as you began the process of bringing your suits to the market? Do you have any advice for other entrepreneurs?

Lindsey: We are still a very young business, so we experience the growing pains of most small companies. Lack of capital was the first obstacle. Another difficulty is reaching our target market (active girls in warm places with water), since we live in Northern California where you wear a wetsuit year round. With any business there is a learning curve, and we have learned more in the last year than I could have imagined, but we definitely find a new problem just about every day! But, they become less scary, because as time goes on, you learn to weather the storms.

Dr. Claire: Are you still problem solving or inventing? If so...in what way? What problems?

Lindsey: I am definitely still problem solving and inventing. In the operating room, if a piece of equipment fails or a new problem arises, you often don’t have the option to sit back and think about it. You are forced to solve a problem and solve it quickly. That makes your heart race, but the reward is the best part, which is a successful surgery. Also, in my business, we are constantly engineering different types of bikinis that are structurally secure for a girl-on-the-go. It’s not easy given the limited fabric we have to play with, but it’s amazing how small changes in design have such significantly different outcomes in the water. I think an inventor’s mind never stops inventing and problem-solving, and the more problems you solve, the more new ones you see! It can be addicting. And in my opinion and limited experience, business is like one big giant puzzle waiting to be solved. There are so many moving parts.

Dr. Claire: You are in a STEAM related field...did Invention Convention influence or inspire you toward this career path?

Lindsey: Invention Convention introduced me to a world of puzzles, and that’s something I take with me every day.

Dr. Claire: Do you have any specific plans for the future you would like to share?

Lindsey: Every time I make a plan, it changes, so I’ve stopped planning so much! But, we do want to make Kinda Fancy a household name so that we all can have the freedom and control over our work life.

Dr. Claire: What words of advice/encouragement do you have for young inventors?

Lindsey: Keep the inventing spirit alive! It makes life so much more exciting and interesting, and every one of us has the opportunity to revolutionize some aspect of the world.

Dr. Claire: You appeared on The Letterman Show...what do you remember about your trip and your experience?

Lindsey: I remember being nervous! And I remember laughing a lot with David Letterman. After the filming of the show, we went to a restaurant. When I walked in, a bunch of the audience was having dinner there too, and practically the whole room stood up and started clapping.

Dr. Claire: Describe yourself in 3 words.

Lindsey: Party time, excellent (Wayne’s World)!

Dr. Claire: What’s your favorite thing to do in your free time?!

Lindsey: Surf! Of course!

