



Invention Convention Alumni Spotlight Starring: Lilly Keleman

Lilly Keleman participated in the Northeast Invention Convention in both 2011 and 2012. In 2011, she won 1st place in 4th grade for her invention *Suction Pups* and in 5th grade she won the “Chairman’s Choice” award for her invention *Where’s the Bulb*. Lilly is currently in the 9th grade where she is very involved in volunteering, sports, mentoring and academic clubs. Lilly tells us that Invention Convention positively impacted her life by encouraging her to explore new skills, including inventing and public speaking. She believes Invention Convention helped to build her confidence when speaking in front of crowds—a skill she thinks is essential to her success in school!

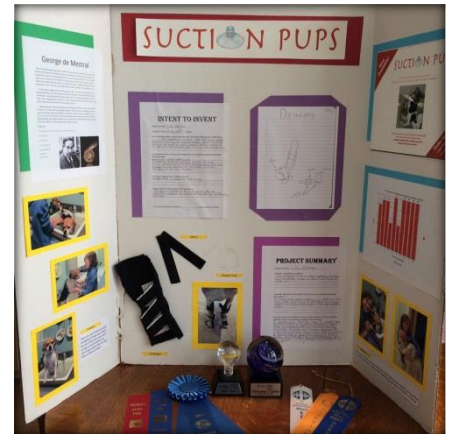
Lilly’s favorite class is science and she aspires to attend college and study biomedical engineering in order to help people with physical disabilities be able to enjoy the activities in life she enjoys such as sports and active games. Lilly continues to nurture her interest in STEAM-based educational opportunities via academics and clubs. Her commitment to her peers, community and academics is exceptional! Thank you for sharing your story Lilly.

Check out Dr. Claire’s Interview with Lilly

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

Lilly: In fourth grade, I invented Suction Pups, which are rubber boots for the front paws of dogs. In 2010, my family adopted our first dog, which refused to remain still in the bath. Our young pup would leap over the sides of her bathtub with wet paws, immediately slip, and tumble to the floor. I decided to solve this problem by inventing waterproof boots made of rubber with suction cups on the bottom of the soles. These boots safely prevented dogs from jumping out of bathtubs and slipping, injuring themselves.

In fifth grade, I invented *Where’s that Bulb?* This product is a mesh bag (colors vary based on the season *Where’s that Bulb?* is in use) that helps gardeners identify the bulbs they planted. In addition to the bag, there is an identification tag (made of Duct tape in the prototype) that may be used to label the type of flower. The tag separates into two strips that release an organic repellent (fox urine) that repels chipmunks or squirrels who usually steal bulbs. The inspiration for this invention came from my grandma. She seemed to always lose the beautiful tulip bulbs she planted to chipmunks and squirrels. I was compelled to help and began inventing!



Dr. Claire: What made you decide to be part of Invention Convention?

Lilly: Fortunately, inventing was a requirement of both my fourth and fifth grade honor classes. Without my classes, I would not have found the Invention Convention. In fourth grade, advancing to the convention was a requirement but in fifth grade, the advancement had to be earned. From my positive experience with the convention in the previous year, I was determined to advance. I researched and reinvented countless times and elected to move on. My positive experience from the Invention Convention (new relationships with fellow inventors, being able to explore the other inventions presented at the convention, and presenting my own invention) sparked my determination to participate in convention another year.

Dr. Claire: How did being part of Invention Convention impact your life?

Lilly: The Invention Convention positively impacted my life because I was able to explore new skills including inventing, presenting to strangers, and speaking in front of a crowd. I believe I have more confidence when speaking in front of crowds or presenting my projects, which are essential skills in school.

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

Accomplishments, awards, recognition, opportunities you were encouraged to try as a result of being part of Invention Convention.

Lilly: Aside from the awards I earned from Invention Convention, I have found highlights of my life through volunteering in and outside of my school. I enjoy tutoring and mentoring others through programs offered in the middle school. In seventh grade, I became the secretary of Builder's Club (a club similar to Key Club where students volunteer in the local senior's home, at sporting events, and through fundraising events). I also earned Student of the Month in sixth grade.

Dr. Claire: What are you doing/working on in life today?

Lilly: I play volleyball in the spring, softball in the fall, and dance ballet, tap, and jazz all year round. I am an Honors student and am a part of Honors Club, Power of the Pen (a creative writing club), Project M.O.R.E. (a program where Honors Club members tutor student in the elementary school who are struggling academically) and Peer Mentoring (a program where eighth grade students mentor sixth and seventh students who need help in social, academic, or organizational skills).

Dr. Claire: Are you still problem solving or inventing?

Lilly: I still enjoying problem solving and inventing today! Almost every week, our Algebra class is assigned a problem-solving question where we must incorporate math and problem solving skills to solve a real-life problem. In addition, the eighth grade class recently completed a project for the National History Day (a national competition that schools prepare for year round where students complete a project to honor an impactful figure in history). I used my invention skills to construct an exhibit for my project. I really enjoyed experimenting with materials like I did while inventing for the Invention Convention!



Dr. Claire: Do you plan to pursue a STEAM-related career? Did Invention Convention influence or inspire toward this career path?

Lilly: I do plan to attend college. My sister will be graduating from the George Washington University in the summer and my brother will be leaving for college in the fall. After seeing the success my sister accomplished in college, I am inspired to follow in her footsteps. I aspire to be a biomedical engineer because I want to help people with physical disabilities be able to enjoy the activities in life I am able to enjoy (sports and active games). My favorite class in school is science and it is important to incorporate science into any career I choose.

Dr. Claire: Can you share how you felt on convention day and after being part of the convention?

Lilly: In fourth grade, I was incredibly nervous before the convention began. I was unconfident in my presentation skills, though I memorized my board and had been practicing all morning. When I arrive at the competition, my fears disappeared! I had so much fun exploring the different inventions at the convention. I talked to new friends and loved presenting my invention. After the competition, I felt proud of my accomplishments. I had turned an idea, a sketch in my composition notebook, into a prototype. I was able to invent! The next year, after switching schools, I was excited to learn that the Invention Convention was a requirement of fifth grade! I was still nervous, but much more confident when I presented to school employees of Kirtland Elementary School and judges at the competition after my positive experience at the competition in the previous year.

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

Lilly: I encourage students with any interest in science, math, inventing, or entrepreneurship to participate. The Invention Convention was such a fun experience for my classmates and I and the competition provides all young inventors with many opportunities that are unique and exciting. Although it is very difficult to do, try not to be nervous when presenting. Be confident in your invention and presentation and be enthusiastic when presenting. Most importantly, enjoy the experience of inventing! As Steve Jobs said, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." Try to solve a problem or innovate a product. You will never know what can result from your invention unless

you complete it. Your invention may even impact the lives of others. Do not stop trying and reinventing! Remember, have fun every step of the way.