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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Falls, Kimberly youths win IDX 3D-printing competition

POCATELLO, Idaho (April 19, 2022) — A team from Kimberly Middle School and J.R. Simplot Elementary in American Falls earned first place at the 2022 Idaho Exhibition of Ideas in the senior and junior divisions, respectively. The event took place April 8 at the William M. and Karin A. Eames Advanced Technical Education and Innovation Complex at Idaho State University in Pocatello. It is one of two regional Idaho Exhibitions of Ideas, also known as IDX showcases, Idaho STEM Action Center stages annually.

IDX is the culmination of a project that began last summer when Idaho STEM Action Center trained and equipped teachers attending the annual i-STEM Institutes professional development conferences it offers at six locations throughout the state. Teachers attending the IDX strand returned home to assemble teams to vie in the 3D printing competition.

Per this year's IDX challenge theme, each team identified a space exploration issue that can be addressed using 3D printing and digital fabrication and developed and documented a product to help resolve it. The teams presented their solutions at IDX to a panel of judges and a public audience for review and feedback.

Fantastic 5, Kimberly Middle School's team, designed a solution called Pandora's Box — a small cube to give astronauts healthy mind breaks. In addition to incorporating games the team innovated from traditional ones and others they created from scratch into the inside and outside of the box, the team included a QR code inside that would lead astronauts to an app they coded in English and Russian. The app would allow astronauts to journal, access daily positive thoughts, and rate their daily moods with added questions and prompts to assess mental health quickly in case they needed to reach out for help. The team pursued the project after learning about MIT research that revealed an astronaut's sleep cycle can get disrupted by the 16 sunrises and sunsets they see in a day and that over time these disrupted cycles can have an impact on mental health. Seventh-grade STEM teacher Angie Poulsen led the team, which was comprised of Zoey Parkinson, Mariah Baird, Maggie Belliston, Gus Dalton, and Kayla Long.

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Team Armstrong from Simplot Elementary created the Space Brush — a toothbrush with an attachable tube of toothpaste designed to work well in zero-gravity environments. Alexandra Sandoval, a fifth-grade teacher at J.R. Simplot Elementary, led the team, which was comprised of Jorge Ledesma, Isabella Fernandez, Junie Hansen, Kambree Crump, Gracie Sandoval, and Carson Crump.

Both teams won a 3D printer (a \$350 value) provided by POWER Engineers and a \$250 cash prize, one donated by Cradlepoint and another by the Sahai Family Foundation.

A team from Donald J. Hobbs Middle School in Shelley and a second team from Simplot Elementary earned second place in the senior and junior divisions, respectively. Both teams won a \$300 cash prize, one donated by Cradlepoint and another by the Sahai Family Foundation. The Hobbs Middle School team also won the Student's Choice Award.

The Little Crainiacs, Hobbs Middle School's team, designed the Cosmic Cleaner — an effective way for astronauts to wash their clothing in space instead of sending it back to Earth for cleaning like they currently do. Brandon Crain, the gifted and talented program director at Hobbs Middle School, led the team, which was comprised of Brooke Mundt, Emma Redman, Aubrey Picanco, Haven Ivins, Kyli Russell, Kyden Peterson, Stephen Stohle, Nathan Adams, Nathan Hodson, and Mason Murdoch.

Little Einsteins, the Simplot Elementary team, created eyeglasses for astronauts called Space Glasses that employ attached wireless earbuds to prevent them from floating away. Sarah Baker, a fourth-grade teacher at Simplot Elementary, led the team, which was comprised of Andrey Morales, Scotlyn Barclay, Carolina Altamirano, Lainey Moore, Yanileth Rios, and Ryder Magee.

Students from Pocatello Community Charter School in Pocatello and Roberts Elementary School in Roberts earned third place in the senior and junior and divisions, respectively. Each team won \$250 cash from Idaho STEM Action Center's end-of-year giving campaign.

PCCS Wolf Pack, Pocatello Community Charter School's team, designed a solution to collect small pieces of space junk. Fifth- and sixth-grade crew leader Taylor Terlson led the team, which was comprised of Owyn Cardell, Elijah Fenwick, Wyatt Casper, and Andre Baker.

BULC D3 (3D CLUB spelled backwards), the Roberts Elementary School team, created a magnetic boot that helps keep astronauts from floating in the zero-gravity environment aboard the International Space Station so they can focus more on their work. PTO volunteer Jana Mills led the team, which was comprised of Odin Padigimus, Livia Padigimus, Deizel Worthen, Riggin Merrill, Emily Mills, and Eve Taylor.

Twenty-three teams took part in the event — including three from North Idaho that competed virtually.

Additional Eastern Idaho schools represented include Aberdeen Middle School (Aberdeen), America Heritage Charter School (Idaho Falls), Edgemont Elementary School (Idaho Falls), Idaho Science and Technology Charter School (Blackfoot), I.T. Stoddard Elementary School (Blackfoot), John V. Evans Elementary School (Burley), Lincoln and Rock Creek Elementary Schools (Twin Falls), Midway Elementary School (Menan), Mountain View Elementary School (Burley), and Robert Stuart Middle School (Twin Falls).

North Idaho's virtual participants included a team from Lena Whitmore Elementary (Moscow) and two from the Potlatch School District (Potlatch).

The STEM Action Center hosted another regional IDX showcase at One Stone School in Boise March 12.

According to STEM Action Center executive director Dr. Kaitlin Maguire, competitions like IDX are important to the future of Idaho.

"IDX is designed to equip students with the practical, technical, and creative skills needed to engage with the real-world problems of today and tomorrow," Dr. Maguire said. "Competitions like IDX help students develop durable skills like creative thinking, problem solving, innovation, and collaboration, plus it helps them understand the cognitive design process. Idaho employers value these skills, and these experiences better prepare students for future success in high-demand STEM careers."

She said STEM jobs in Idaho are projected to grow 15.4 percent by 2030, outpacing the national average of STEM job growth at 10 percent.

About Idaho STEM Action Center

Idaho STEM Action Center was created in 2015 because Idaho citizens are not entering the STEM pipeline fast enough to meet current and future Idaho workforce needs. Its goals are to increase access to STEM opportunities, align education and workforce needs, and amplify awareness of STEM throughout Idaho. The organization is working with industry, government, educators, and students to develop new resources and support high-quality professional-development opportunities to foster a STEM-educated workforce that ensures Idaho's continued economic prosperity.

Visit STEM.idaho.gov for more information, and visit <https://STEM.idaho.gov/support-us/foundation> to make a tax-deductible donation to Idaho STEM Action Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to enhance the investment the state has made in Idaho's STEM community. Contributions provide greater access to STEM camps for children, student competitions, and many other life-shaping programs.