

Problem-solvers

5th-graders tackle real-world issues ahead of state competition

Invention Convention

By **Dakota Bruton** Brown County Democrat

Sprunica Elementary's grade 5 students tackle real world issues at the Invention Convention.

The Invention Convention took place on Feb. 21 with every grade 5 student entering a project. They were each judged individually and the top three students, as well as an honorable mention, were chosen to compete in a state-wide competition at the Indiana State Museum that will take place on March 9.

The Invention Convention teaches children about problem solving as well as giving them the confidence to approach real life issues. That is what Abby Magner the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) teacher at Sprunica Elementary wants to teach them with the Invention Convention.

"I want them to keep solving real world problems. I want them to implement things they learn in school in the real world. I've had students tell me they want to be an engineer or scientist because of things they learn like this," Magner said.

Magner created the Invention Convention at Sprunica after hearing about it online. She said that the school partnered with 4-H and the Henry Ford Learning Institute, an institute in Michigan that empowers and promotes learning through services and classes.

"Indiana never had one (Invention Convention) on a state level so we partnered with the Purdue 4-H to create one here. Three, possibly four kids will compete for state and 4-H will pay for the winners of state to go to nationals at the Henry



Pictured: Averi Bohbrink, first place winner **Dakota Bruton** | **The Democrat**

Ford in Michigan." Magner said.

In addition to the opportunity of competing at state, the top three winners also received baskets made by Big Woods Pizza, Urban Air and Chocolate Moose.

The students were allowed to choose their own projects for the convention, as long as their topics influence a real life issue.

"This is all them. I don't tell them what to do. They start with a problem in school, home and a public place and it turns into this. They solve a real world problem through this," Magner said The top three winners that

will be moving on to the state competition on March 9 will be Averi Bohbrink, Karma Harrison and Gertie Mercer. Garren Gaddis was an honorable mention and will also be moving on to the competition.

Teachers and faculty from various schools around the state came with the Regional Opportunities Initiative to visit Sprunica to see the Invention Convention and the World of Work, a comprehensive curriculum that aims to teach children about career and self exploration from a young age. Sprunica is a Ready School, a framework that helps schools align curriculum with the educational and workforce needs of Indiana.

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Pictured from top: Karma Harrison, second place winner // Gertie Mercer, third place winner // Anna East presenting her project// See more photos from the Invention Convention at bcdemocrat.com. **Dakota Bruton | The Democrat**

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