

# INVENTORS

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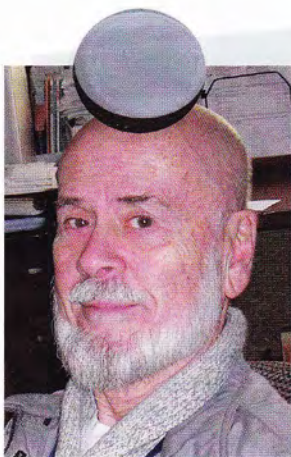
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**JACK LANDER**, our regular columnist on all things prototyping, licensing and inventing, explores the gap between inventor and entrepreneur. Jack, a near-legend in the inventing community, is no stranger to the written word. His latest book is *Marketing Your Invention – A Complete Guide to Licensing, Producing and Selling Your Invention*. You can reach him at [jack@karlaandjack.com](mailto:jack@karlaandjack.com).

# TREPS\$: Little Town – Little School



What happens when little kids converge in a little school in a little town? You get TREPS\$!

Florida, NY, a tiny town of fewer than 3,000 residents, home to “Polka King” Jimmy Sturr, William Henry Seward of “Seward’s Folly” fame, and more recently the InvenTeam Lemelson-MIT Program winners at the S.S. Seward Institute (see *The Keys to Kool Kid Kreations*, April 2012), has been home town to this Bronx-born journalist for the past 15 years. Since I write about kid innovators, an ad in our local newspaper piqued my curiosity about the TREPS\$ program.

Held on Saturday afternoon, May 5, 2012 in the gymnasium of Golden Hill Elementary School, Florida mayor Jim Pawliczek conducted the ribbon-cutting ceremony to make it “official” for the student entrepreneurs. Principal Ron DePace (who, on a personal note, brings out the best in all students who enter his doors), hosted this event, along with TREPS\$ program facilitators, Golden Hill teachers Colleen MacFarlane and Sandy Correa.

Forty student TREPS\$ exhibitors filled the gym with brightly colored tables and a huge variety of new products. Visitors packed the room and everyone felt the entrepreneurial vibes!

Ten-year-old Shawn Behrent in grade 4, owner of Shawn’s Books and Beyond, created a colorful variety of recycled, reasonably-priced products (from items such as old Avon catalogs and paperback books) including Magazine Trees, Paperback Apples, Recycled Art, and Treasure Box Books.

Jenna Greenhill, 9 and also in grade 4, repurposed old vinyl records as Vinyl Remix. These cute storage bowls were priced at \$2.00 each; and, I was given a lesson from the young entrepreneur on how to make the product – “carefully, in a 250 degree oven for not more than 10 minutes, then press over a mold to form a bowl!”

Caileigh Costello, 10 and in grade 4, designed Caileigh’s Just

for Fun Wacky Pencils; and fifth grader, 10 year-old Jane Carbonaro created a line of Zaney Janey hair clips and barrettes.

TREPS\$, short for “entrepreneurs,” was founded by Hayley Romano and Pamela deWaal. It was initially developed not as a business, but as a fun, educational after-school program for their kids’ school. At the time, they were both certified teachers and stay-at-home moms looking for a creative outlet and a way to make a positive impact on their children’s lives. They began the TREPS\$ program at Paradise Knoll School in West Milford Township, NJ for the first time in 2005 to a very responsive group of over 50 fifth and sixth graders. When neighboring schools began inquiring about the program, they recognized a market opportunity. The year 2006 was spent refining the program and turning it into an actual marketable product that would meet the needs of potential customers. TREPS ED, LLC was launched in 2007, and it has grown each year. Much of their business comes from word-of-mouth, but they do make presentations at PTA or PTO meetings and meet with teachers and administrators who are looking for additional information. They have recently collaborated with SCORE in Massachusetts and are extremely hopeful that this relationship will help TREPS\$ spread throughout the country. Children between the ages of 9 to 14 usually participate. The start-up kit, according to the website (see *SIDEBAR*) costs \$599.

So, between the InvenTeam in the high school, and TREPS\$ in the elementary and middle schools, I guess you can say we have some very innovative children in this wee village in the Hudson Valley region of New York. Go Florida, NY! Go TREPS\$!

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# Little Entrepreneurs

By Edie Tolchin

We asked co-founder Hayley Romano to speak about this unique, encouraging program for youth. Here, in Hayley's own words:

"The TREP\$ program is being used in over 50 schools in the United States (most in New Jersey, but some in New York, Massachusetts, and Ohio) and internationally (Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Indonesia). The program was brought to the Middle East as a result of an inquiry through our website from the Prince Salman Science Oasis in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The center is an interactive museum that offers educational programs to children. They were interested in offering an entrepreneurship program, as there are many correlations between scientific thinking and entrepreneurial thinking. They found us online, piloted the program, and have been extremely happy with the results."

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