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Piscataway school plays host to invention convention

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Problem-solving skills and imagination were on full display this week at Grandview Elementary School as pupils participated in the school's fourth annual Invention Convention.

The event began the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 21, and continued with an evening program yesterday.

Rose Harris, a third-grade teacher, said she started the annual invention tradition when she won the Amistad Exemplary Award from the New Jersey Department of State in 2005. She said the project teaches pupils how to solve problems.

"They're learning to look at a problem, because as a teacher, I can only teach them the tools to learn because I have no idea what their jobs are going to be," Harris said.

She said that from about 70-80 students participated in the convention this year.

Among the problem-solvers was 9-year-old Joseph M., inventor of the "Telmet," a bike helmet with a television hanging in front. It is designed for children who might miss their favorite TV shows while out playing.

"It's been a problem for me," he said. "I've been to the park with my friends and I've been like, 'Oh, I'm missing my TV show.' "

He did add a disclaimer: don't watch while riding.

Emefa D. 8, figured out a way to ensure that her pet fish are fed when she is gone. She created an automatic fish feeder.

"I used to have three (fish)," she said. "And I forgot to feed one, so it died and the two fish, my mom keeps reminding me to feed them."

Zhiraya R., 8, came up with portable inspiration.

"It's a book that has good things about you," she said. "And how you are going to fix your problems."

Rainy days were on the mind of Jessica P., 9, who designed a car with windshield wipers on every window.

"When it is raining, they just have to press a button and then the wipers start," she said.

Joshua S., 8, who wants to own his own restaurant one day, invented a health bar made with cranberries, oats, an egg and other healthy ingredients.

"It's a nutritious bar," he said. "People are tired of eating ordinary bars, so I invented the J.E.S. Bar."

Harris said she teaches her students that they can be anything they want to be, and she expects greatness.

"I teach them all that I expect them to take care of me when it's all over," she joked.