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Moriah McDonald

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This year Andrews University’s STEM Division will host the first “Mission: Invent,” an initiative encouraging development of innovation and entrepreneurship in K–12 Seventh-day Adventist students in the United States and Canada. During Mission: Invent, students will select real-world problems, create solutions using engineering design methodologies and entrepreneurial skills, and showcase their projects to peers at invention fairs.

“Participating classrooms or schools must host an invention fair, like the traditional science fair except that projects are carried out in teams,” explains Monica Nudd, STEM coordinator in the College of Arts & Sciences. “We want students to develop a love of math and science by designing and modeling a solution to their problem.”

Winning teams from each school will be registered to participate in an exhibition and awards ceremony hosted by Andrews University on Monday, July 11. The STEM Division hopes to hold the celebration in person on the Andrews campus.

“Invention and innovation are skills that prepare students for the 21st-century

job market,” says Matías Soto, director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship. “Both established companies as well as small businesses are in desperate need of inventors and innovators who can transform their businesses to deal with the constant changes happening in the world today.”

He notes, “Mission: Invent helps students to learn and develop innovation skills from an early age, so that [the skills] become part of their education. This prepares them for both the demanding curriculum of college and for the real-life job market.”

In addition to working on projects to showcase at invention fairs, students involved with Mission: Invent will have the opportunity to learn basic engineering and invention skills in the classroom. Nudd worked with colleague Michael Bryson, engineer and Andrews alumnus, to create workbooks, assessments, rubrics and other resources for K–12 teachers to utilize when implementing engineering topics into their own curriculum.

Via Zoom, Nudd and Bryson conducted live, interactive training sessions for Adventist teachers in August, October and November 2021. During these meetings,

teachers were introduced to the fundamentals of engineering, design thinking and inventing and contributed ideas to solve sample problems.

“There’s nothing better than hands-on learning to cement knowledge in a young person’s mind,” says Soto. “This program offers the opportunity for students to do active learning, team collaboration, problem solving, and goal-driven work. All those skills are invaluable to students.”

Andrews University has partnered with other Adventist universities and conferences across North America to establish an advisory committee for Mission: Invent. Members include representatives from AdventHealth University, Burman University, Central California Conference, La Sierra University, Pacific Union College, Southern Adventist University, Southern Union Conference, Southwestern Adventist University, Walla Walla University and Washington Adventist University. The committee plans to guide the rotation of Mission: Invent to participating universities in the future.

Mission: Invent was made possible through a grant awarded by the Versacare Foundation in spring 2021 to the Andrews University STEM Division. Established in 1990, the Versacare Foundation serves Seventh-day Adventist ministries and other humanitarian efforts with financial grants.

There is still time to participate in 2022. For more information on Mission: Invent, visit andrews.edu/go/invent.

▼ South Bend Junior Academy students participated in a pilot program for Mission: Invent in spring 2021.



Monica Nudd

Moriah McDonald, student writer, University Communication, Andrews University