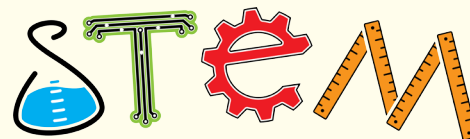


Special Edition



“SEYMOUR” snaps up



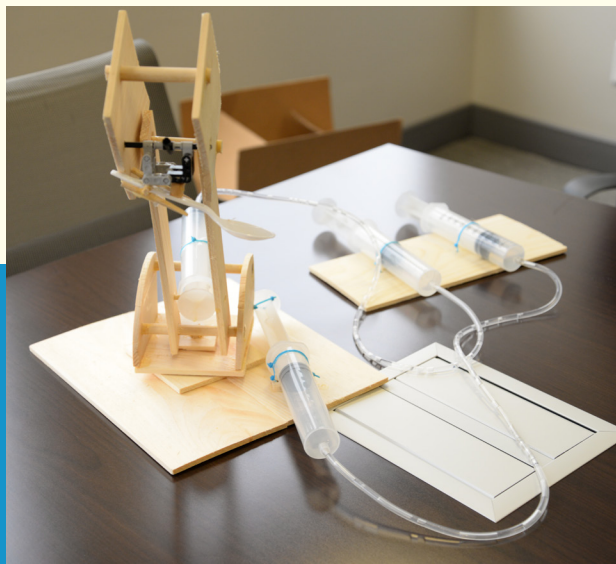
2018 ENTREPRENEUR AWARD



Lassonde Institute Challenge » Copper Hills High School senior Andrew Rich has been engineering since very early childhood. “Anything I could get my hands on, I’d find a way to make a practical or unconventional use of,” Andrew says. “I would build paper cities. And Legos opened up a whole new world to me.” Fitting, granted he took basic materials (Legos included) in fusing his passionate advocacy for special-needs individuals with his natural ingenuity to develop a simple, self-sustaining robot, “Seymour,” that feeds individuals who cannot feed themselves. His invention was selected for competition in the High School Utah Entrepreneur Challenge (HSUEC), hosted by the Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute, a division of the University of Utah’s David Eccles School of Business.

STEM Action Center official Brad Hunsaker was on the judging panel and ultimately awarded Andrew the

“Seymour” and Andrew Rich visited the STEM Action Center on Friday, May 11, to meet our team.



The early-stage, working prototype robot uses a simple hydraulic system to convey food to individuals who are unable to feed themselves.

Learn more about STEM Action Center programs at stem.utah.gov

\$1,000 STEM Award for his scientific entrepreneurial idea. Judging was based on a measure of four criteria: identification of a problem or opportunity, determination of a solution, identification of the target consumer base, and creation of a prototype. These were virtually second-nature to Andrew, whose grandfather taught him from a young age the value of practical problem-solving. “Grandpa would sit me down and go through a checklist: What’s the challenge? What materials do you need? And if it didn’t work, what could have been the cause? What could be done differently?” Andrew explains. Fast-forwarding to 2018, “Seymour” originated from a question Andrew one day asked Copper Hills High School teacher Jacqueline Sheppick, who heads the special education program where Andrew often volunteers his time. “What do you think the biggest daily challenge is for students living with illnesses like cerebral palsy?” Her answer was quick and simple: “Eating.” Ms. Sheppick explained that while her special needs students had mealtime support at home, they relied solely on friends and staff for help eating lunch. Many times, Andrew explained, they would otherwise go hungry. Andrew, an advocate for those with special needs, saw a major opportunity for improving others’ lives while combining his love of engineering and passion for people living with physical impairments. As for his choice of a name? “Have you ever seen the movie ‘Little Shop of Horrors?’” Andrew asked members of the STEM Action Center staff during his recent visit. “That’s the



“There are options out there, but they are electronically complex robotic machines that cost thousands of dollars. ... I aim to completely disrupt that approach. It’s completely possible to simplify and streamline a complex tool.”

— ANDREW RICH
2018 AWARDEE

inspiration for ‘Seymour.’ As in ‘Feed me, Seymour!’” Barring the possibility of otherworldly, insatiably carnivorous plants, “Seymour” has the potential to fulfill a demand that affects millions of people, and Andrew’s intent is to develop a durable, portable — and above all, affordable — robot that is simple and doesn’t require a power source. “There are options out there, but they are electronically complex robotic machines that cost thousands of dollars. That’s just impossible for most people who are living with these types of conditions to afford, plus they’re cumbersome,” Andrew says. “I aim to completely disrupt that approach, and prove that it’s completely possible to simplify and streamline a complex tool.”

Learn more about STEM Action Center programs at stem.utah.gov

Join us on Twitter and Facebook:
[@STEMUtah](https://www.facebook.com/STEMUtah)