Common Dreams

By Gay Evans

Two young men, not so very far apart in many ways—both high school students, both athletes, and both inventors—are determined to use their inventions to make a difference in the world.

Adrian Lindsey is a 17-year-old high school junior at Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy. His product, “All-Net,” is a nylon backpack basketball carrier. The idea behind the carrier is to make it easier for players who are walking or bicycling, to carry a ball to the gym or park. Adrian holds a patent on his invention, and it is now being sold in a Cleveland, Ohio area Wal-Mart. He will also be marketing his basketball carrier in the Cleveland Cavaliers Team Shop.

Adrian is not only a young entrepreneur; he is a young man who believes completely in “giving back.” This summer he sold his “All-Net” ball carrier to earn $26,836 to help the Shaker High School band of East Cleveland earn the funds to play at the Beijing Olympics. Adrian’s social entrepreneurial spirit of “paying it forward” does not stop there. He, with the help of his mother, Cherrylyn Lampley, along with various Akron and Cleveland organizations and the National Museum of Education, will sponsor a two-week “Entrepreneur Camp” in the summer of 2009. This camp will be open to 44 Akron public high school students. They will learn to problem solve, innovate and eventually develop products which they will have help in marketing through music and media. The camp is only the beginning of an even greater venture for 2010, which will take entrepreneurship for youth to the next level— invent, produce and market in an “Invention Factory” for students, which will open in Akron, OH.

Adrian’s dream of becoming a doctor who creates more realistic artificial limbs was inspired by one of his teachers who had a prosthetic hand. Adrian imagined making it appear more realistic, and he knows that the earnings from the sale of his “All-Net” basketball carrier will help to provide the school that he needs to make his dream a reality.

These two young men will meet in Akron, OH on October 25 at the National Gallery for America’s Young Inventors Induction Ceremony, when both of them are inducted into the Entrepreneur Hall of Fame and receive “Young Entrepreneur Awards for 2008.” Perhaps their creativity and the synergy that brought them together will also be the catalyst for the hundreds of students who may have dreams of inventing and are only looking for the inspiration.

For more information about the Induction Ceremony, see www.nmoe.org.

Grayson, who won a $10,000 Savings Bond from the Sealed Air Corporation, inventors of Bubble Wrap, is already looking to the future. As a sophomore at Franklin Road Academy, Grayson plans to be an officer in the US Army and eventually to go into politics.

Both Grayson and Adrian share a love of sports; Grayson plays varsity football and Adrian, of course, plays varsity basketball. Both young men have been inspired by important people in their lives. Grayson’s mom is a double-amputee who lost both legs in a car accident over 20 years ago. He also heard an inspiring story from his parents about a 15-year-old Ghanian boy, Daniel, who had an artificial leg without a cosmetic covering. The charity could only pay for the leg. It was Grayson’s goal to make the covering out of Bubble Wrap, but unfortunately, Daniel passed away before Grayson was able to deliver the covering.

For Grayson’s original story see page 26
Invention and innovation, key elements of many entrepreneurs' success stories, require thinking out of the box. Well, Grayson Rosenberger, this year's winner of Sealed Air Corporation's first Bubble Wrap® Competition, actually used what a heat gun, he created "muscle like" shapes around the artificial limb's traditional metal rods.

Who would use Bubble Wrap® instead of the standard covers typically seen in the US? Many citizens of Ghana, Africa would and are grateful for it too. Grayson's father's organization, "Standing With Hope", works with Ghana's government to provide artificial limbs for its citizens who can't afford them otherwise. Although they can walk with these limbs, they are still looked upon as outcasts due to their unnatural look. Prosthetic covers typically cost $1,000 or more and are unfortunately out of the question. Grayson's solution is a practical, effective, and cost-efficient way to not only give Ghana's amputee's mobility, but also return their self esteem.

Grayson's father and mother, who lost both of her legs in a car accident as a teenager, say they are astounded by Grayson's ingenuity and his winning of the $10,000 savings bond given as first prize for Sealed Air's annual competition. Pretty amazing for a 15 year old! It only goes to show that it is never too early to start working toward your future.

The National Museum of Education is proud to have developed and administered the Bubble Wrap® Competition. It will now be an annual contest, with the due date for this year, on Thursday, November 1, 2007. This is only the beginning of many creative efforts for students grades 5-8. Check the website at www.nmoe.org for further details.