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**For Immediate Release**

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**October 5th NoCo Mini Maker Faire Celebrates the Amazing Things**

**Colorado Kids and Kids-at-Heart are Creating!**

Loveland, CO (September 19, 2013) –

Imagine -- 100,000 sq ft filled with demonstrations and activities, many built by kids themselves, and you are invited to play. The Maker movement is sweeping the country and regional Maker Faires are events that inspire, educate and entertain curious and creative learners of all ages. The NoCo Mini Maker Faire is the first major Faire in Colorado and showcases over 140 Makers from all over the Front Range such as:

* MESA kids flying remote control planes they built
* A Nerdy Derby where you can make and race your own car
* Creative creations of the Global Cardboard Challenge
* “How To” Hands on workshops from Comic books to 3D printing
* The best of Denver Design Students from IDSA
* Solder electronics Simon kits with Boulder-based SparkFun
* Create art with Fort Collins based Anna’s Art Explorers

There will be hands-on activities, entertaining performances and projects for kids of all ages – there is nothing else like this in Colorado!

“Our goal is not just to create a one day event. It is to help innovators of all ages leverage this Maker Faire to create more opportunities for youth makers, entrepreneurs, and lifelong learners. Already we are seeing the spark of creativity and collaboration growing in our Maker meetings. It’s so exciting to see people from disparate backgrounds contributing expertise in science, technology, engineering, the arts—and fostering creative learning as a whole’” says Producer Elise Weiland, Executive Director of Making Progress L3C.

The NoCo Maker Faire is partnered with Action Works, who are bringing their annual statewide robotics scrimmage to the Faire. Action Works is an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit engaging youth in hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). While best known in Colorado for robotics events and an equipment loan program for schools, Action Works is working on a Makerspace for its classes and camps. The Maker Movement overlaps with the natural inclinations of children and the power of learning by doing. New tools and technology, such as 3D printing, robotics, microprocessors, wearable computing, e-textiles, “smart” materials, and new programming languages are being invented at an unprecedented pace. The Maker Movement creates affordable — even free — versions of these inventions, and shares tools and ideas online, creating a vibrant, collaborative community of global problem-solvers.

Come and see the amazing things kids can do at the NoCo Mini Maker Faire on October 5th at the Rocky Mountain Center for Innovation – the old Agilent/HP facility at 14th and Taft in Loveland Colorado. You’ll be amazed, you’ll be entertained, you’ll be surprised at what you can Make! To learn more and to purchase tickets go to [www.nocomakerfaire.org](http://www.nocomakerfaire.org)

**Want to Know More About the Youth Maker Movement?**

The Maker Movement is strong in education systems throughout Colorado. St Vrain has launched Spark – The Discovery Center for Make/Hack/Play; the Thompson Middle Schools have a maker lab outfitted with equipment such as Epilog Laser systems, and you’ll find more in every district.

What defines the Youth Maker Movement and why is it important?

(exerpt from the Smart Blog on Education by[*Sylvia Libow Martinez and Gary Stager*](http://smartblogs.com/tag/SylviaLibow-Martinez-and-Gary-Stager) *)*

Key Lessons from the Maker Movement for kids and learners of all ages:

“**Doing” is what matters.** Makers learn by making stuff. Students can and should be scientists, artists, engineers and writers today. The affordable and accessible technology of the Maker Movement makes learning by doing a realistic approach for schools.

**Openness.** The Maker Movement is facilitated and expanded by the internet. Makers worldwide share ideas, designs and open source code. It is a collaborative environment driven by personal interest rather than by tests or grades.

**Give it a go.** Back in the 1980s, TV’s MacGyver could defuse a bomb with the chewing gum and paper clips he found in his pocket. Modern MacGyvers are driven to invent the solution to any problem by making things, and then making those things better. While perhaps “grit” or determination can be taught, the best way for students to become deeply invested in their work is for their work to be personally meaningful, supported by time and encouragement to overcome challenges.

**Iterative design.** Computers make designing new inventions risk-free and cheap. You can now tinker with designs, code and make nearly perfect prototypes easily and quickly. This is a departure from linear design methodology that assumed that mistakes were expensive and need to be avoided.

**Aesthetics matter.**Many Maker projects are indistinguishable from art. It’s human to embellish, decorate and to seek the beauty in life. In schools, there is a movement to add arts to STEM subjects (STEAM). That’s a good instinct, but if school hadn’t artificially removed all traces of creativity and art from STEM subjects, we wouldn’t need to talk about STEAM. Find ways to allow students to make projects with pride and unencumbered by categorization.

**Mentoring defies age.** As Sir Ken Robinson says, school is the only place in the world where we sort people by their date of manufacture. The Maker Movement honors learners of all ages and embraces the sharing of expertise. Young people like “Super Awesome Sylvia,” a young maker who broadcasts her project tips on her own web show, or Jody Hudy, who surprised President Obama with a marshmallow cannon at the White House, are valued alongside decades-older master tinkerers and inventors. Schools may create opportunities for mentoring and apprenticeship by connecting with the greater community.

**Learning is intensely personal.**  Learning happens inside the individual. It can’t be designed or delivered. Learning is personal — always. The Maker Movement values the intensity of the learning experience with endless options and choices about what a person might find interesting or fall in love with. Giving kids the opportunity to learn about what they love means they will love what they learn.

**It IS about the technology.** The Maker Movement sees tools and technology as the essential element for solving unsolvable problems. To Makers, a 3D printer is not for learning to make 3D objects, but is the raw material for solving problems like how to create an inexpensive but custom-fit prosthetic, or print a pizza for hungry astronauts. The Maker philosophy prepares kids to solve problems their teachers never anticipated with technology we can’t yet imagine.

**Ownership.** One motto of the Maker Movement is “if you can’t open it, you don’t own it.” Educators often talk about how learners should own their own learning, but if the learner doesn’t have control, they can’t own it. Teachers should consider that prepackaged experiences for students, even in the name of efficiency, are depriving students of owning their own learning.

The Maker Movement offers lessons, tools and technology to steer a new course to more relevant, engaging learning experiences for all students.