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Raven Hill Discovery Center, incorporated in 1991,
is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation.

Open year-round on weekends – noon to 4pm Saturdays and 2pm to 4pm Sundays.
Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, hours expand to include weekdays from
10am to 4pm. The Center is also open other times, including holidays, by appointment.

MISSION: to provide a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong
learning for all ages by connecting science, history and the arts.

WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

To: Raven Hill friends

From: Cheri

Date: March 16, 2024

Re: *Calling all inventors and innovators!*

Raven Hill Discovery Center's Evolving Technology (ET) Building is a testament to Raven Hill's commitment to education. The space highlights the journey of human *innovation* from the Stone Age to the Information Age. The display helps visitors bridge the gap between ancient *innovations* and their modern counterparts, illustrating the continuous thread of human ingenuity, igniting curiosity and fostering a deeper appreciation for the technological advancements—both *innovations and inventions*—that work to shape our daily lives.



Over the past few years, the Evolving Technology Patent Office had become a repository for donations and a staging area for those items as they were readied for exhibit. These donated items were packed up and moved to a storage area so that the Patent Office could become what it was designed to be, a place for invention and innovation.

The building also includes a small Patent Office, which finally became functional this week, advancing from its prior use as a “catchall” storage/staging area. The Patent Office now invites visitors to “sit a spell” and *invent or innovate* through drawings, models or prototypes. There is even a patent ledger where visitors can share “patent” drawings of their *very own inventions and innovations*.



This old rocking horse found its forever home on the Patent Office's elevated platform. Showcasing innovative artifacts from the past, the high shelf provides an eye-catching vignette of inventive designs while maximizing the use of a high and otherwise unusable space.

As the ET Building illustrates, humans have always been highly *innovative*, adapting and improving upon existing materials and methods to meet their needs for survival. Stone Age communities developed sophisticated tools, weapons, shelter designs, and techniques for hunting, gathering, and cooking, demonstrating a high degree of *innovation* in utilizing the resources within their environments and sharing that information without feeling like they needed to protect their ideas from others.

Patents first appeared in ancient civilizations, like Greece and China. During the Middle Ages in Europe, guilds and monarchs granted patents giving exclusive rights to certain craftsmen and merchants to encourage *innovation* and protect their interests. Modern patents emerged during the Renaissance in Europe. In the 1400's, the Republic of Venice enacted one of the earliest known patents for a device that improved the design of glassmaking ovens. The first U.S. patent was granted in 1790 to Samuel Hopkins for making potash, an important ingredient in fertilizer. Visitors to the ET Building may find themselves contemplating the stories behind all the *innovations and inventions* found everywhere there.



It turns out that my *innovative* idea of hanging a "retired" exhibit behind the Patent Office panels is nothing new. The practice has been used for decades as an efficient way to store decommissioned exhibits. (Left) Volunteers from Northland Self-Storage in Petoskey hang the 2021-22 **Labor Days** exhibit first. (Right) The Patent Office panels are positioned to be hung in front of the archived **Labor Days** exhibit.



The newly renovated Patent Office now has the look and feel of an old patent building, inviting visitors to ponder what they might *invent* or how they might *innovate*.

The need for a formalized patent system to protect *inventions* and encourage *innovation* increased during the Industrial Revolution, when the economy changed from farming to manufacturing. That sudden increase in

inventions and innovations is evident as visitors walk the timelines in the Evolving Technology Building and consider the concept of the patents protecting an inventor's rights.



Look closely to see the RHDC logo on Raven Hill's Patent Office sign.

Raven Hill's Patent Office will foster a deeper appreciation for the myriad of technological advancements that shape our daily lives, as it encourages the problem-solving, critical and creative thinking skills that are an essential part of *innovation and invention*. We invite you to make plans to visit the Patent Office and all of Raven Hill soon. We are open Saturdays from noon to 4pm and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm, as well as during the week by appointment. Call 231.536.3369 for information or to make reservations.



The **WOW** (**Wide Outreach of Work**) Factor was part of the Labor Days exhibit and has found its niche high on the wall in the crossover space of the ET Building. The panel features the *inventions & innovations* of northern Michigan residents that have reached from here all the way into the universe. Thanks Tamara, Matt & Zach for spending a Day of Kindness at Raven Hill.

Cheri