

# KIPP: Houston High School

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## **KIPP Houston High School Students Receive Invention Grant through MIT to Create Pollution-Absorbing Paint**

*Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam Initiative Inspires a New Generation of Inventors*

**Houston, Texas, October 19, 2011** — KIPP Houston High School was recently awarded a [Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam](#) grant in the amount of \$8,000 to create TOX AWAY, a paint that absorbs various forms of pollution. KIPP Houston High School is one of 16 teams nationwide to be selected as an InvenTeam this year.

InvenTeams are teams of high school students, teachers, and mentors that receive grants up to \$10,000 each to invent technological solutions to real-world problems. Entering its ninth year, this initiative of the Lemelson-MIT Program aims to inspire a new generation of inventors.

“The InvenTeams program represents the future,” said Leigh Estabrooks, invention education officer from the Lemelson-MIT Program. “We place an emphasis on STEM-focused projects to develop interest in these fields among youth. With InvenTeams, our primary goal is to foster high school students’ passion for invention and innovation, in turn inspiring them to consider careers in science, technology, engineering or math.”

Marlo Diosomito at KIPP Houston High School initiated the InvenTeam application process last spring, and his co-teacher Nikhil Kumar attended training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in June to help prepare the final proposal. A prestigious panel of judges composed of educators, researchers, staff and alumni from MIT as well as representatives from the industry and former Lemelson-MIT Award winners assembled this fall and selected KIPP Houston High School as one of this year’s InvenTeam grants.

TOX AWAY reduces the amount of NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and CO<sub>2</sub> present in polluted urban air when painted on either outdoor or indoor surfaces, improving the aesthetics of man-made structures and enhancing air quality via a ubiquitous medium. Given the amount of pollution in Houston, the KIPP Houston High School team was inspired to contribute

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their unique solution. The prototype cost will be around \$35 - \$45 to produce, but the target retail price will be \$30.00, near the average cost of a gallon of commercial paint.

The KIPP Houston High School InvenTeam will also work with Dr. Jeffrey D Rimer, Assistant Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Houston, who will guide the students through the development of their invention.

“Our students have shown tremendous determination and ingenuity throughout this process,” says Kumar, who co-teaches the Science Research course at KIPP with Mr. Diosomito. “We’re all excited to showcase the final product in Boston this summer, and we’re hoping the paint is a hit!”

Over the next nine months, the KIPP Houston High School InvenTeam will develop its TOX AWAY paint. In June the students will showcase a prototype of their invention at EurekaFest at MIT in Cambridge, Mass. EurekaFest, presented by the Lemelson-MIT Program, is a multi-day celebration designed to empower a legacy of inventors through activities that inspire youth, honor role models, and encourage creativity and problem solving.

## **ABOUT THE LEMELSON-MIT PROGRAM**

*Celebrating innovation, inspiring youth*

The Lemelson-MIT Program celebrates outstanding innovators and inspires young people to pursue creative lives and careers through invention.

Jerome H. Lemelson, one of U.S. history’s most prolific inventors, and his wife Dorothy founded the Lemelson-MIT Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1994. It is funded by The Lemelson Foundation and administered by the School of Engineering. The Foundation sparks, sustains and celebrates innovation and the inventive spirit. It supports projects in the U.S. and developing countries that nurture innovators and unleash invention to advance economic, social and environmentally sustainable development. To date The Lemelson Foundation has donated or committed more than U.S. \$150 million in support of its mission. <http://web.mit.edu/invent/>

## **ABOUT KIPP Houston**

KIPP, or Knowledge Is Power Program, was co-founded by Teach For America alumni Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin in Houston in 1994. KIPP has grown to a national network of 109 public schools in 20 states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 32,000 students. KIPP schools are recognized for narrowing the achievement gap in public education and putting underserved students on the path to college.

KIPP Houston currently operates 20 schools and serves nearly 8,000 students in the city’s high-need communities. Ninety-eight percent of KIPP Houston students are African-American or Latino/Hispanic, and 90 percent qualify for the free or reduced price meals program. Since the first KIPP school opened in Houston in 1995, 90 percent of KIPP students, tracked from the 8th grade, have matriculated to college. To learn more, visit [www.kipphouston.org](http://www.kipphouston.org).