

# Richmond Times-Dispatch

## Mini-Economy Market Day draws young entrepreneurs



LINDY KEAST RODMAN/TIMES-DISPATCH

*Greenfield Elementary students Callie Yost (from left), Aubrey Scott King and Liza Wimbish sold their handmade products yesterday at the Mini-Economy Market Day.*

By [David Ress](#)

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Eyes wide with wonder when her name was called, Addison Scarborough skipped down to the court at the Siegel Center to get her medal as "class entrepreneur."

And moments later, after the bell opening the Mini-Economy Market Day yesterday, the 11-year-old stood at her station for Kersey Creek Elementary School in Hanover County, proving her market mettle.

"It means I am an en-tre-pren-eur," she explained in the midst of the Market Day frenzy, showing off her award and grinning hugely.

The Virginia Council on Economic Education's annual event culminates weeks or months of elementary schools teaching students about spending, about saving, about working and about planning.

In the program, the children earn "money" -- typically, hand-drawn bills modeled loosely on greenbacks -- doing classroom jobs, like the "board engineer" assigned to clap blackboard erasers clean in Anne Littlefield's fifth-grade class at Elmont Elementary School in Hanover.

"We set up a mini-society. We try to teach them the way the world works," the teacher said.

Then, the idea is to use the money to run a business -- a business that made products in school and launched them in an enthusiastic, echoing-off-the walls clamor at Virginia Commonwealth University's Siegel Center.

So, Jonathan Slaughter, a fifth-grader at Battlefield Park Elementary School in Hanover, wore two sheets of corrugated cardboard advertising his class's rock pets.

He paced the aisles between tables crammed with construction-paper picture frames, pipe-cleaner animals, bracelets, yarn dolls, stuffed balloons and gloves for squeezing when stressed.

"My granddaughter's class is selling this. It's called Gak," said S. Buford Scott, chairman of the brokerage firm Scott & Stringfellow, holding up a baggie filled with pinkish-orange shiny . . . stuff.

"I'm going to take this back to the office and play with it all day."

Randell Howard, a fourth-grade student at Jackson Davis Elementary School in Henrico County, started selling her box-a-banks -- masonite-and-wood-lath boxes, a kind of cubist version of a piggy bank -- for 20 "mini-bucks."

They weren't moving, not at first.

But a few minutes later, all but two had disappeared, and a beaming Randell explained that a modest price adjustment, to 15 mini-bucks, did the trick.

It was the kind of lesson about economics, in this case about supply and demand, that Suzanne Gallagher, director of VCU's Center for Economics Education, reminded the students about before ringing the opening bell for the market.

Not that Kersey Creek class entrepreneur Addison needed too much coaching. Just a few items were left on the school's tables as the clock ticked towards the market close and she chanted: "Everything's a dollar."

Long gone, though, were her own class's paper airplanes and pencils padded with coils of cotton -- the ones, she carefully explained, you could peel the cotton off of, if the pencil needs a sharpening.

"Addison works in our school store, and she noticed that that the padded pencils were fast sellers," her teacher Stephanie Miller said.

But those pencils are wrapped with pipe cleaners. Sharpen them too much, and you have to pull the whole pipe cleaner off.

Addison's idea was to use cotton, so pencil owners could remove padding as their pencils shrank.

"She really was so enthusiastic," Miller said. "It's been a great program for everybody."