BEST INVENTIONS OF 2020

Gitanjali Rao TIME's Kid of the Year

Each year, TIME for Kids picks the coolest and most helpful new inventions. Kid of the Year Gitanjali Rao, 15, is an inventor. This year, we let her take the lead. Gitanjali selected these items from TIME's list of the 100 Best Inventions of 2020. Read what she has to say below.

Our generation is seeing problems that have never existed before, in addition to serious long-standing issues. We need to innovate, generate new ideas, and build on them in order to have a meaningful impact on the future. We want a sustainable world. Young people will play a significant role in getting us there. So let's change the old ways. I hope the inventions on this list will inspire you to come up with solutions of your own.
—By Gitanjali Rao

ULTIMATE INDOOR GARDEN

Eating a salad is more satisfying when you harvest the greens yourself. Want to grow a garden but don't have a backyard? Consider a **GARDYN.** This vertical indoor-growing system is powered by artificial intelligence. It lets you choose from 32 plants, including fruits, vegetables, greens, herbs, and flowers that will appear right in your home. Load the seedpods into Gardyn. Then an app monitors variables. These include light and humidity. Cameras let you know when your crops are ready to harvest.
—By Marjorie Korn

GITANJALI: SHARIF HAMZA FOR TIME. IMAGES OF PRODUCTS COURTESY BEST INVENTIONS COMPANIES (3)

FOLLOWING THE CONVERSATION

Robotics might be the answer to making virtual classes feel more human. The **MEETING OWL PRO** is a 360° tabletop camera. It shifts its lens and microphone to whoever is speaking. In "hybrid" classes and meetings, virtual participants will have a better feel for what's happening in the room. "It's able to follow the conversation," says Owl Labs cofounder Max Makeev. To date, Owl Labs products are used by more than 50,000 companies and universities, as well as K–12 schools across the United States.
—By Jesse Will

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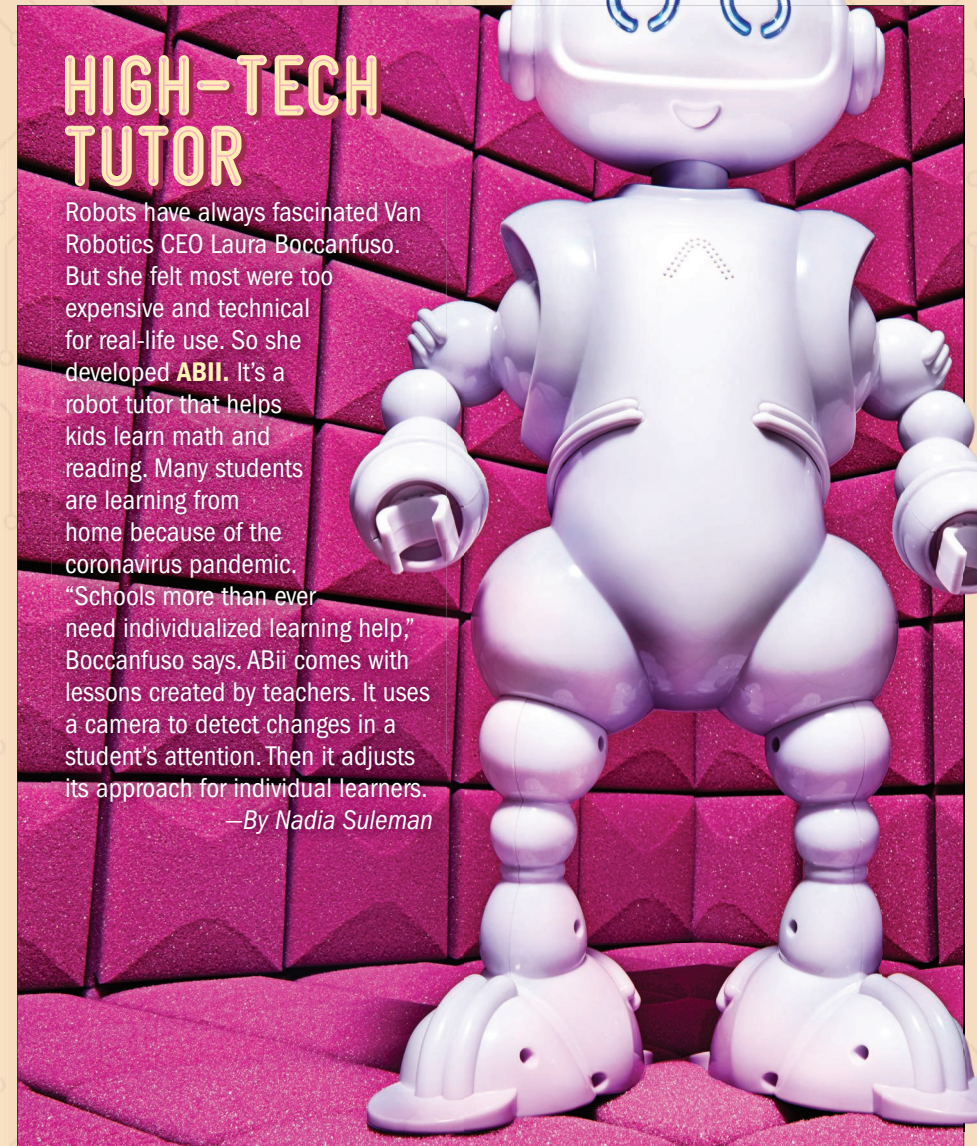
PORTABLE PURIFIER

"When people want clean water, they reach for plastic bottles," says **CRAZYCAP** CEO Rakesh Guduru. For those who want a more sustainable way to hydrate on the go, Guduru created a bottle cap. It uses cleansing UVC light to sanitize water in just 60 seconds. The device has two settings. One purifies water from taps or public fountains. The other purifies water from streams and ponds—perfect for hikers and campers. The cap is rechargeable and compatible with many reusable bottles.
—By Simmone Shah

HIGH-TECH TUTOR

Robots have always fascinated Van Robotics CEO Laura Boccanfuso. But she felt most were too expensive and technical for real-life use. So she developed **ABII.** It's a robot tutor that helps kids learn math and reading. Many students are learning from home because of the coronavirus pandemic. "Schools more than ever need individualized learning help," Boccanfuso says. ABii comes with lessons created by teachers. It uses a camera to detect changes in a student's attention. Then it adjusts its approach for individual learners.
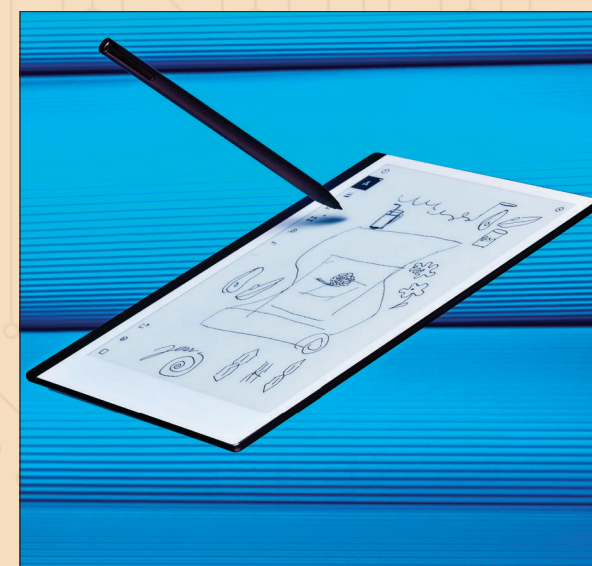—By Nadia Suleman

JESSICA PETTWAY FOR TIME

TAKING NOTES

In 2013, Magnus Wanberg noticed his colleagues taking notes on paper instead of on laptops and phones. "Why hasn't anyone replaced paper with technology?" he wondered. This led him to make the reMarkable paper tablet. The note-taking device converts handwriting into digital text. Released in 2016, its thin design mimics paper. Now, Wanberg has made the **REMARKABLE 2.** At less than a quarter-inch thick, the device is 30% skinnier than the original. Its battery can go two weeks per charge.
—By Mariah Espada

JESSICA PETTWAY FOR TIME