

Catlin Gabel Students Win National Design Competition for Assistive Technology

The four students were awarded the top prize among other high school teams for an invention designed to improve the lives of people with disabilities

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, April 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Four students from [Catlin Gabel](#) School in Portland, Oregon, won the national [SourceAmerica](#) Design Challenge, an annual competition that encourages high school and college teams to design and create prototypes of assistive technologies that helps people with disabilities succeed in the workplace.



The ZipBag design team: (L to R) Keola Edelen Hare, Lucas Holliday, Eric Wang, and Ben Rosenfeld

The Catlin Gabel team created “ZipBag,” a device that safely and easily allows people with limb differences and lower dexterity to open and close resealable bags in a work environment. In addition, the ZipBag team captured the most votes from the audience, winning the “People’s Choice Award.”

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SourceAmerica Design challenge....gave our students a chance to use their engineering skills on a project for the community and to do so remotely.”

Dale Yocum, Robotics and Engineering Program Director

The ZipBag team was one of only five high school teams from across the U.S. selected to compete in the finals, which were held virtually on April 7. Each team member receives \$575 in prize money, and the Catlin Gabel Engineering Program also receives \$1,000, which will go toward funding future projects.

The ZipBag team is comprised of Catlin Gabel senior Eric Wang (the team leader), and sophomores Lucas Holliday, Ben Rosenfeld, and Keola Edelen Hare. They partnered with the nonprofit On-the-Move PDX to deepen their understanding of the needs of those with disabilities. They then developed a concept, built a prototype, and beta tested their invention. Utilizing foot pedals and a simple design, ZipBag requires the use of only one hand

and a minimal amount of fine motor skills to operate. The student inventors created a video about the “why” behind their idea, the iteration process, and creation of the solution itself. [Watch the video here.](#)

Dale Yocum, Director of Catlin Gabel's extracurricular Engineering Program, is especially proud of the way the students were able to collaborate remotely this year. “In this year of COVID-19 remote learning, the SourceAmerica Design challenge was a perfect fit for members of our Robotics team,” he says. “It gave our students a chance to use their engineering skills on a project for the community and to do so remotely. We had four first-time teams from our Engineering Program enter the competition this year, never expecting to even be a finalist, let alone winning the entire competition!”

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ZipBag team members (L to R) Lucas Holliday and Eric Wang (team leader)



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