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## Marketing 101

Students Take Part In Global Fair At JMU

By [Heather Bowser](#)



Keister Elementary School third-graders Erika Mitchell (right) and Ciara Hampton sell baked treats at their booth, Flower Power Bakers, on Thursday during the Global Entrepreneurship Marketplace Fair hosted at JMU's Convocation Center.

Photo by Nikki Fox

HARRISONBURG - Folks looking to buy miniature catapults made out of clothespins and soda caps or grass growing inside custom-painted eggshells, are simply out of luck - they're all sold out.

For about 90 minutes on Thursday, nearly 500 elementary and middle school children from eight schools in Harrisonburg and Rockingham and Greene counties gathered for the 11th annual Global Entrepreneurship Marketplace. The event was held inside James Madison University's Convocation Center.

The kids sold dozens of handmade goods, everything from cookies and candies to beaded bracelets to, yes, miniature weapons and egg planters. They trade goods using "GEMS," a student-created currency named after the event.

"The catapults work best when you shoot beans or beads," said the primary designer, Danny Sorto, a 10-year-old at Ruckersville Elementary School in Greene County.

The program is organized by the JMU Center for Economic Education and funded by Shenandoah Valley Economic Education Inc. and the National Council on Economic Education, said Lynne Stover, associate director for the center.

The kids learn a little something about supply and demand, sales and scarcity, she said. Dozens of children, for example, sold baked goods or painted faces, but only one group spray painted the children's hair (don't worry, moms. It was the washout kind).

#### How It Works

The project began earlier in the school year when students designed and developed their own classroom society, creating a name, flag and "currency," Stover said.

Students can earn currency by completing various classroom jobs or turning in their homework on time. Eventually, the students start "licensed" businesses by creating their own goods or services and pricing them, she said.

Kelly Gooss, a 13-year-old seventh-grader at Elkton Middle School, and her partner, Audrey Gutshall, 12, sold baked goods. They learned that their stuff "will not sell just because it's on sale," Kelly said.

Two other seventh-graders from EMS, Hannah Hensley, 13, and Meghan Nicholson, 13, painted faces while Ciara Hampton and Erika Mitchell, third-graders from Keister Elementary School, operated the Flour Power Bakery.

"We've got quite a bit of money," Ciara said. "I even gave some money to my teacher who didn't have any."

Contact Heather Bowser at 574-6218 or [hbowser@dnronline.com](mailto:hbowser@dnronline.com)