For Immediate Release

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STEM FOCUS AFTERSCHOOL AND HOMESCHOOL PROGRAM OPENS IN SW PDX

Eugene program expands to SW Portland for technology enthusiasts, aged 8-14

Monday, February 15, Portland, OR *. . .* The tidy red brick buildings of SW Sequoia Parkway are the workplaces of various tech startups and professional offices stretching along I-5 between Tigard, Portland and Lake Oswego. One such new business, tucked between a dental office and sewing center is Fidgets2Widgets, a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) after school program that's also the only authorized Minecraft EDU site in Oregon.

Founded in Eugene by counselors and educators Sydney Ashland and Pam Simon, M.S.W., co-authors of "Mind Your Minecraft, Eat Your Vegetables!" the new Fidgets2Widgets Portland center combines the innate curiosity of 8 to 14 year olds with hands-on technology learning.

Fidgets2Widgets, Portland

Address:	15495 SW Sequoia Parkway, Portland OR
Phone:	503-310-3248
Hours:	1 to 6:30pm M-F
	12 to 4:00pm Sat
Social:	FB, Twitter, Insta
Video:	
Photos:	Download here: Dropbox

Working mothers themselves, Fidgets2Widgets was borne out of frustration with lackluster after school choices that penalized parents for every minute they arrived late, or under-stimulated children's growing minds. Not to mention the programs didn't support what they were learning in school.

"Holistic means that children, or Widgetarians, as we call them, have balance at Fidgets2Widgets," said Simon. "Screen time is interactive learning time, and we intersperse this with exercise, homework help, 3D printing at our maker station and snack time. The main difference between Fidgets2Widgets and other after school programs is that the STEM-focus is presented in a casual and fun way. We mentor kids to become content creators, rather than just passive users of technology."

As well as having 40 computers, 20 Droid tablets, a dedicated Maker space, including 3-D printing, beading and a sewing machine, Fidgets2Widgets teaches many lessons with a dedicated Minecraft server. This means kids

can play their favorite game on LAN (Local Area Networks), on a Private Server and/or Mods through Technic Launcher. It's a supervised and safe environment, and even hosts a Minecraft Club every Saturday from noon to 4:00 PM.

Another difference in this program is it acknowledges that children are constantly connected, so the center encourages them to be good digital citizens. Kids as early as five can be shown how to use a moral code when playing online. This moral code is founded on values cultivated before bad things set in, including cyberbullying, identity fraud, security breaches and cyber predators.

Fidgets2Widgets is similar to Montessori programs in its holistic approach to learning, with its tagline of "Holistic, High Energy, High Tech." Programming is varied and balanced.

"We have sedentary activities as well as many opportunities to exercise during the time at Fidgets2Widgets. We have a WiiU and another Virtual Reality System called, "Beam," along with Yoga Balls, Stationary Bike, and a Jungle Jumparoo. The way we are different from Montessori is that Maria Montessori could never have imagined the digital age and what 21st Century learning would require!"

Fidgets2Widgets is open daily except Sunday, from 1:00 to 6:30 PM. On holidays, such as Presidents Day and others that public schools are closed, the center opens for early drop off and pick up. Cost is $20 per session for ½ day, and $40 for all day. Programs include Urban Planning using Minecraft, Robotics with Spheros, Budgeting, Saving and Making Money, coding and Probability in Game Design. For a full list of programs, please visit the Fidgets2Widgets website at: http://fidgets2widgets.com

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