

Hiller's class completes exercise about man who invented traffic signal

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE – Goshen Elementary first-grade teacher **Ali Hiller** recently completed a story about **Garrett Morgan**, the inventor of the traffic signal during Black History Month celebrations.

Garrett Morgan was a star on trail for African-American inventors with his patents, including those for a hair-straightening product, a breathing device, a revamped sewing machine and an improved traffic signal.

With only an elementary school education, Morgan, born in Kentucky on March 4, 1877, began his career as a sewing-machine mechanic. He went on to patent several inventions, including an improved sewing machine and traffic signal, a hair-straightening product, and a respiratory device that would later provide the blueprint for WWI gas masks. The inventor died on July 27, 1963, in Cleveland, Ohio.

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inventors like Garrett Morgan in the exercise she had them do.

“After reading about his amazing accomplishments, the students then participated in the Invention Convention J,” Hiller said. “The students were in groups of two or three and they created their own inventions. I gathered a bunch of items (foam squares, tissue boxes, craft sticks, clay, pipe cleaners, etc.) and had the students work together in pairs to come up with a new invention.”

Hiller described the exercise as a demonstration of “excellent teamwork and hands-on activity.”

“After we created our new inventions, we shared them with the class,” she said. “The students then moved into a writing activity where they wrote about what the purpose of their inventions was and the process and plan they used in order to make their invention. We incorporated Black History Month along with science and writing. The students had a lot of fun and really enjoyed being great inventors like Garrett Morgan.”

