

# Runaway cart carries inspiration

As toddler rolled away, mother thought: That needs brakes!

By **SCOTT WILLIAMS**

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With her toddler son perched in the seat, Christina Hackbarth watched in horror as the shopping cart rolled away from her, across the parking lot.

The frightening experience got Hackbarth thinking, and it transformed the Wisconsin mother of three.

It made her an inventor.

The Oconomowoc native went home and began sketching ideas for equipping shopping carts with a brake that shoppers could operate using a handle.

The idea was simple, but Hackbarth submitted it to the federal government and got a patent.

Now the 35-year-old innovator is working to introduce her idea into the marketplace, with hopes of reaching shoppers in grocery stores and other retail outlets.

"I'd like to see the product out there and see it helping people," she said. "It would just make the shopping experience so much better."



JIM BOVIN / FOR THE JOURNAL SENTINEL

Christina Hackbarth sketched her idea before applying for a patent. She's trying to interest stores in installing brakes.

Retailers have been slow to embrace the idea of shopping cart brakes, questioning whether they are necessary. But public health advocates have urged improved safety in shopping cart design, mostly

Please see **INVENTION, 6B**