



# RILEY'S RAINFOREST

"Send down... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing..." —Bahá'u'lláh

## Finding Friends

**H**ow is friendship like riding a bike or eating veggies? It gives your health a boost!

Research shows that in addition to being fun, social ties with friends and family are crucial for our health and happiness. In fact, one study found that strong, happy relationships are as important as eating a nutritious diet and not smoking! Getting support from others helps us deal with stress, which leads to better health. People with close friends and family are happier and may even live longer than those who feel more isolated.

Feeling connected to a community is like a safety net. You have the confidence to leap into a new sport or an audition for a play because you know

your friends are cheering you on. And if you don't make it, they'll be there for encouragement. On the other hand, loneliness hurts. Feeling rejected activates the same areas of our brains as physical pain. A put-down from a friend can feel as bad as a punch in the stomach.

If you don't have a *lot* of friends, don't worry! The number doesn't matter as much as having some strong and positive ties. Be sure to nurture your relationships. Enjoy fun times and build good memories together. Offer encouragement when someone is down. Take time to check in with people you haven't seen in a while. When you make friends and family a priority, everyone can be healthier and happier.



## Explore & Soar: Strengthen Your Friendships

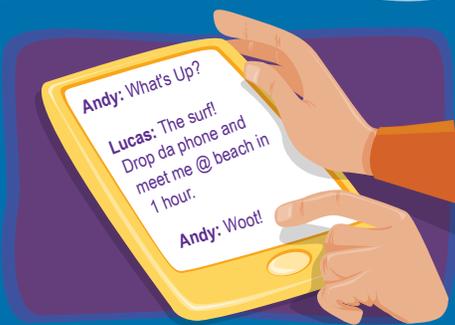
**N**urturing relationships takes some time and effort, but it also feels great. Try these simple ways to build stronger bonds with people in your life:

- ☐ Give sincere compliments. *Awesome job! Your music rocks!*
- ☐ Be curious about people and ask questions. *Did you have a good trip? How are you today?*
- ☐ Explore things you have in common, such as hobbies or music.



- ☐ Support healthy interests you don't have in common. If they make your friends happy, cheer them on.
- ☐ Look for creative ways to show your thanks when someone is kind.
- ☐ Keep in touch with friends and family you don't see often. Send texts, e-mails, cards, or homemade gifts.

## Curiosity Canopy



**T** rue or False? More than half of teens spend time texting friends every day.

**TRUE.** In one survey, 55% of teens 13–17 said they text friends daily. Just 25% said they spend time every day with friends outside of school.