

A BAHÁ'Í COMPANION FOR YOUNG EXPLORERS

Brilliant Star

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CELEBRATING THE LIFE
OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

HOW DO YOU
SHINE YOUR LIGHT?

Be a Candle

Brilliant Star

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Brilliant Star empowers kids to explore their roles as world citizens. Inspired by the principles of peace and unity in the Bahá'í Faith, we encourage readers to use their virtues to make the world a better place.

The Bahá'í Faith is the second most widespread religion in the world, with over five million Bahá'ís. It was founded by the Prophet Bahá'u'lláh ("Glory of God" in Arabic) in 1863. Bahá'u'lláh taught that all people are part of one human family, and all religions come from one God. Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, interpreted His teachings and led the Bahá'í community after Bahá'u'lláh's passing.

Today, Bahá'ís work to bring love and justice to the world, and end prejudice and discrimination of all kinds.

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Your skills can add up to super service.

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Chalk up some imaginative art.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Can one person's kind deeds really make a difference in the world? Yes, they can! Having a spirit of service is a light that can brighten our communities.

A brilliant example is the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who led the Bahá'í Faith from 1892–1921. He devoted nearly all of his time to helping others.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's words and actions inspire people around the globe. He described unity in different areas of life as candles that will help to illumine humanity. He encouraged people of all faiths to work for equality and justice.

In this issue, celebrate and explore 'Abdu'l-Bahá's life of love and service. Challenge friends and family to join you in helpful activities. Quiz yourself on your deep listening skills. Create a cactus garden craft from Nur's Nook. And get to know Ridvan Foxhall, who empowers kids to express their virtues and cultures in their communities and onstage.

Whether you share a prayer, offer a meal, or help out a neighbor, your acts of kindness can be candles that light up our world.

LOVE, BRILLIANT STAR ☆



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Maya's MYSTERIES

"Service to humanity is service to God." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

WE LOVE HELPING NATURE!



BLOOM WITH SERVICE

My junior youth group has been reading cool stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He always found ways to help people around him, especially those who were poor or sick.

'Abdu'l-Bahá also loved nature. He helped plant the gardens at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, his father. He enjoyed flowers and took walks in parks and gardens. I love nature, too. Reading those stories inspired me

to want to care for the environment even more.

To honor 'Abdu'l-Bahá's spirit of service and love of nature, our group cleaned up a hiking trail by my house. It was fun to do a service project outside, and the trail looks beautiful again!

How do you like to be of service? Check out these ideas we came up with to help our Earth and spread love.



SPROUTS OF SERVICE

Invite friends and family to see how many of these services you can do in two weeks. Add your own ideas, too.

- ☐ Find a story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá admiring nature, and share it with a friend.
- ☐ Plant flowers that are native to your area to attract pollinators like butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds.
- ☐ Plant a tree or garden in honor of a loved one.
- ☐ Host a prayer gathering outside. It could be in a backyard, at a park, or at the beach!
- ☐ Learn three facts about an endangered species in your area and find out how you can help.
- ☐ Make a bird feeder out of recyclable materials.
- ☐ Adopt a street or park to clean regularly with your family.
- ☐ Invite friends to capture nature with art. Find a location to photograph or draw together, then share your creations.
- ☐ Turn off the TV and other electronics, and have a game night with family and friends.
- ☐ Create a homemade art project for an elder using recyclable materials.
- ☐ Offer to help an elderly neighbor with a garden project.
- ☐ Learn three fun facts about a landmark in your area, then share your findings with a friend.
- ☐ Visit a farmer's market to find local fruits and veggies.
- ☐ Invite a family member or friend to go outside and meditate on the beauty you see, then share your thoughts.
- ☐ Offer to water a neighbor's plants when they're on a trip.
- ☐ Ask your family to bike or walk to an event instead of driving.
- ☐ Write a poem, story, or song about caring for Earth and share it with friends and family.
- ☐ Ask a sibling or friend to do a science experiment with you. One idea: *Maya's Mysteries: How Earth Heats Up**
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____



Peacock Power

Picture a peacock strutting through the forest, his head held high as his tail feathers fan out behind him. Adult males are famous for these magnificent trains—each one has about 200 feathers!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá shared a joke about peacocks with friends in ‘Akká, Israel, in 1908. Over lunch, he asked if they were happy. They said they were very glad to be with him, but they were unhappy about their own faults. “Think not of yourselves,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

said, “but think of the Bounty of God. This will always make you happy.” With a smile, he said that peacocks are content because they focus on their gorgeous feathers instead of their ugly feet.*

Our wings might droop when we think about personal and global problems like prejudice and climate change. But when we focus on the greatness of God instead of our shortcomings, we can soar to greater heights of peace and justice.

Find nine letters hidden among the peacocks, and use them to complete the quote.



Letters found:



“oy ve u w n ! n t me of oy... we
 eem ette a le to co e w th the wo l an to
 n ou he e o u e ulne .” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace His Ascension

The Life of Bahá'u'lláh

The highlighted
area marks the time
in which this story
takes place.

1817 November 12

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh
in Tihrán, Iran

1844

Recognizes the Báb as
a new Messenger of God

1852

Imprisonment in the
"Black Pit" of Tihrán

1853–1863

Exile in Baghdád, Iraq.
From 1854–1856, He
goes into the mountains
to pray in solitude.

1863 April

Declares Divine Mission
as Prophet-Founder
of the Bahá'í Faith

1863–1868

Exile in Constantinople
(Istanbul), then Adrianople
(Edirne), Turkey. Begins
writing letters to kings
and rulers in 1867,
urging world unity

1868

Last exile, to prison-
city of 'Akká, Israel

1877

Finally free to live in
countryside homes
of Mazra'ih and then
Bahjí, outside 'Akká

1892 May 29

Bahá'u'lláh passes
away at Bahjí.

One autumn evening in 1879, two hours after sunset, Bahá'u'lláh mounted his white donkey, Barq (Lightning), and moved to His final home—the Mansion of Bahjí.

For about 26 years, Bahá'u'lláh had been imprisoned, exiled, and persecuted for sharing His peaceful teachings. His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, served alongside Him at every step. During their imprisonment in 'Akká, Israel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá helped care for the Bahá'í community, met with government officials, and assisted the poor and sick.

One day Bahá'u'lláh said, "I have not gazed on verdure for nine years. The country is the world of the soul, the city is the world of bodies." In response, 'Abdu'l-Bahá rented a garden and home for Him outside the city. Though technically still a prisoner, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was so respected that no one stopped him from leaving 'Akká. Sometimes officials even joined him.

But when all the arrangements were ready, Bahá'u'lláh refused to leave the city! He was a prisoner and wouldn't disobey His sentence. An important Muslim leader admired Him so much, he begged Bahá'u'lláh to move to the country. Bahá'u'lláh finally agreed. He lived in a house called the Mansion of Mazra'ih for about two years before moving to the Mansion of Bahjí. There, He spent the last years of His life revealing holy writings, welcoming visitors, and caring for the Bahá'ís. Meanwhile, 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued his important service in 'Akká. It brought great joy to Bahá'u'lláh when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Him at Bahjí.



After leaving 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh spent about two years at the Mansion of Mazra'ih, enjoying the peace of the countryside that He loved so much.

After nearly 13 years, Bahá'u'lláh became sick with a fever. It went away, but came back a few weeks later. He gathered family and friends at His bedside for one last time and said, "I am well pleased with you all . . . May God assist you to remain united."

On May 29, 1892, Bahá'u'lláh passed away. 'Abdu'l-Bahá announced the event to the Sultán of Turkey with the words, "the Sun of Bahá has set." Bahá'u'lláh was laid to rest shortly after sunset that day, in a house near the Mansion of Bahjí that later became His shrine. For an entire week, mourners of many faiths and backgrounds came to grieve with the family and offer tributes to Him.

Nine days after His passing, nine witnesses gathered to read Bahá'u'lláh's will. It was the first time in known history that a Messenger of God had left written instructions about the leadership of His Faith. Bahá'u'lláh appointed 'Abdu'l-Bahá

“It is incumbent upon . . . My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards . . .
the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l Bahá].” —Bahá’u’lláh

as the head of the Bahá’í Faith and told His followers to turn to him for guidance.

In His will, Bahá’u’lláh wrote, “The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity or dissension.” His will allowed the Bahá’í Faith to stay unified after His passing. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent the rest of his life guiding the growing Bahá’í community as a loving champion of justice. He wrote that “no greater manifestation of love and kindness can be conceived in the world” than to visit the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and pray for a loved one.



The Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, located next to the Mansion of Bahjí, is the holiest place on Earth for Bahá’ís.

Find 18 uplifting words from Bahá’u’lláh’s written will.
Search up, down, forward, backward, and diagonally.

BLESSINGS	C	Y	H	T	R	O	W	E	S	I	A	R	P	C	C	PEACE
CONFIRMATION	Q	O	V	A	E	R	B	M	B	C	U	V	Y	O	T	POWER
CONCORD	T	U	N	V	T	R	U	S	T	Q	N	T	F	N	S	PRASEWORTHY
EQUITY	Y	N	O	F	C	M	Z	T	Q	D	I	D	B	C	S	RESPLENDENT
GRACE	V	L	E	C	I	S	Q	R	R	L	T	S	L	O	E	RIGHTEOUSNESS
JUSTICE	Q	N	E	D	V	R	D	Z	I	U	Y	O	Y	R	N	TRANQUILITY
LOFTY	N	S	H	L	N	M	M	U	P	B	T	E	T	D	S	TRUST
LOVE	M	W	W	E	X	E	Q	A	U	E	Q	H	F	P	U	TRUTH
LUMINOUS	X	T	O	M	C	N	L	C	T	U	A	J	O	O	O	UNITY
	V	N	T	D	A	I	F	P	I	I	S	C	L	W	E	
	E	C	A	R	G	P	T	T	S	G	O	Y	E	E	T	
	U	I	T	J	W	L	Y	S	R	E	L	N	H	R	H	
	W	Z	K	R	Q	H	P	T	U	R	R	H	H	U	G	
	L	U	M	I	N	O	U	S	L	J	C	C	D	E	I	
	P	L	G	P	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S	Y	R	

(((How Deeply Do You Listen?)))

“Let us pray for eyes to see and ears to hear, and for hearts that long for peace.” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Want to know a secret to helping others? Open your ears! When you want to help friends and neighbors, a great place to start is by listening. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is a wonderful example of this. People from all over the world asked for his help and insight. One man who met him said, “He responded first with silence . . . His encouragement always was that the other should speak and He listen . . . ‘Abdu’l-Bahá seemed to listen with my ears.”

When a friend needs help, listen deeply to what’s needed. Pay attention to their speech *and* emotions. Then listen to yourself. How does your spirit guide you to respond? Finally, notice the impact of your words and actions. Have you really helped? If not, ask how you could be more supportive.

When we listen with love to ourselves and each other, our service and friendships can truly sing!

(((How well do you listen to yourself and others? Circle your answers, then add up your points.)))



1. I check before helping or giving advice, to make sure my input is needed or wanted.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

2. When a friend speaks, I don’t rush to answer. I focus on understanding them before I think about what to say.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

3. I make eye contact to show empathy and respect when someone is speaking to me.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

4. I try to make sure everyone has a chance to speak without interruption.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

5. I ask questions to make sure I understand clearly.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

6. I pay attention to the impact of my words and actions on others.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

7. When a friend is upset, I listen first, then ask if there’s something I can do to help.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

8. If someone says I hurt them, I listen with an open mind and apologize if I need to.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

9. I try not to judge ideas and opinions that are different from my own.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

10. I watch body language and facial expressions to help me understand how someone feels.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

11. I try not to let my mind wander while someone is speaking.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

12. I listen to my emotions so I can be honest with myself and others.
Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1



MY SCORE

36–28 POINTS You lend a loving ear to friends in need. Keep using your skills to strengthen your relationships!

27–20 POINTS You’re learning to listen with love. Try a tip from the quiz to enhance your skills and keep improving!

19–12 POINTS You can strengthen your listening skills with practice. Choose a few ideas from the quiz to try.

Rhythm of Life

Is the rhythm of your day filled with music? Whether you listen, sing, rap, or play an instrument, melodies are *everywhere*! They brighten festivals, family celebrations, sacred places, and more.

Music is important in every culture and in many faiths. In his talks and letters, 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged music for everyone. When one Bahá'í sang a favorite

hymn for 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Israel, it brought tears to his eyes.* He said music has a powerful effect on the spirit.

Playing an instrument, singing, composing, or sharing recorded tunes can be fun ways to serve your community. These skills take practice and patience to develop. But with persistence and focus, you can contribute to the soundtrack of humanity.

Use the Musical Mini Code to replace each note in the quote with the correct letter.

Friendship Fest



"Sin in m lo i s will rin nim tion n
h ppin ss to th worl o hum nity..." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

RILEY'S RAINFOREST

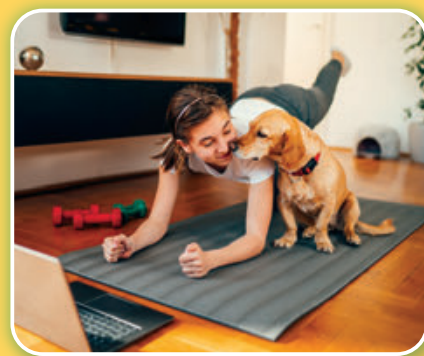


“Send down ... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing...”
—Bahá'u'lláh

Explore & Soar: Cool Ways to Be Kind

Check out these fun ways to make someone's day, and add your own to the list!

- ☞ Handwrite a thank-you note for a teacher.
- ☞ Make a favorite treat for a friend or family member.
- ☞ Share an inspiring quote or video with someone.



- ☞ Offer to care for a neighbor's pet.
- ☞ Throw a craft or coloring party at a senior center.
- ☞ Dry the slides at the park with a towel after it rains.
- ☞ Make gifts for kids who are in the hospital.
- ☞ Help a sibling or friend with a chore or project.
- ☞ Tell a family member three things you appreciate about them.
- ☞ Teach a younger kid how to play a new game.

Soar with Service

My family and I are planting eucalyptus trees at the park with our koala and kangaroo friends. It's hard work, but a lot of fun! It also makes us stronger in many ways.

Did you know that helping others is like activating a superpower? It makes me feel happy and confident, like I'm really accomplishing something. Some scientists even say volunteering can help us live longer, healthier lives!

Serving with others can strengthen friendships, too. I'm meeting lots of new friends at the park. Being with friends can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Also, service is contagious—when people see good deeds, they're more likely to help someone else. Amazing, right?



I get to build my virtue muscles as we work. Digging holes for *two hundred* saplings in the hot sun was tiring and kind of repetitive. But our friends started telling stories. Then time flew by, and we planted the trees in no time. I can't wait to see them grow!

The good feelings that come from helping out don't have to stop when the project is done. Doing acts of kindness can help you stay more positive over time.

You don't need to do a huge project to activate your superpowers of service. Even simple things, like gathering macadamia nuts for dinner or giving the neighbor fledglings a flying lesson can have a huge impact. Check out the cool ideas my friends and I came up with to spread kindness and soar with service!

Curiosity Canopy



Did you know our brains are “hardwired” to give? Being generous activates the same reward pathways in the brain that are triggered by delicious food or fun with friends. It also releases chemicals in our brains that boost health and happiness. Giving is a gift—both to yourself and others!

Clear the Clutter

We've all been there. You can't wait to hang out with friends, but there's a big project to finish first. It can be hard to do service cheerfully when the work feels like a chore.

Before negative thoughts litter your brain, try to keep the big picture in mind. Focus on how good it will feel when you've accomplished your mission, and

you know you've made a difference.

You can make a job more joyful by joining forces with friends. Turn it into a game, or play your favorite music while you work. Think about how your service will bring happiness to others. When you keep a positive focus, even dull tasks can take on new life and help your spirit shine.

To help this service project sparkle, match each negative thought with the positive one that can replace it.

1 WHY DID WE GET STUCK CLEANING UP THE TRAILS?

A OUR WORK MAY INSPIRE OTHERS TO KEEP THE TRAILS CLEAN, TOO.

2 I BET IT RAINS ON US, AND WE WON'T HAVE TIME FOR FUN.

B IT'S FUN TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW!

3 THIS JOB IS TOO HUGE. WE NEED 100 MORE PEOPLE.

C A GAME OR STORY MIGHT MAKE THINGS GO FASTER.

4 THESE BUGS ARE SO ANNOYING!

D I HOPE IT DOESN'T RAIN, BUT IT WOULD HELP THE PLANTS GROW.

5 WHY BOTHER? OTHER PEOPLE WILL JUST MESS THINGS UP AGAIN.

E THIS IS A LOT OF WORK. I'M GLAD WE'RE DOING IT TOGETHER.

6 IT'S SO BORING AND QUIET HERE.

F I'LL TAKE A SHORT BREAK, BUT I WON'T GIVE UP.

7 I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO DO THIS. I CAN'T GET THE HANG OF IT.

G I'M GLAD TO HELP TAKE CARE OF THE TRAILS.

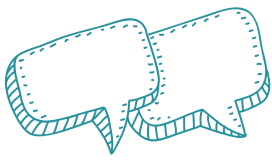
8 UGH! IT FEELS LIKE THIS WILL NEVER END.

H IT'S COOL TO BE ABLE TO HEAR THE SOUNDS OF NATURE.

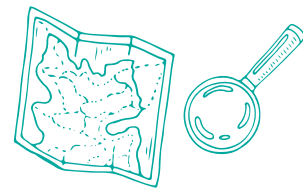
9 I GIVE UP. I JUST WANT TO GO HOME.

I THE BIRDS AND BATS MUST LOVE HAVING SO MANY BUGS TO EAT!





Talking About ... Secrets of Service



Is there someone in your family or community who's passionate about helping others? Are you curious about what motivates them? Do you want to explore careers where people do intense service, like healthcare, firefighting, or teaching?

You can learn a lot by interviewing service heroes. Put on your detective hat and investigate someone's service paths. Find out what makes their service joyful. What skills and qualities have they developed? You might solve the mystery of how *you* can best help others!

Name: _____

Birthplace: _____

Birth year: _____

Paths of service: _____

Attach a photo or drawing

What types of service bring you the most joy, and why?

What's a challenge you faced in your work, and how did you handle it?

How did you choose your career or volunteer service?

What advice would you give someone who's looking for a way to help others?

What skills or qualities are important in the work you do?

Tell me about a time you felt like you made a difference in someone's life.

Reflections

Virtues I see in this person: _____

Something I learned from this interview: _____

Actions I can take to help others: _____

EXPLORE AND PROTECT THE EARTH AND ITS CREATURES

"All the members of this endless universe are linked one to another." —Bahá'í Writings

WE
ARE
ONE

EARTH-SAVING TIP

Pollinator Power!

Check out the website www.pollinator.org/guides to see what to plant in your region to support bees, butterflies, birds, bats, and other pollinators.



WOW, REALLY?

The bee hummingbird is the world's smallest hummer. Found only in Cuba, it weighs less than two raisins!

OUR CONNECTIONS

City parks are amazing places to discover nature. They provide homes for diverse wildlife. They boost people's health by encouraging activity and relieving stress. As places for picnics, they build community. Shade trees keep cities cooler, and trees and plants absorb stormwater and filter out pollution. Through photosynthesis, trees also absorb carbon dioxide and generate oxygen. Help keep parks clean and respect their wildlife.



PROTECTING OUR PLANET

Corina Newsome is a biologist who works with Georgia Audubon, a birding and conservation organization. She helped create Black Birders Week to encourage Black people to explore nature, and she connects diverse kids to careers in wildlife. She says, "I hope to expose youth of color to conservation professionals who look like them . . ."



WHERE IN THE WORLD?



Each year, 20 million people visit Lincoln Park along Lake Michigan. It has a zoo, museums, gardens, and a theater. 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited it during his 1912 journey in North America. *Unscramble the letters to find its location:*

OCGIHAC, LILSOINI

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ , ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

AMAZING ANIMALS



Pet cats have been around for thousands of years. It's estimated that there are about 600 million in the world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had a brown cat who made him laugh. *Fill in the letters to find the name of this breed that originated in the Middle East:*

P O R I O N C A T S



BAXTER AND BRIDGET

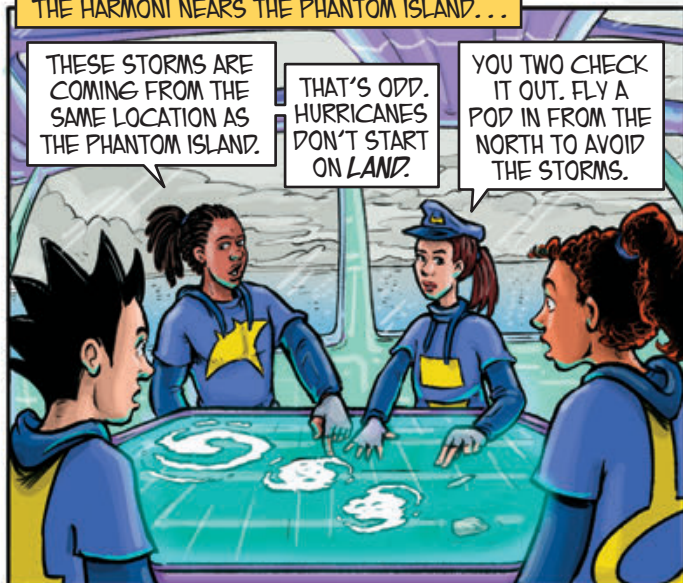
LIGHTNING & LUNA

TRAIL OF TEMPESTS

#89



THE HARMONI NEARS THE PHANTOM ISLAND...



THESE STORMS ARE COMING FROM THE SAME LOCATION AS THE PHANTOM ISLAND.

THAT'S ODD. HURRICANES DON'T START ON LAND.

YOU TWO CHECK IT OUT. FLY A POD IN FROM THE NORTH TO AVOID THE STORMS.

THESE STORMS WILL BE HUGE WHEN THEY REACH THE COAST.



AND CLIMATE CHANGE IS RAISING THAT HEAT!

THEY GET ENERGY FROM HEAT IN THE WATER.



I SEE THE ISLAND! THERE'S A VOLCANO, BUT IT LOOKS ODD.

UGH, THIS WIND!

TURN BACK?

NO, WE GOT THIS!

IN FAUNA'S PHANTOM ISLAND LAIR...



UPLIFTER POD APPROACHING!

ROTATE THE STORM DOOR TO THE NORTH!

LET'S HIT THEM WITH A BIGGER STORM. HA-HA!

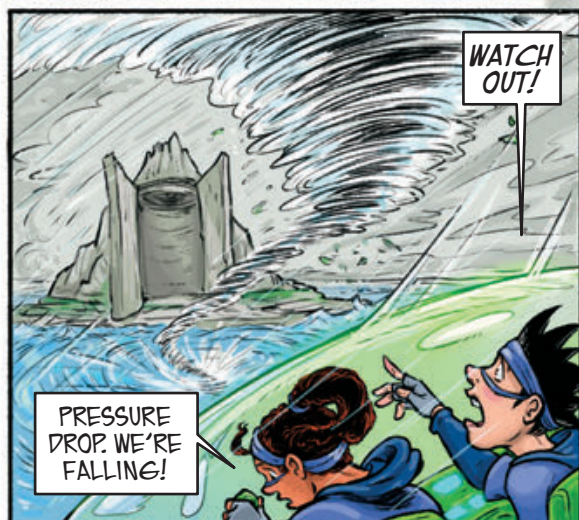


HEY, THE VOLCANO IS TURNING!

IMPOSSIBLE!



THE SIDE IS OPENING!

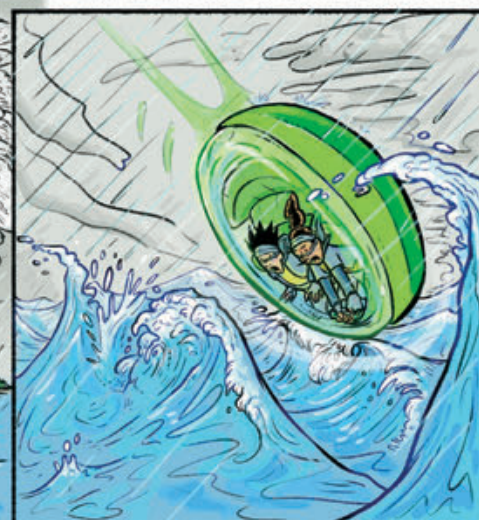


WATCH OUT!

PRESSURE DROP. WE'RE FALLING!

TRYING... TO GET OUT OF THE STORM. IT'S SO STRONG!

YOU CAN DO IT, LUNA!

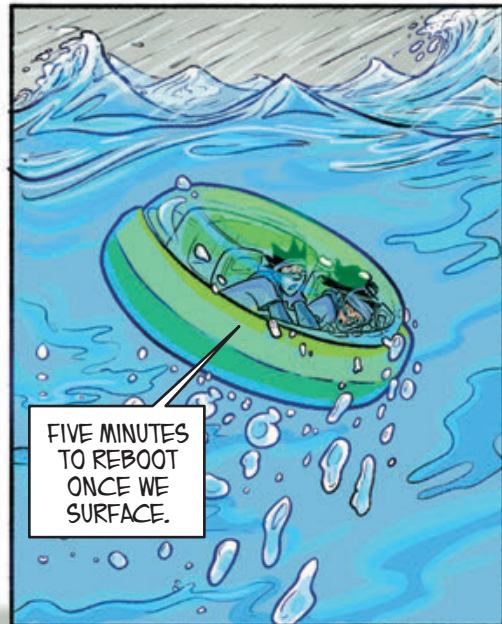




WHOA! YOU
OKAY, BRO?

YEAH. HEY,
I SEE A
DOCK
DOWN
THERE.

WE LOST
POWER! WE
NEED TO
REBOOT THE
SYSTEM.



FIVE MINUTES
TO REBOOT
ONCE WE
SURFACE.

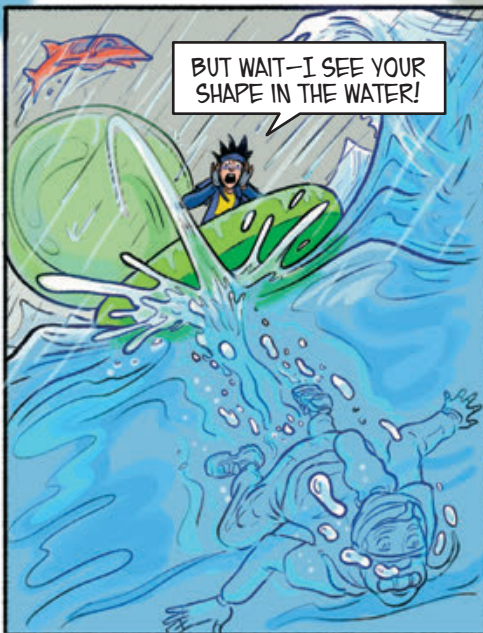


STARTING
REBOOT—
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?

I WANT TO
CHECK
THAT
DOCK.

WE DON'T
KNOW
WHAT'S
DOWN
THERE!

I'LL GO
INVISIBLE!

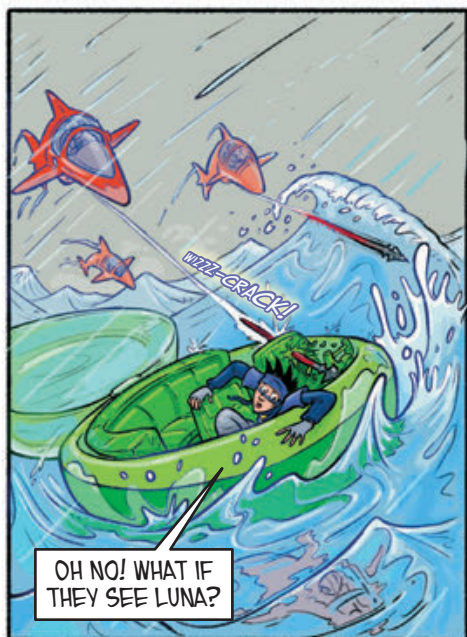


BUT WAIT—I SEE YOUR
SHAPE IN THE WATER!



AARGH!

WHOOOSH!



OH NO! WHAT IF
THEY SEE LUNA?



YIKES! I NEED
TO HELP HER!

PA-TINK!



ZAAAAAAAPPP!

ENOUGH!

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Servant of Bahá

Can you imagine how you'd feel if your father was unfairly imprisoned, your home was attacked, and your belongings were stolen? That happened to 'Abdu'l-Bahá when he was eight. His father, Bahá'u'lláh, was thrown into a terrible dungeon in Tihrán, Persia (now Iran) for four months. Though Bahá'u'lláh had done nothing wrong, He was persecuted because He followed the Bábí Faith.*

The whole family was in danger. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá went outside, he was chased by kids who threw stones at him. The family barely had enough food. One day his mother gave him a handful of flour to eat because they had no bread.

In the prison, Bahá'u'lláh had a divine vision revealing that He was a Messenger of God with a new religion—the Bahá'í Faith. His teachings would promote world peace, the oneness of humanity, and the elimination of prejudice.

When Bahá'u'lláh was released, the family was forced to leave Persia. They were banished to Iraq, and then to what are now Turkey and Israel. Through these ordeals, many people didn't understand Bahá'u'lláh's station as a divine Messenger. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá understood, and he did his best to be of service to Bahá'u'lláh and His followers. Many people, including government officials and religious leaders, admired 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wisdom, kindness, and generosity. Bahá'u'lláh called him "the Master."

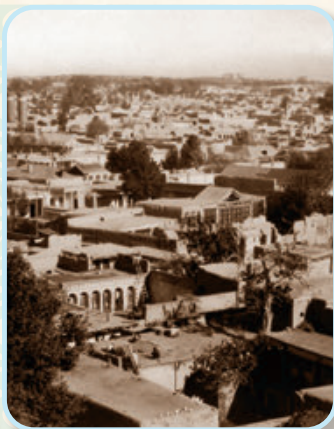
Center of the Covenant

After 40 years of exile for His teachings of peace, Bahá'u'lláh passed away in 1892. He left a written will appointing 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the leader of the Bahá'í Faith. These instructions are Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant—an agreement with His followers that prevents the Bahá'í

Faith from breaking into separate groups. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is known as the "Center of the Covenant."

'Abdu'l-Bahá put into practice his father's teachings of love and kindness. He visited the poor and sick of 'Akká, gave them money, and even provided warm cloaks in the winter. He encouraged Bahá'ís to share the Faith around the world. Though he was officially a prisoner in 'Akká, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was so respected by officials that he was able to leave the city to pray at Bahá'u'lláh's holy resting place, or shrine, at Bahjí.

But some people were jealous of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's influence and spread lies about him. In 1901, the Sultán of Turkey decided 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be confined within the walls of 'Akká. 'Abdu'l-Bahá grieved that he could no longer visit Bahá'u'lláh's shrine. He had a cabin built on the roof of his house, where he would look toward Bahjí and pray.



May 23, 1844

'Abdu'l-Bahá is born in Tihrán, Iran, and named 'Abbás Effendi (later known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá)



1853–1868

Exiled to Baghdád, Constantinople (Istanbul), Adrianople (Edirne), and 'Akká



March 8, 1873

Marriage to Munírih Khánum



May 29, 1892

Passing of Bahá'u'lláh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá becomes the leader of the Bahá'í Faith

“O Lord, my God! Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones,
strengthen me in my servitude to Thee . . .” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Epic Journeys

Finally, in 1908, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was freed. His first act was to visit Bahá’u’lláh’s shrine. He then embarked on epic journeys to share the Bahá’í teachings. From 1910–1913, he visited Egypt, Europe, and North America.

Though in his late 60s and in poor health, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had amazing energy and perseverance. Each day, from morning to night, he met with people from all walks of life—scholars, officials, journalists, clergy members, and families. He gave hundreds of public talks.

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá returned to Israel, he guided the Bahá’ís through World War I (1914–1918). He ensured that crops were grown and food given to those in need. For this work, he was awarded a knighthood by Britain in 1920.

After decades of selfless service, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away at age 77, on November 28, 1921. Ten thousand

people mourned at his funeral. Muslim, Christian, and Jewish leaders gave speeches praising him. He was laid to rest in a room of the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel.

In his Will and Testament, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá protected the unity of the Bahá’í Faith by extending the Covenant. He appointed his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith. Shoghi Effendi led the Bahá’ís until his passing in 1957. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also gave instructions for electing the Universal House of Justice, an international council of nine, which guides the Bahá’í community today.

In the century since the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Bahá’í Faith has circled the globe. There are now over five million Bahá’ís. In 2019, the Universal House of Justice announced that a shrine to honor ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would be built near ‘Akká, on land “consecrated by the footsteps” of Bahá’u’lláh.

Candles of Unity

‘Abdu’l-Bahá described seven candles of unity in 1906. He said, “Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.”

Unity in the political realm

Unity of thought in world undertakings

Unity in freedom

Unity in religion

Unity of nations

Unity of races

Unity of language



1910–1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá travels in Egypt, Europe, and North America



April 27, 1920

‘Abdu’l-Bahá receives knighthood for service during World War I



November 28, 1921

Passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi becomes the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith

April 2019

Plans for the Shrine of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá near ‘Akká announced

November 27, 2021

Global community honors 100th anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing

Armed with Kindness

A crowd of 2,000 gathered in Washington, D.C., one evening in May 1921. They had come to learn about a controversial topic—eliminating racial prejudice. The audience at the First Congregational Church included Black and white people sitting side by side—and that alone was progress. In the same city just two years earlier, white mobs had attacked Black citizens in a four-day riot that killed 15 people. In fact, race-related riots took place in 25 cities around the country in 1919, leading to an estimated 250 deaths.

Dramatic change was needed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the leader of the Bahá’í Faith, helped set things in motion. He chose an unlikely collaborator—a wealthy white Bahá’í named Agnes Parsons. While she was visiting him in what is now Israel, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá shocked Agnes by asking her to arrange a convention for race amity. It would be the first of its kind in the U.S.—and probably the world.

She said, “I thought I would like to go through the floor . . . I did not think I could do it . . . Then a very extraordinary thing happened. I felt suddenly the power of his creative words. I was really getting the confidence that of course was necessary . . .”

When Agnes got home, she had no idea how to start. She turned to Louis Gregory, a prominent Black Bahá’í lawyer. He said, “Nothing short of a change of hearts will do. Unless the speakers are able to make the power of love felt, the occasion will lose its chief value.”

Agnes gathered a team, including Bahá’í journalist Martha Root, who handled publicity. About 19,000 programs were distributed to proclaim the convention’s goal of overcoming prejudice. They stated, “Correction of the present wrong requires no army, for the field of action is the hearts of our citizens. The instrument to be used is kindness, the ammunition—understanding.”



Nearly a thousand people attended the second race amity convention, held in Massachusetts in December 1921. No photos of the first race amity convention in Washington, D.C., are available.

An impressive array of speakers participated over three days, including Bahá’í scholars, a former U.S. Senator, and two U.S. Representatives. Music uplifted the gatherings with traditional spirituals, performances by Howard University choral groups, and a violin solo by Joseph Douglass, grandson of a famous activist, Frederick Douglass.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent an inspiring message: “Say to this convention that never since the beginning of time has one more important been held . . . It will become the cause of the enlightenment of America.”

The first race amity convention was a rousing success. Upon reading news of the event, U.S. President Warren Harding reportedly said, “Thank God for that convention!”

Later that year, on November 28, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away. But the race amity work he began continued. Over the next two decades, race amity conferences across the country attracted well-known leaders and activists.

Today, Bahá’ís continue to promote racial harmony in many ways around the world. Still, much work remains to be done.

Determined in the Desert

Desert cacti are pretty sharp—and not only due to their amazing spines. They also help other creatures in the desert. For example, saguaro cacti provide food and homes for Gila woodpeckers. In return, the woodpeckers feed on insects and parasites that could harm the cacti. So everyone benefits!

Like cacti, we can benefit ourselves *and* others when we bloom with service. If you plant a garden, you'll beautify

the community *and* learn to care for plants. It's a win-win!

Helping out isn't always easy. What if you get prickly with impatience while waiting for your plants to grow, or you don't see a thriving harvest? Just like cacti can survive in the desert with the water they store, you can draw on your supply of perseverance. Sticking with it can help you solve problems and accomplish your goals. It can also inspire others, and that helps everyone grow!

These diverse cacti are striving to persist in their service. Fill in the letters to learn their tips and names.

IF YOU MAKE MISTAKES, STAY
_ O _ S _ T _ V _
AND FIND WAYS TO
LEARN FROM THEM.

1 O _ t _ m _ s _ t _ c
Organ Pipe

CHOOSE PROJECTS
YOU'RE E _ C _ T _ E _
ABOUT TO STAY JOYFUL
AND MOTIVATED.

2 P _ s _ s _ n _ t _ e
Prickly Pear

GET A _ V _ _ E
FROM FRIENDS AND
FAMILY WHEN YOU
FACE A CHALLENGE.

3 S u _ _ o r t _ v e
Saguaro

SET GOALS, TAKE SMALL
S _ E _ S TOWARD
THEM EACH DAY, AND
CELEBRATE PROGRESS!

4 S _ r i v i _ g
Strawberry
Hedgehog

IF PLANS DON'T WORK
OUT, BE PATIENT,
F L _ _ I B L _ _ ,
AND PRAYERFUL.

5 C h a _ g i _ g Cholla

IF YOU FEEL STRESSED,
MEDITATE AND PRAY TO
REGAIN YOUR _ E _ C E .

6 S e _ e _ e
Spiral

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS
H _ N _ S T _ Y , THEN
CONSULT WITH OTHERS
ABOUT SOLUTIONS.

SHOW APPRECIATION AND
KINDNESS, AND _ H A _ K
PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT YOU.

EXPECT SOME DIFFICULTIES,
AND STAY C O _ _ I T T _ D
TO ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL.

7 A _ _ _ r t i v _ Artichoke Agave

EARTH HAS
OVER 2,000
SPECIES
OF CACTI.

SOME ARE 200
YEARS OLD!

8 G _ a _ _ f _ l Golden Barrel

9 D _ d _ c _ t _ d Dinosaur Back

Grow with Resilience: Create a Cactus Gift

“Perseverance is an essential condition. In every project firmness and steadfastness will undoubtedly lead to good results . . .” —‘Abdu’l-Bahá

My family and I just flew back from a trip to a faraway desert that has incredible cactus plants! Cacti are amazing because they’re super **resilient**—they can thrive in tough situations.

Millions of years ago, spiny cacti looked like ordinary, leafy plants. But Earth’s climate changed, and their habitats became deserts. Still, the cacti persevered! They adapted to store lots of water, which helps them live in dry, harsh places where many plants can’t. Over time,

their leaves turned into spines that protect and shade them and even collect water. That’s so awesome!

Cacti inspire *me* to be resilient, too—like when my plan to paint a mural with friends wilted. Instead of giving up, we came up with another idea. We each painted a cardboard tile, then put them together for a cool mosaic!

Join me in making this cactus garden craft. Keep it, or give it as a gift to someone else who’s growing strong with resilience!

CACTI AND I
PERSEVERE WITH
RESILIENCE!



You'll Need*

- acrylic paint
- paintbrushes
- cup of water
- paper towel
- thin permanent black marker
- smooth rocks
- aquarium or pea gravel
- small flowerpot
- pencil
- colorful cardboard box scraps
- scissors
- toothpicks
- tacky glue
- Optional: paint markers, craft flower, clear sealer

- 1 Paint smooth, clean rocks white to give them an undercoat. Let dry. Repeat with a second coat, if needed.



- 2 Paint each rock a different shade of green (or other colors) for cacti. Mix colors with a little white paint to cover rocks evenly. Let dry. Repeat with another coat, if needed.



- 3 Use paint, permanent marker, or paint markers to add details such as lines or dots for cacti textures.





- 4 Fill flowerpot with gravel to about $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) from its top.



- 8 Bury end of each cactus in gravel.



- 5 On the flowerpot, use a pencil to draw images or write words that remind you of resilience—such as “Way to stick with it!” or “Keep on growing!”



- 9 (a) For garden ornament, fold box scrap in half with colorful sides facing out. Draw stamp-sized shape and cut it out, so you have two shapes. (b) Glue shapes together with toothpick between them. Decorate with paint, permanent marker, or paint markers. Repeat Step 9 to make more.



- 6 Trace over pencil with paint, permanent marker, or paint markers. Let dry.



- 10 Bury end of each toothpick in gravel, so shapes stand up. If you wish, press end of flower into gravel. Display your cactus garden indoors or outdoors, or give it as a gift.



- 7 Optional: Add clear sealer to cacti and flowerpot. Let dry.



RADIANT STARS

Getting to know kids who shine

Connect with kids around the world!
How are they like you? How are they different? Each of us has a unique story to tell. What's yours?

William K.

Age: **11**

I live in: **California, U.S.**

I want to be: **Physician scientist**

This career interests me because: **I get to serve humanity by improving human health**

Virtues I admire most: **Trustworthiness and cleanliness**

Favorite Bahá'í activity: **Teaching children's classes for my five-year-old sister and her friends**



Place I'd love to visit: **The Bahá'í shrines in Haifa and Bahjí, Israel**

I'd like to invent: **A vaccine to cure cancer**

An inspiring hero in my community: **My parents, because they do so much service**

I help my family by: **Being respectful and doing chores without being asked**

A memorable time someone helped me: **I slept over at my grandparents' [house]. They helped me in such a loving way when I scraped my leg.**

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd: **Work in a research lab at Stanford [University] focusing on cures for cancer**

Malaika Y.

Age: **13**

I live in: **Illinois, U.S.**

I want to be: **A chef**

This career interests me because: **I love cooking, and eventually I would like to open a restaurant.**

Hobbies or sports: **Volleyball and tennis**

Favorite Bahá'í activity: **Junior youth group**

Place I'd love to visit: **Tokyo, Japan**

An inspiring hero in my community: **I really admire how Ellen Price and her family are always so loving and welcoming.**

I help my family by: **Watching my two younger siblings**



A favorite food: **Sushi**

A memorable time someone helped me: **I was walking home, and it started to rain. I didn't have an umbrella, so I was soaking wet . . . My friend had an umbrella and handed it to me. What made it special was that she gave me her umbrella, and she walked in the rain.**

I'd like to invent: **Something that can help with pollution around the world**



Erika R.

Age: **13**

I live in: **Maryland, U.S.**

I want to be: **A STEM-based occupation**

This career interests me because: **STEM . . . is advancing the future . . . There is still a significant amount to discover . . .**

Virtue I admire most: **Kindness**

Hobbies: **Violin, drawing**

Favorite Bahá'í activity: **Junior youth [group]**

Place I'd love to visit: **Iran (one day) and Italy**

I'd like to invent: **A CO₂ [carbon dioxide] mitigation system to filter the CO₂ out of the atmosphere, reduce acid in the ocean, and lower the surface temperature of the sea**

An inspiring hero in my community: **My family is always inspiring and supportive. I admire their caring and loving personalities.**

I help my family by: **Doing my daily chores**

If I could volunteer anywhere: **In Zimbabwe, I'd help by gathering charitable groups to provide food, water, and other basic necessities.**

Ethan B.

Age: 9

I live in: **Washington, U.S.**

I want to be:
An animal rescuer

This career interests me because:
I love animals and want to save them.

Virtue I admire most:
Hope

Favorite Bahá'í activities:
Children's classes and hanging out with junior youth

Favorite animal or pet:
I love them all!!! I have two rats and a rabbit.

A memorable time someone helped me:
When my Dad helped me learn to ski. It was special because skiing is now something I love to do, despite the falls.

A favorite book:
Brilliant Star Magazine

A favorite food:
Hawaiian pizza

I'd like to invent:
A machine to sort the plastic out of the ocean

I help my family by:
I like to bring them joy.

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
Be a junior youth animator at one of the new houses of worship because I like learning about the Bahá'í Faith...



Kiana B.

Age: 10

I live in: **Utah, U.S.**

I want to be:
Scientist or professional soccer player

This career interests me because:
It would be really cool to discover new things, and I really like soccer...

Virtue I admire most:
Loyalty or kindness

Favorite Bahá'í activities:
Junior youth [group], Feast, Ayyám-i-Há**

An inspiring hero:
Martin Luther King, Jr. — I admire how he fought for equality... We are all equal. As Bahá'u'lláh says, we are "the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch."

I'd like to invent:
Robots that pick up trash on land and in the ocean

A memorable time someone helped me:
I got really injured in soccer, and my teammates helped me. It was special because I had a hard time walking.

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
Volunteer in Africa. I would help them with education [and] health...



"God has crowned you with honor and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world!" — 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Melia K.

Age: 9

I live in: **California, U.S.**

I want to be: **Engineer**

This career interests me because:
I like to make things, and I want to make things that [don't] cost too much and [that] also help people.

Hobbies or sports:
Ballet, art, designing, hair styling, soccer

Favorite Bahá'í activities:
Children's classes, Feast*

A favorite food:
Atcheke [a West African dish made from cassava]

An inspiring hero in my community:
My mommy. I admire how she encourages me and tells me to never give up and how she loves me so much. Also how she sets a good example to help me grow up properly



I'd like to invent:
A bird that sucks up polluted air and exhales clean air, and turns the polluted part into fertilizer for plants

A memorable time someone helped me:
I was crying because a bully said something mean about my skin color, and my friend helped me stand up against the bully.

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
Go to Togo. I'd help build hospitals and schools [and] help kids learn... I love Togo. My parents came from there.

How to be a Radiant Star:

1. If you're age 7-14, go to www.brilliantstarmagazine.org. From the top menu, choose "Discover." Then click "Become a Radiant Star or Trailblazer," and fill out the form. Or email us at brilliant@usbnc.org. Include your name, age, birthdate, mailing address, and phone number.
2. When it's your turn to shine, we'll send you questions and a form for you and your parents to sign.
3. Answer the questions and send them to us with the signed form, along with at least two good-quality, close-up photographs of your smiling face. Photos should be in sharp focus and show your eyes clearly. Please don't send color copies, low-resolution digital images, or copyright-protected images (like school portraits).

*Feast is a Bahá'í community gathering with prayers, consultation, and fellowship.

**Ayyám-i-Há is a festival of hospitality, gift giving, and preparing for the Bahá'í Fast.

Cailyn B.

Age: **10**

I live in: **Wyoming, U.S.**

I want to be:
A veterinarian

This career interests me because:
I love animals and science.

Virtue I admire most:
Kindness

Favorite Bahá'í activity:
Junior youth [group]

I'd like to invent:
A mechanical dolphin that looks like a normal dolphin, except it goes around eating trash to clean the ocean

An inspiring hero in my community:
My mom—she is so cheerful and kind

I help my family by:
Doing jobs for them

Favorite animal or pet:
Cat (I have two), wolf

Place I'd love to visit:
Haifa, Israel

A memorable time someone helped me:
People in the store helped me when I was lost. It was special because people were kind.

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
[Work at] the animal shelter. I'd walk and feed the animals . . .



Mina J.

Age: **10**

I live in: **California, U.S.**

I want to be:
Food scientist

This career interests me because:
I love food and I love science.

Virtue I admire most:
Caring

Hobbies or sports:
Swimming, cooking, softball, baking

Favorite Bahá'í activity:
Feast

Favorite animal or pet:
My dog, Mario

I'd like to invent:
A robot that sucks up all the pollution and puts it in a factory that [turns] pollution into clean air



Place I'd love to visit:
Mexico or Singapore

A favorite food:
Tacos

An inspiring hero in my community:
Doctors, because they save people's lives

I help my family by:
Feeding the dog and watering the plants

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
Help make food for the people in need because I love cooking and helping people

Kalil M.

Age: **9**

I live in: **Virginia, U.S.**

I want to be: **Professional software coder**

This career interests me because:
I like making video games.

Virtue I admire most:
Kindness

Hobbies or sports:
Video games and baseball

Place I'd love to visit:
Dubai [United Arab Emirates]



Favorite Bahá'í activities:
Going to Green Acre Bahá'í School and celebrating Ayyám-i-Há

I'd like to invent:
An anti-coronavirus ray

I help my family by:
Helping to clean the kitchen

A memorable time someone helped me:
My coding teacher helped me to figure out something difficult . . . It meant a lot to me that he spent the time with me to figure it out.

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
Go to San Mateo, California, to the Roblox headquarters and volunteer to help their software coders . . . I would love to learn more from them.

Amelia H.

Age: **8**

I live in: **Monrovia, Liberia**

I want to be:
Marine biologist

This career interests me because:
I love otters and sea creatures.

Virtue I admire most:
Honesty

Hobbies or sports:
Arts and crafts

I'd like to invent:
A machine to suck in plastic from the oceans

I help my family by:
Staying happy

An inspiring hero in my community:
My mom, because she cares about people and always tries her best to help them

Favorite animal: **Otters**



Favorite Bahá'í activity:
Saying prayers

Place I'd love to visit:
Carmel, California

A memorable time someone helped me:
Once I got lost in Spain and was very scared, but some people helped me to find my mom.

If I could volunteer anywhere, I'd:
Volunteer at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. I would like to work in the gardens because I like nature.

Serve with STEM

"We may think of science as one wing and religion as the other; a bird needs two wings for flight, one alone would be useless." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

Wouldn't it be amazing if you had the power to fly, live underwater, or see how someone's brain works? You can learn those skills and many more with STEM.*

STEM skills are behind lots of cool inventions and exciting ways to help the world. STEM experts develop vaccines, make clean energy, code new apps, protect endangered species, and a zillion other things.

The same kinds of skills can guide us in acts of

service. And math is one of our powerful tools. A few quick calculations can tell you how many seedlings to buy for the community garden or how many boxes of donated food fit in a car.

STEM and smarts alone won't save the world. But we can use these abilities fairly when we link them with spiritual qualities such as compassion, unity, and justice. So embrace your inner STEM superpower, and help formulate a better world.

Our STEM club has a budget of \$475 to make 120 lunches for the food bank. Use your math skills to fill in the blanks.

Are we under or over the budget?
By how much?

Item	Price	Calculate cost for 1	Cost for 1	Cost of 120 (multiply the cost x 120)
Paper bags	40 for \$4.00	$\$4.00 \div 40$	\$0.10/each	\$12.00
Napkins	60 for \$3.00	$\$3.00 \div 60$	\$0.05/each	\$_____
Sandwiches	5 for \$10.00	$\$10.00 \div 5$	\$_____/each	\$240.00
Apples	12 for \$4.80	$\$4.80 \div 12$	\$_____/each	\$_____
Cracker pack	8 for \$4.00	$\$4.00 \div \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$	\$_____/each	\$_____
Cookies	24 for \$6.00	$\$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \div 24$	\$_____/each	\$_____
Juice boxes	6 for \$3.60	$\$ \underline{\hspace{1cm}} \div \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$	\$_____/each	\$_____
TOTAL COST \$_____				

Ridvan Foxhall



Can you imagine flying across the world at age eight to live in another country—without your parents? That's what Ridvan Foxhall did when she and her sisters went to New Era Bahá'í School in India. Their parents stayed in Nigeria to work. After high school, Ridvan moved to New York City to study fine arts and photography.

When Ridvan married her husband, Eric, and they had a son, she felt called to work with kids who have mental and behavioral differences. She earned a master's degree in occupational therapy to help kids build social and emotional skills. Then she started a local chapter of the Children's Theatre Company. It was such a hit that kids and parents asked her to expand it. So, in 2013, Ridvan founded New Era Creative Space, offering kids classes in arts, science, technology, and leadership, plus volunteer opportunities. Ridvan lives in New York with her family.

Q: What's your favorite childhood memory?

A: My mother always threw us big birthday parties. And what was special about that is she baked our cakes. Nigeria is a very hot country . . . You shouldn't be baking big cakes in 90-degree weather, but my mother always made a big deal of my birthday.

Q: How did living in diverse cultures impact you?

A: I was living in a community [at school in India] where . . . we had kids from literally all over the world, and when those kids become your family . . . the oneness of humanity works . . . [I had] a really strong sense of . . . pride in my nobility . . .



At age eight, Ridvan (second from left), her older sister, Eme (left), and her younger sister, Glory, left Nigeria to attend school in India.

Q: What was the most challenging experience for you as a kid?

A: I think [it] was leaving Nigeria. I was eight years old. The three of us—my sisters Eme and Glory and myself—we went to India, to the New Era Bahá'í School. That was really hard because . . . I loved being with my parents, and that was a young age to be separated from them. Glory was six, I was eight, and Eme was 12. I think I overcame it because I had my sisters with me, and we became a team . . . I got to love the school, but I can't say I did in the beginning. I was just like, why are we here—different country, different food, different language? As an adult, I appreciate it, but as a child . . . I couldn't understand it.

Questions and

Answers with an

Inspirational Bahá'í



Ridvan (second from right) gets support for New Era Creative Space from her husband, Eric (left), their daughter, Zia, and son, Jared.

Q: What is New Era Creative Space, and what inspired it?

A: I was inspired by Mehr Mansuri, [who founded] the Children's Theatre Company (CTC) in New York City . . . This concept of building character using theater really stuck with me . . . With Mehr's support, [I started] the Peekskill [New York] chapter of the [CTC] . . . We [also] started a junior youth empowerment group . . . We decided to go beyond theater and started New Era Creative Space . . . I wanted to expand this concept of using the arts [in] empowerment groups . . .

Q: How do drama and other arts help our communities?

A: It's kind of an expression from the soul—music, visual art, theater, spoken word . . . The arts are therapeutic . . . Bahá'u'lláh says something about music being a ladder to the soul. I feel that about *all* the arts. It gives [people] a voice . . . an outlet.



In a show about African-American culture and history, *Melanin Magic*, Ridvan (left) introduces youth who performed skits, spoken word poetry, dancing, and music.

Q: This issue of *Brilliant Star* is about joyful service. What can kids do every day to help their family, friends, or community?

A: With family, they can just support each other. I used to tell my kids that we are a community in this house. Everybody has a role to play, and if they can anticipate some of the needs of each other . . . That's what service is . . . You do it not because you're asked, but because something needs to be done. And that can bring you joy . . . I talk to the youth about . . . what does kindness or truthfulness . . . look like in the hallway of your school? . . . We can be a part of the change . . .

Q: What are some benefits and skills that kids gain by doing service?

A: Empathy is one of the benefits of service. Service makes you happy . . . [It] seems like you're doing something for someone else, but . . . when I talk to the kids and we do [service], it brings them such joy and pride. So, service ultimately does more for you than it does for the person you're serving. And 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that . . . if you're feeling depressed or moody . . . go serve someone else . . .

Q: What's something you'd like kids to know about 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

A: You know that song, "Look at me, follow me, be as I am"?* The *being* part, 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived [that], he served . . . [He] met with dignitaries, but also helped clean people and take care of them and give them clothing. The humility of that . . . I want people to remember that, the *doing* part. 'Abdu'l-Bahá *did*. He walked service. I try to remember that, especially when I . . . serve communities that are marginalized.

*See www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyx-YILIUOM
Melanin Magic photo by Rana Faure

SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

Howard Colby Ives (1867–1941)



Quiet anticipation filled the room as a crowd of people packed tightly into a New York City home in April 1912. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the head of the Bahá'í Faith, had just arrived in America, and many were anxious to see him. Among them was a Unitarian minister named Howard Colby Ives.

Born in New York in 1867, Howard felt curious about spirituality from a young age. As a teen, he spent many hours alone. He wrote poetry and tended sheep while recovering from a lung illness in the mountains of Wyoming. He later returned to the Northeast, and he became a minister at age 38. As he preached, his search for spiritual truth continued.

Howard learned of the Bahá'í Faith just a few months before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival. When he saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá through the crowd on that spring day in April, he was struck by a sense of majesty. He said, "Such gentleness, such love emanated from Him as I had never seen."

A Meeting of Hearts

Howard hurried to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá again the next morning. The sunlit reception room was already filled with visitors. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá entered, he saw Howard, smiled, and motioned for him—a complete stranger—to come forward.

Howard soon found himself sitting alone with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In a tender voice, 'Abdu'l-Bahá called Howard his "very dear son." Howard felt such "overwhelming love" that "the heart within me melted and the tears flowed." They sat together silently, but Howard later said, "It seemed as though

never before had anyone really seen *me*. I felt a sense of gladness that I at last was at home . . ."

A New Life

Meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá transformed Howard's life. Over frequent visits, 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered his spiritual questions. He told Howard, "This is a Day for *very great things*." Howard soon became a Bahá'í. 'Abdu'l-Bahá called him a "minister of the Temple of the Kingdom."

Howard was eager to teach people about the Bahá'í Faith. In 1921, he and his wife, Mabel, sold or gave away most of their belongings. With only their trunk and suitcases, they spent the next 16 years traveling throughout the U.S. and Canada. They worked as salespeople during the day and often shared the Faith with people in the evenings. They didn't have a permanent home. Although Howard and Mabel struggled financially, they were happy in their work. They helped many people to embrace the Bahá'í Faith.

Later in life, Howard wrote a book about his life-changing visits with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He said, "All this life has taught me, or could ever possibly teach me, is but a sign, a token, a symbol, of what the future worlds of God shall surely teach . . ."

In 1937, with Howard's health declining, he and Mabel settled in Arkansas. They lived there until his passing in 1941. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandson, Shoghi Effendi, praised him as an "OUTSTANDING PROMOTER" of the Faith and declared "HIS MAGNIFICENT LABORS IMPERISHABLE."

ReMARKable Service

Sidewalk chalk mixed with your creativity can be a magical force! Your images and messages of hope may lift someone's heart or inspire change in your community.

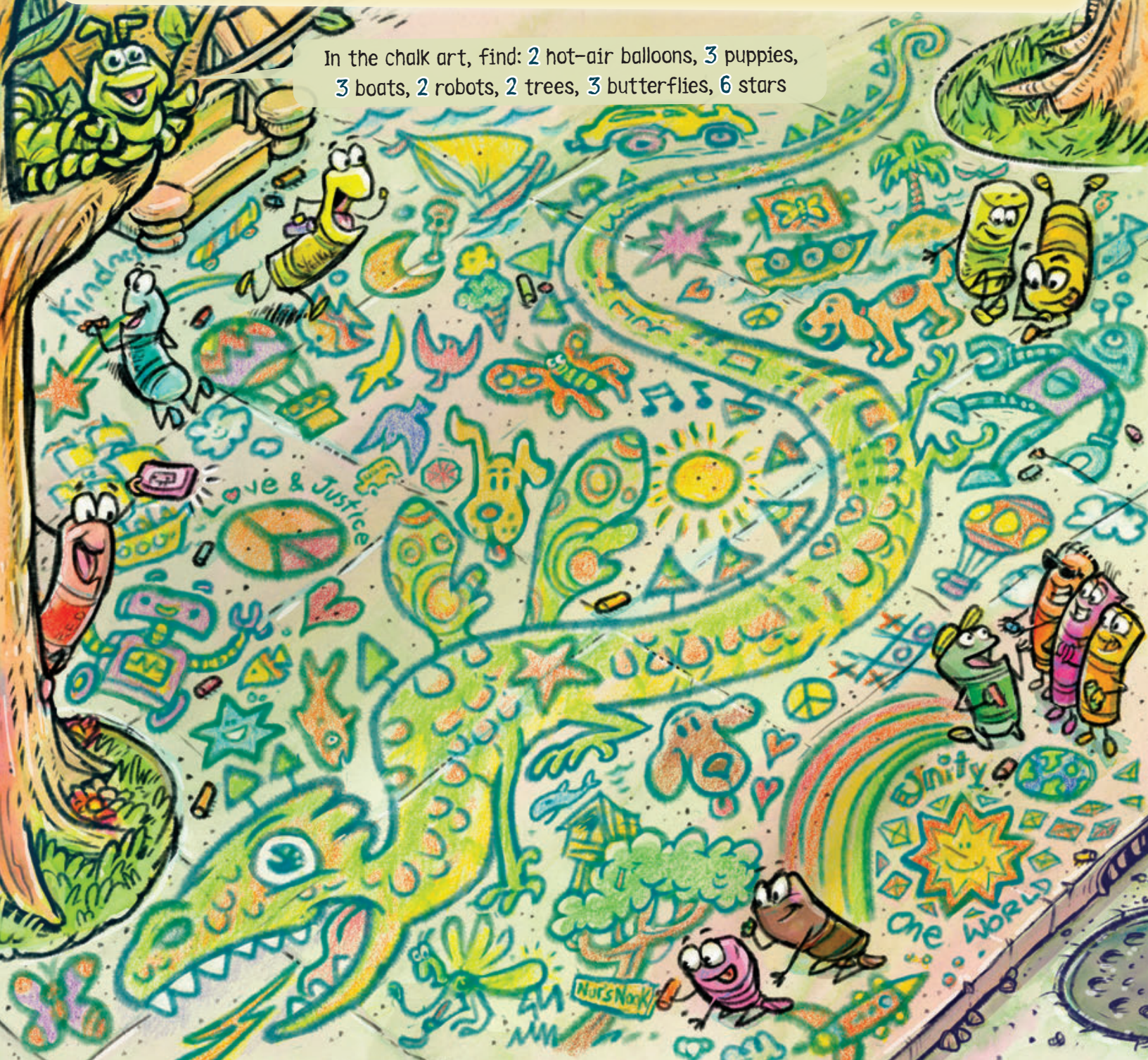
Making art is an imaginative service that can work wonders.

Pictures about racial justice and unity can spread awareness and understanding. A cool character you've created may help kids

find their courage. Or your colorful scene might put a smile on a friend's face.

Find a spot where your chalk creations can be seen and appreciated. Then check for permission, and make your mark. Since chalk isn't permanent, snap photos of your work. The remarkable art you conjure can bring joy to you, neighbors passing by, and beyond!

In the chalk art, find: 2 hot-air balloons, 3 puppies, 3 boats, 2 robots, 2 trees, 3 butterflies, 6 stars





ACROSS

3. Saguaro _____ provide food and homes for Gila woodpeckers. (p. 17)
4. Music is important in every _____ and in many faiths. (p. 7)
5. Erika, Ethan, Kiana, Cailyn, and Amelia all want to clean up the _____. (pp. 20-22)
8. To help friends and neighbors, a great place to start is by _____. (p. 6)
11. The first race _____ convention, in 1921, was a rousing success. (p. 16)
12. Making _____ is an imaginative service that can work wonders. (p. 27)
13. You can make a job more _____ by joining forces with friends. (p. 9)
14. With each path of service you travel, you'll _____ more about yourself and others. (p. 29)
15. Louis Gregory said, "Nothing short of a change of _____ will do." (p. 16)

DOWN

1. William and Cailyn would like to visit _____, Israel. (pp. 20-22)
2. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and _____. (p. 23)
3. Let _____ and joy guide your journey in life. (p. 29)
6. Ridvan Foxhall founded New Era _____ Space. (p. 24)
7. _____ can have 200 tail feathers. (p. 3)
9. Sticking with things can help you solve problems and accomplish your _____. (p. 17)
10. Corina Newsome helped create Black _____ Week. (p. 11)

FROM OUR MAILBOX



Brilliant Star makes me feel happy. Whenever I read one, I feel more joyful and more loving and full of happiness. From reading *Brilliant Star*, I've learned that all humans have virtues and talents, and we need to show them, not hide them. If I could choose an issue theme, it would be service, because I want to help the world, even if it's just going to help my community.
—Kalei D., age 14, Hawaii, U.S.

ANSWERS

KEY: T=Top, C=Center, B=Bottom, L=Left, R=Right

Page 3: J at far TR; P, B, at TL; R at TR; G at C; I at CL; F at BL; S, D at BC. "Joy gives us wings! In times of joy . . . we seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness."

Page 7: "Singing melodies will bring animation and happiness to the world of humanity . . ."

Page 9: A) 5, B) 7, C) 8, D) 2, E) 3, F) 9, G) 1, H) 6, I) 4

Page 11: Chicago, Illinois; Persian cats

Page 17: 1) Optimistic, positive; 2) Passionate, excited; 3) Supportive,

advice; 4) Striving, steps; 5) Changing, flexible; 6) Serene, peace; 7) Assertive, honestly; 8) Grateful, thank; 9) Dedicated, committed

Page 23: Napkins: \$6.00, Sandwiches: \$2.00, Apples: \$0.40, \$48.00, Crackers: 8, \$0.50, \$60.00, Cookies: \$6.00, \$0.25, \$30.00, Juice boxes: \$3.60, 6, \$0.60, \$72.00. Total: \$468.00, under budget by \$7.00

Page 27: Balloons at TL, CR; puppies at TR, C, BC; sailboats at TC, TR, CL; robots at TR, CL; trees at TR, BC; butterflies at TC, TR, BL; stars at TL, TC, BL, BR, 2 at C (including Sun)

FINDING YOUR PURPOSE

As you zip along the highway of life, you'll run into lots of exciting twists and turns. Part of the fun is learning to navigate them. Let curiosity and joy guide your journey!


Do you wonder why your dog loves to play fetch? Volunteer at an animal shelter to learn about dog behavior. Maybe you're blown away by your friend's new robot. Ask

if you can help her build the next one. Do you race through books? Ask a librarian what they love about their work.

With each path of service you travel, you'll learn more about yourself and others. You'll discover and develop skills, interests, and strengths you can use to help humanity zoom along its path toward oneness.

Label your Path of Purpose with something you'd love to explore to help others. Then navigate life's highways, passing fellow travelers on your journey to reach it.





“In the meeting place of life be ye
a guiding candle; in the skies of
this world be dazzling stars . . .”

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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