

# Brilliant Star

A BAHÁ'Í COMPANION FOR YOUNG EXPLORERS

JULY/AUGUST 2012



QUIZ YOUR  
CURIOSITY

## Wings of Joy

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S  
GREAT VOYAGE



# Brilliant Star

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**Brilliant Star** magazine invites all kids to explore the Bahá'í Faith. It is the second most widespread religion in the world, with more than five million Bahá'ís.

The Bahá'í Faith 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 that all religions come from one God. Bahá'ís work to bring peace and unity to the world, and end prejudice and discrimination of all kinds.

Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, **'Abdu'l-Bahá**, interpreted His teachings and led the Bahá'í community after Bahá'u'lláh's passing.

**Brilliant Star** encourages kids to bring their virtues and talents to light, and use them to make the world a better place. **Brilliant Star** is produced bimonthly by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the U.S.

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### NEW DESTINATIONS



### DEAR FRIENDS,

What makes you jump for joy? What are your favorite things to do?

What's the most fun you've ever had? Life is full of great adventures, whether they happen in your own backyard or on an exciting journey. With curiosity and an open mind, you can make new discoveries every day and live life with joy.

In a joyful life, you're full of wonder about our amazing world and its Creator. You meet new experiences and challenges with enthusiasm. You're also thankful for blessings, such as family and friends.

In this issue, you'll find lots of ways to embrace the adventure of life. Make music with a homemade harmonica. Experiment with the science behind bubbles. Quiz yourself to see how curious you are. Find out why funny things are good for you, and practice turning negative thoughts into happier ones. And meet Pardis Parker, who spreads joy and laughter.

Make a list of 10 things you'd love to do or learn about—then get started!



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With love from **Brilliant Star**



# Outgoing otters

**E**xcept for the furry bodies and webbed feet, a family of otters looks a lot like kids having fun at a water park. They swim and splash in streams, wrestle and chase each other in rivers, dive for pebbles in ponds—they even use muddy slopes and riverbanks to slide into the water!

For otters, play is part of everyday life. Scientists aren't sure why animals play. Some believe it helps prepare the young for adulthood. Their seemingly silly

antics may sharpen skills for hunting and protection. For otters, play may also strengthen family bonds.

People benefit from play, too. It helps us learn to get along with others, develop our imaginations, and solve problems creatively. Outdoor games give us an opportunity to be active and enjoy nature. Playing can also relieve stress and create lasting memories.

So take a cue from our river friends—to be happy and healthy, you *otter* have fun!

RIVER OTTERS CAN HOLD THEIR BREATH UNDERWATER FOR UP TO EIGHT MINUTES!

**Find 18 otters playing in their Rocky Mountain river habitat.**



## A Brief Timeline

### 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 Tíhrán, Iran

#### 1844

Recognizes the Báb as a new Messenger of God

#### 1852

Imprisonment in the "Black Pit" of Tíhrán

#### 1853–1863

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

#### 1863 April 22

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.

# Bahá'u'lláh's Life: Mission of Peace Happiness During Hardship

“Those who beheld Him were assured of His great happiness,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said of his father, Bahá'u'lláh, who founded the Bahá'í Faith, “for no trace of sadness or sorrow was ever visible upon His face.”

But Bahá'u'lláh's happiness was not a result of an easy, carefree life.

Instead, He endured about 40 years of imprisonment and exile by unjust officials who wanted to stop His teachings of unity and peace.

Bahá'u'lláh's intense hardships began in 1852, when authorities put Him in heavy chains and locked Him in a cold, foul-smelling dungeon for four long months. Then He was exiled from His home in Persia (now Iran) and went to Baghdád, Iraq.

In the next 15 years, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled three more times. He and His family traveled through bitter cold and snow without adequate clothing, and through torturous heat. In 1868, Bahá'u'lláh's final exile took Him to the prison-city of 'Akká, in what is now Israel.

Surrounded by stone walls, 'Akká was dirty, with no clean water. Vicious rumors had been spread about Bahá'u'lláh and His followers, and they were met with jeers by the townspeople. For about two years, they were confined to an old army barracks.

But as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, Bahá'u'lláh “endured all in perfect joy and happiness.” In time, Bahá'u'lláh was transferred out of the barracks and lived in various homes in the city. The people and officials of 'Akká grew to respect Him, His family, and His followers.

One day, Bahá'u'lláh noted that He had not seen any greenery—not a single tree or blade of grass—for nine years! 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew how much Bahá'u'lláh loved nature.

Conditions eased enough for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to venture outside the city walls. He rented a lush garden for Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh called it the Garden of Ridván, which means “Paradise” in Arabic. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also rented a house called Mazra'ih in the countryside near 'Akká.

Although Bahá'u'lláh was still technically a prisoner, He had become so admired that a leading official of 'Akká pleaded with Him to leave the prison-city. In June 1877, Bahá'u'lláh left 'Akká to live at Mazra'ih.



**Top left:** Bahá'u'lláh entered 'Akká (in what is now Israel) through this sea gate. **Above:** Mazra'ih, Bahá'u'lláh's first home outside the prison-city of 'Akká

Bahá'u'lláh relished the beauty of Mazra'ih after His long confinement. He also enjoyed the Garden of Ridván. In one description, He wrote, “We beheld its streams flowing, and its trees luxuriant, and the sunlight playing in their midst.”

In 1879, Bahá'u'lláh moved to a home known as Bahjí (“Delight” in Arabic). Bahá'u'lláh spent the last years of His life meeting with His followers and writing about His vision of a peaceful world. He wrote, “Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts.”





# RILEY'S RAINFOREST

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

## Laughter IS Good Medicine

**D**on't you love a good laugh? Humor does more than just tickle your funny bone—it may be seriously good for you. Some scientists say a hearty belly laugh can boost your immune system, help you handle pain, and maybe even keep your heart healthy.

The study of laughter and its impact on our bodies is called *gelotology* (from the Greek word *gelos*, which means "laughter"). Research in this field shows that laughter has a positive effect on the body. Some studies find that when we chuckle, more immune cells are made. And stress chemicals, which can weaken the immune system when stress is constant, are decreased. So laughing can help your body's defenses.

Sometimes you might laugh until your sides ache—but laughing can actually *lessen* pain. Some researchers believe that exerting stomach muscles during laughter



causes a rush of endorphins—the same feel-good chemicals our bodies release during exercise—which helps to ease pain.

Laughter may also protect your heart. In one study, people with heart disease were 40% less likely to laugh in funny situations than people with healthy hearts. Those findings suggest a link between laughter and heart health. Another study showed that laughter appears to cause blood vessels to expand, allowing more blood flow, which may help to ward off heart disease.

So chuckle, chortle, and guffaw to your heart's content. Laughter might really be the best medicine!

## Explore & Soar: Get the Giggles

**B**e silly with your friends, and add more laughter to your life.

- Make funny faces or sound effects with a friend.
- How long can you stare into a friend's eyes *without* laughing?

- Share jokes with friends and make up new jokes together.
- 77 benevolent elephants! Try out some tongue twisters.
- !sdrawkcab gniklat yrT



## Canopy of Questions

**W**hat do you want to know about staying healthy and happy? Health can involve your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Send your questions to [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org). Responses are given by a health professional.

**“What should you do when your friends are being mean to you and leaving you out of activities?”**

—William, age 8

Dear William,

Your question is about a serious problem for many kids. Our hearts are like gardens, and it's up to us to choose what grows there. You can plant sweet-smelling flowers of love, compassion, and service. Bullies create scary gardens of weeds and thorns, and they get a kick out of destroying the gardens of others.

Bullying is unacceptable. No one should get away with being physically intimidating, excluding others, spreading rumors, or making fun of people. If you're being bullied:

- Say "stop" directly, confidently, and calmly. Then walk away.
  - Use humor. Laugh it off, if possible.
  - Find an adult to stop the bullying, and tell your parents about it.
  - Spend time with caring friends.
- Stopping bullies often takes teamwork, and bullies are less likely to pick on kids who are part of supportive groups.
- Be an example of how to treat everyone with kindness and respect.

*Wishing you joy,*

*Keyvan Geula  
Licensed Family Therapist*



# Are You Curious?

**W**hat are you most curious about? Why the sky is blue? How the Internet works? If penguins have wings, why can't they fly?

When you hear about something that interests you, are you eager to find out more? Curiosity is a sign of a great thinker. It also makes life more fun. It keeps you open to new ideas and adds excitement to everything you do, from taking a walk outside to meeting new people in your neighborhood. Learning

and trying new things can even bring more joy and meaning to your life.

Your curiosity about the world around you will lead to thrilling discoveries. If art is your passion, you could create inspiring pieces for a school show. If you love science, your experiments can turn into cool inventions. Our endless universe is full of adventure. As you wonder about it, ask questions, stay curious, and share your enthusiasm with others.

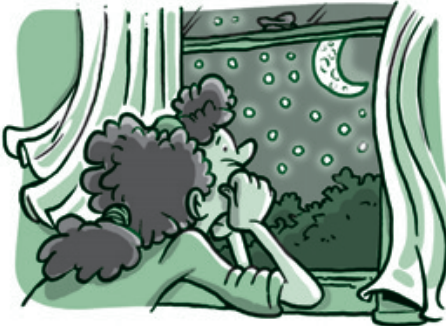
**Take this quiz to find out how curious you are.**

- 1 I like to use my creativity to help others.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 2 I get excited about the challenge of learning a new hobby or skill.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1



- 3 I wonder about our purpose on Earth and why we were created.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 4 I like to invent or try new games.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 5 When a new kid comes to school, I talk to him or her.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 6 I find ways to have fun no matter where I am. There's too much to do to be bored!

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 7 I enjoy talking to people who have opinions that are different from mine.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 8 I love to travel and see new places—even in my own hometown.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1



- 9 I like to try new foods from different cultures and countries.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1



- 10 I like to ask a lot of questions and find out how things work.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 11 I enjoy learning about inventors and explorers who did amazing things.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

- 12 I love to dream about my future and imagine all the cool things I'll do.

Often = 3 • Sometimes = 2 • Rarely = 1

## My Score:

**36–28 points:** You're a super explorer who lives with curiosity and enthusiasm. Keep following your interests and sharing what you learn with others.

**27–19 points:** You're heading down the road to adventure. Think about what makes you curious and find some new things to explore.

**18–12 points:** Build your curiosity by paying attention to what interests and inspires you. Circle some ideas in the quiz to try today.



# 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S GREAT VOYAGE: UNITY FEAST



“It is my wish to give a large feast of unity,” said ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, leader of the Bahá’í Faith, during his eight-month journey in North America. “It must be outdoors under the trees, in some location away from city noise—like a Persian garden . . . All the friends will come. They will be my guests.”

A Bahá’í coffee merchant named Roy Wilhelm offered his large property in New Jersey, U.S., for the festive event. On June 29, 1912, tables were set up in a grove of pine trees. About 200 people joined the celebration, including members of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths, as well as Bahá’ís. Among them was Louis Bourgeois, the architect who later designed the Bahá’í Temple of North America. The artist Juliet Thompson, who painted ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s portrait, also attended.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá called it “a delightful gathering.” He said, “Hundreds of thousands of meetings shall be held to commemorate this occasion, and the very words I speak to you today shall be repeated in them for ages to come . . . Be happy and joyous because the bestowals of God are intended for you and the life of the Holy Spirit is breathing upon you.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá also spoke about the importance of unity, saying, “May you become as the waves of one sea, stars of the same heaven, fruits adorning the same tree, roses of one garden in order that through you the oneness of humanity may establish its temple in the world of mankind . . . You must be exceedingly kind and loving . . . Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other.”

A delicious meal was served, with Persian rice, sherbet, and many sweets. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá walked among the guests and anointed each one with rose perfume. One of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s companions, Mahmúd-i-Zarqání, wrote, “The friends were ecstatic . . . their meeting



‘Abdu’l-Bahá (front left) at the unity feast in 1912. The man at center in the white suit is Louis Bourgeois, architect of the Bahá’í Temple in North America.

was an assembly of love and amity, and the surroundings were green and verdant with trees in full bloom perfuming the air . . . Everyone was happy at the unity of the gathering.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke to the group twice more. Juliet Thompson noted, “To me the most beautiful scene of all came . . . after dark. About fifty or sixty people had lingered, unable to tear themselves from Him.” Guests sat on the lawn, holding candles in the moonlight. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá walked among them, “His words floated back to us—the liquid Persian . . .” and the “beautiful, quivering translation, like the sound of a violin string. ‘Peace be with you,’ this was the last we heard, ‘I will pray for you.’”

As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá proclaimed, today, this joyous unity feast is remembered each year at the same location, now known as the Wilhelm Bahá’í Properties. Bahá’ís and friends gather to honor ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s kindness and gentle guidance.

Unity feasts are also held around the world, bringing together people from diverse faiths and backgrounds in a spirit of joy and friendship.





# World of Water

"Without water no worldly creature can live—mineral, vegetable, animal and man, one and all, depend upon water for their very being." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

**D**id you know that your body weight is at least 60% water? It's in our blood, cells, muscles, and more—and it helps everything work together smoothly. Like all living things on Earth, we depend on water to survive.

Amazingly, all water on Earth is part of one system. Rain and snow fall into our rivers and lakes. Or they flow into the oceans, which are all connected through vast global currents. About 70% of the Earth's surface is covered with water. In time, water

evaporates and turns into rain and snow again.

For the health of our planet and its creatures, all this water has to be clean. You can help by recycling your trash to keep it away from water sources. You and your friends can help clean up creeks or beaches in your area. Or you could have fun doing a science project about a river or lake.

Whether you study it, drink it, or splash in it, water is a precious and refreshing resource that needs protection.

These kids are studying life in their local river. Search for words about the world of water going forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally.

LESS THAN 3% OF THE WATER ON EARTH IS FRESH WATER—AND MOST IS FROZEN IN GLACIERS AND ICECAPS!

WHAT FALLS ALL DAY WITHOUT GETTING HURT?

A WATERFALL!

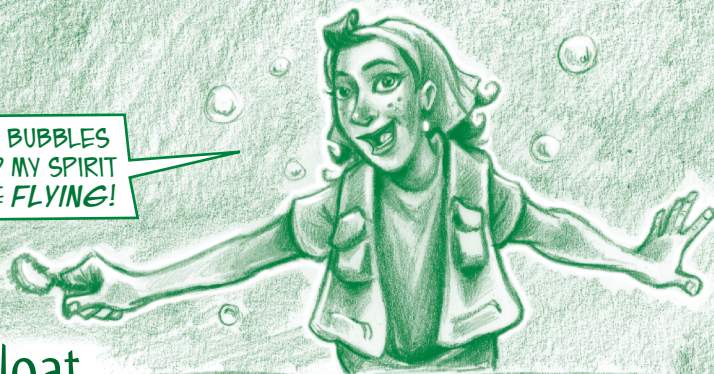
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ATMOSPHERE	FISH	POND	RESPECT	SPLASH
CLEAN	LAKE	NATURE	RESPONSIBILITY	STREAM
CONSERVATION	OCEAN	RAIN	RIVER	WATER
COOPERATION	PLANET	REFRESH	SNOW	WAVE





MY BUBBLES  
AND MY SPIRIT  
ARE FLYING!



## Staying Afloat

**B**ubbles sparkle in the sun as they float through the air. But in seconds, POP! They're gone! Bubbles burst when they dry up or collide. In a similar way, when you're happy, it may feel like your spirit is flying. But your joy can deflate when you face challenges.

You can help soap bubbles last longer by giving them safe surfaces to land on. And you can find

ways to protect your spirit when you bump into bad news. Talk to your family, pray, or write about your feelings when something threatens to "burst your bubble." Take deep breaths and ask yourself, What virtues can I use? Who can I talk to? Think positively and tell yourself, I can handle this!

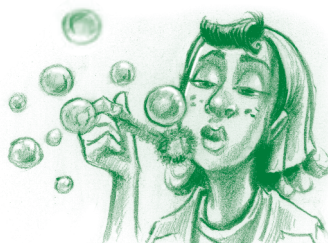
Experiment with bubbles as a reminder to keep your spirit afloat!

## Make Your Own Bubbles

**You'll Need:** Liquid dishwashing soap,\* warm water, measuring cups, bowl, spoon, 5–10 pipe cleaners (various thicknesses, if possible), pencil, aluminum foil, woolen blanket (optional), stopwatch (optional), drinking straw, ruler

1. Mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (118 mL) warm water and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (59 mL) dishwashing soap in bowl until soap dissolves.

holding your wand at different distances from your mouth.



Try timing them with a stopwatch.

2. For a bubble wand, twist one end of a pipe cleaner



into a loop for dipping. Make circular wands in several sizes.

For a big wand, use one pipe cleaner for the loop and one for the stem.

- a) Which wand makes the biggest bubbles?

\_\_\_\_\_

- b) Which wand can make the most bubbles at once? \_\_\_\_\_

- c) Allow bubbles to land on your hand, a puddle of bubble soap, the ground, a piece of aluminum foil, and a woolen blanket. Which ones let bubbles last longest?

- d) Place a ruler on a sheet of aluminum foil. Dip the straw in the soap and blow onto the foil. What's the largest bubble you can make?

\_\_\_\_\_



## How It Works

When a bubble lands on a dry surface, its moisture gets absorbed, and it collapses. A bubble may last longer in a puddle, because it can absorb as much moisture as

it loses. Aluminum foil helps a bubble last because the foil doesn't absorb moisture. On a woolen blanket, the bubble rests on tiny fibers that don't absorb much liquid.



# Taking Flight

COLOR  
& FIND

**H**ave you ever dreamed of traveling to a far-off land or creating an amazing new invention? Over 200 years ago, two brothers in France were inspired to make a big bag out of cloth and paper and fill it with hot air from a fire. The first hot air balloon rose beautifully into the air. They continued the experiment and sent up a rooster, a duck, and a sheep. Soon after, two other Frenchmen made history as the first humans to fly in a balloon. Since then,

we've learned to fly far above and beyond the earth.

What wondrous journey would you like to take? Would you explore the rainforest? The ocean? Outer space? How far would you go? Who would you like to bring along, and how would you get there?

When you can imagine a fantastic adventure, you're more likely to make it come true. So pack your curiosity and courage, and let your imagination soar!

FLYING IN A BALLOON IS **AWESOME!** I SEE A ROOSTER, A ROBOT, A SOCCER BALL, AND ZEBRA STRIPES.

CAN YOU FIND THEM ALL? ALSO LOOK FOR A PENGUIN, LIGHTNING BOLTS, A DRAGON, AND MUSICAL NOTES.







# GO for the GOLD

**W**ho is the fastest runner or swimmer on Earth? What's the highest anyone has ever jumped? Olympic champions break world records with incredible feats of speed, strength, endurance, and grace.

This summer, athletes from about 200 countries are competing in the Olympic Games in London. They've put in long years of training to develop their skills and prepare for the thrilling challenges they'll face. They'll also have a great opportunity to share

cultures, make friends, and promote peace. It's hard work to qualify. It also takes optimism, focus, and a strong drive to succeed. For the first time, every nation will have women competing on its team!

We can learn a lot about dedication and good sportsmanship from Olympic athletes. Whether your goals include sports, the arts, or the sciences, you must believe in yourself. No matter what you want to achieve, go for the gold, and work toward your dreams like a champion!

*These athletes are in London to test their Olympic skills. Read their clues. Then match them to their flags.*

**1. Great Britain**

**2. Spain**

**3. Russia**

**4. Jamaica**

**5. U.S.**

**6. Brazil**

**7. China**

**A** IN VOLLEYBALL, IT TAKES **TEAMWORK** TO SET THE BALL, THEN POWERFULLY SPIKE IT ACROSS THE NET. I LIKE TO PLAY NEAR THE AMAZON RIVER.

**B** GYMNASTS DO GRACEFUL LEAPS ON A BEAM ONLY 3.9 INCHES (10 CM) WIDE, 4.1 FEET (1.25 M) ABOVE THE FLOOR. MY COUNTRY STRETCHES ACROSS ASIA AND INTO EUROPE.

**C** TRACK CYCLISTS CAN REACH SPEEDS OF OVER 46 MILES PER HOUR (75 KM/H). MY COUNTRY IS HOSTING THE OLYMPICS!

**D** TABLE TENNIS REQUIRES **LIGHTNING-FAST** REFLEXES. THE BALL CAN GO 93 MILES PER HOUR (150 KM/H)! IN MY COUNTRY, IT'S THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON.

**E** FOOTBALL, CALLED SOCCER IN SOME PLACES, IS THE MOST POPULAR SPORT IN THE WORLD. MY COUNTRY WON THE 2010 WORLD CUP.

**F** IN A RELAY RACE, A BIG CHALLENGE IS PASSING THE BATON WHILE RUNNING AT HIGH SPEED. I TRAIN ON AN ISLAND NATION IN THE CARIBBEAN SEA.

**G** SWIMMING EVENTS RANGE FROM A SHORT, 21-SECOND RACE TO A 6.2 MILE (10 KM) MARATHON! THE MISSOURI IS THE LONGEST RIVER IN MY COUNTRY.



# 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

### *Have fun without screens.*

Computers and video games are cool, but they also use energy. Spend some free time on non-electronic fun, like playing outside or reading.

## WOW, REALLY?

7,000 people helped develop *Curiosity*, NASA's latest Mars rover, over the past eight years.

## OUR CONNECTIONS

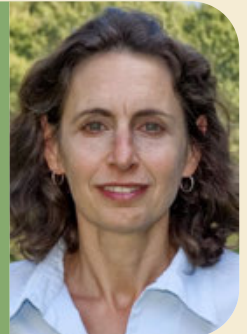


What has 6 wheels, 17 cameras, and a thrilling mission? It's *Curiosity*, NASA's rover for exploring Mars. Ice caps and signs of ancient water have

been discovered there. Since water is crucial for life on Earth, scientists continue seeking evidence of water—possible clues to past life. *Curiosity* will collect data and transmit it to Earth. Scientists will search for links to water—and life. Learning about Mars can help us better understand and protect life on Earth.

## PROTECTING OUR PLANET

**Elizabeth Kolbert**, an award-winning journalist for *The New Yorker* magazine, is dedicated to educating people about climate change. She wrote a popular book and won a 2010 Heinz Award for her work. She says, "You need really bold ideas and a sense of common purpose . . . We've got one planet, only one."



## WHERE IN THE WORLD?

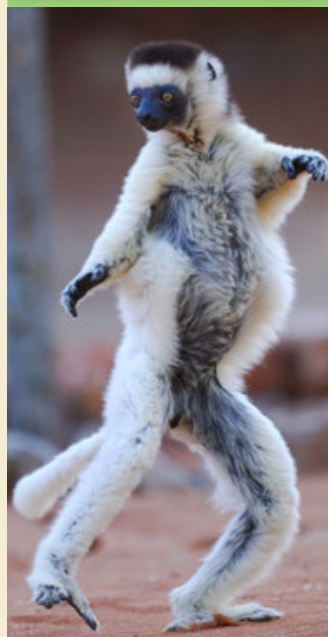


After the 2012 Summer Olympics, Olympic Stadium will host the largest Paralympic Games ever held, with participants from 166 countries. Athletes with disabilities will compete in 20 sports, including cycling, table tennis, and wheelchair basketball.

Unscramble the letters to find the location of these inspiring events:

ANGLEDN   

## AMAZING ANIMALS



Sifakas are lemurs known for graceful movements on their hind legs—they look like they're dancing! They live in trees and make daring leaps between them. They're found only on an island nation in the Indian Ocean. Fill in the blanks to find the country:

MA  A  AS  AR



# 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?

### Jeremy S.

Age: 9

I live in: **New Jersey, U.S.**

I want to be:

**An Olympic athlete**

Best quality or virtue:

**Bringing happiness to others**

Something I like about me that makes me unique:

**I run faster than most of my friends.**

Hobbies or sports:

**Making/serving food at [a] homeless shelter**



Favorite Bahá'í activities:

**Feast—always learn something new and get to eat\*\***

Place I'd love to visit:

**The lost city of Atlantis (if it is real)**

What is the coolest adventure you can imagine?

**Achieving a world record at the Olympics**

What three things that make you happy would you take on a long journey?

**My prayer books, my Harry Potter books, and our iPad (to play chess and connect with other people)**

What are three blessings you're grateful for, and why?

**I'm blessed to have my family, because they make me feel loved... freedom, so I can share my beliefs... [and] my education...**

### Jared F.

Age: 13

I live in: **New York, U.S.**

I want to be:

**Engineer and musician**

Best quality or virtue:

**I am creative and musical.**

Something I like about me that makes me unique:

**I make friends easily.**

Hobbies or sports:

**Tennis, basketball, lacrosse, scooter**

Favorite Bahá'í activities:

**Travel teaching\***

What brings you the most joy?

**Playing piano, saxophone, helping, and serving make me happy.**

What is the coolest adventure you can imagine?

**Discovering something no one has ever discovered on a tropical island**

What is one of your happiest memories?

**When I was water skiing in New Hampshire**

What three things that make you happy would you take on a long journey?

**I would bring my prayer book, plenty of food, and a loved one.**

What are three blessings you're grateful for, and why?

**I am grateful for my life, my family, and the wonderful experiences and teaching opportunities my parents provide for me.**

Favorite Bahá'í activities:

**Children's classes and Feast**

I like to help people by:

**Trying to make friends happy by including them when they're feeling left out**

What brings you the most joy?

**Camping with my family**

What is the coolest adventure you can imagine?

**Having a time-travel exchange visit with Laura Ingalls Wilder, so she can visit me in the modern American West, and I could visit her and experience pioneer life in the [late 1800s].**

What three things that make you happy would you take on a long journey?

**A prayer book, a didgeridoo, and my doll, Sarah**

### Serena J.

Age: 8

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

I want to be:

**A farmer**

Best quality or virtue:

**Joyfulness**

Something I like about me that makes me unique:

**I can speak three languages: English, Spanish, and Persian.**

Hobbies or sports:

**Reading, playing soccer, hiking, and climbing trees**

\*Taking a journey for the purpose of sharing the Bahá'í teachings with interested people  
\*\*Feast is a Bahá'í community gathering with prayer, consultation, and fellowship.



## Yasmin F.

Age: 10

I live in: **Queensland, Australia**

I want to be:  
**A doctor or a lawyer**

Best quality or virtue:  
**Generosity**

Something I like about me that makes me unique:  
**I am creative. I love to draw different types of dragons.**

Favorite Bahá'í activities:  
**Neighbourhood Bahá'í classes every Friday**

Place I'd love to visit:  
**Egypt**

What brings you the most joy?  
**My family and pets**

What is the coolest adventure you can imagine?  
**Travelling around the world**

What is one of your happiest memories?  
**Getting our kitten from an animal shelter**

What three things that make you happy would you take on a long journey?  
**A good book, a prayer book, and my brown pony**

What are three blessings you're grateful for, and why?  
**A loving family ... that is nurturing and supportive ... a warm home, [because] there are many homeless people with no basic shelter, [and] ... good 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

## Sarit K.

Age: 9

I live in: **Quebec, Canada**

I want to be:  
**A gardener in Haifa**

Best quality or virtue:  
**My teacher thinks I have a lot of perseverance.**

Favorite Bahá'í activities:  
**Studying the Hidden Words, Paris Talks, and prayers ... going to the Shrine in Haifa [and] the Temple in Chicago ... [and] children's classes**

Favorite animals:  
**Dolphins and pandas**

Places I'd love to visit:  
**India, especially the Lotus Temple. China and Egypt, too.**

What is the coolest adventure you can imagine?  
**Living in a tree in the jungle and searching for different kinds of flowers and fruits**



What is one of your happiest memories?  
**My dream of 'Abdu'l-Bahá when I was small (he was with a nice bear).**

What three things that make you happy would you take on a long journey?  
**Lots of books, my cello, and my family ... My piano, but I can't take it.**

What are three blessings you're grateful for, and why?  
**I am grateful that God gave me a wonderful family ... that I know about the Bahá'í Faith and can study it, because it makes me happy, and that God made me like reading ...**

## Ruha M.

Age: 8

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

I want to be:  
**Vet and zookeeper**

Best quality or virtue:  
**Caring and kindness**

Something I like about me that makes me unique:  
**My last name, and I always make people laugh.**

Favorite Bahá'í activities:  
**Sunday school and Persian conference\***

Places I'd love to visit:  
**South Africa, Iran**

What are three blessings you're grateful for, and why?  
**[I'm] grateful that I have a good family that loves me, that I am a Bahá'í, and that Bahá'u'lláh is in my life, because [He] helps me a lot.**

I like to help people by:  
**Standing up for kids that get bullied and help[ing] kids with special needs ... on the bus and at school**

What three things that make you happy would you take on a long journey?  
**My friend Taylor, my mom, and my laptop with screen saver of a prayer**

What is the coolest adventure you can imagine?  
**Being in a world of monkeys and taking care of them**



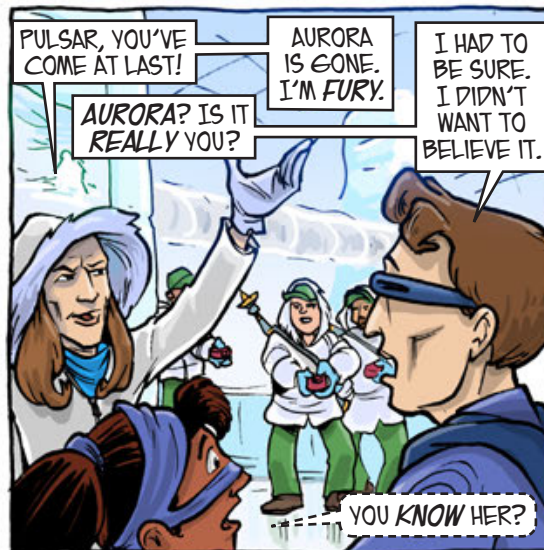
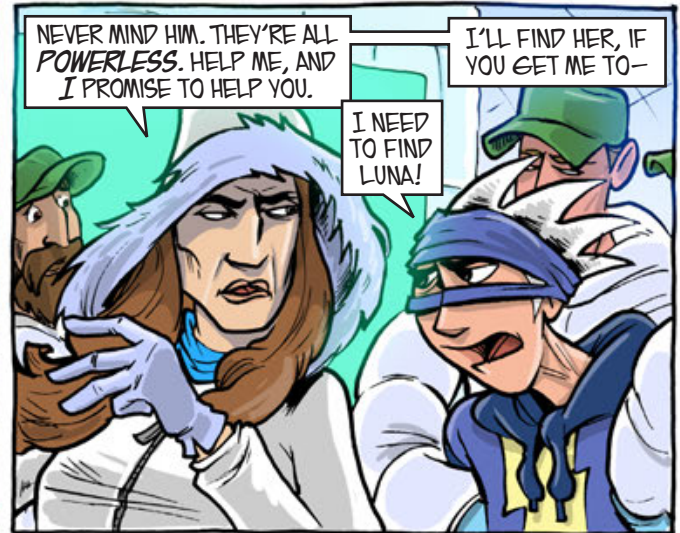
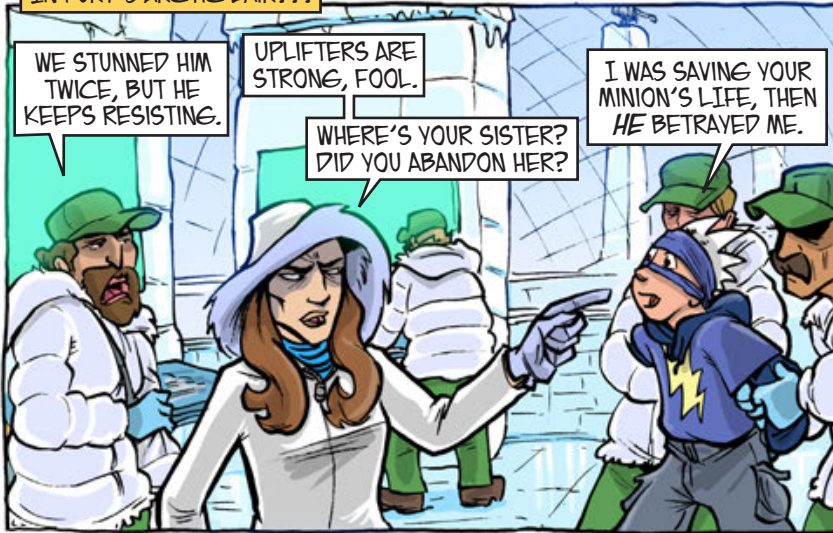
## How to be a Radiant Star:

1. If you're age 7–14, write us at [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org) or Brilliant Star, 1233 Central Street, Evanston, IL 60201. Include your name, age, birth date, mailing and e-mail addresses, and phone number. Mention "Radiant Star" in the e-mail subject line or in your message.
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).

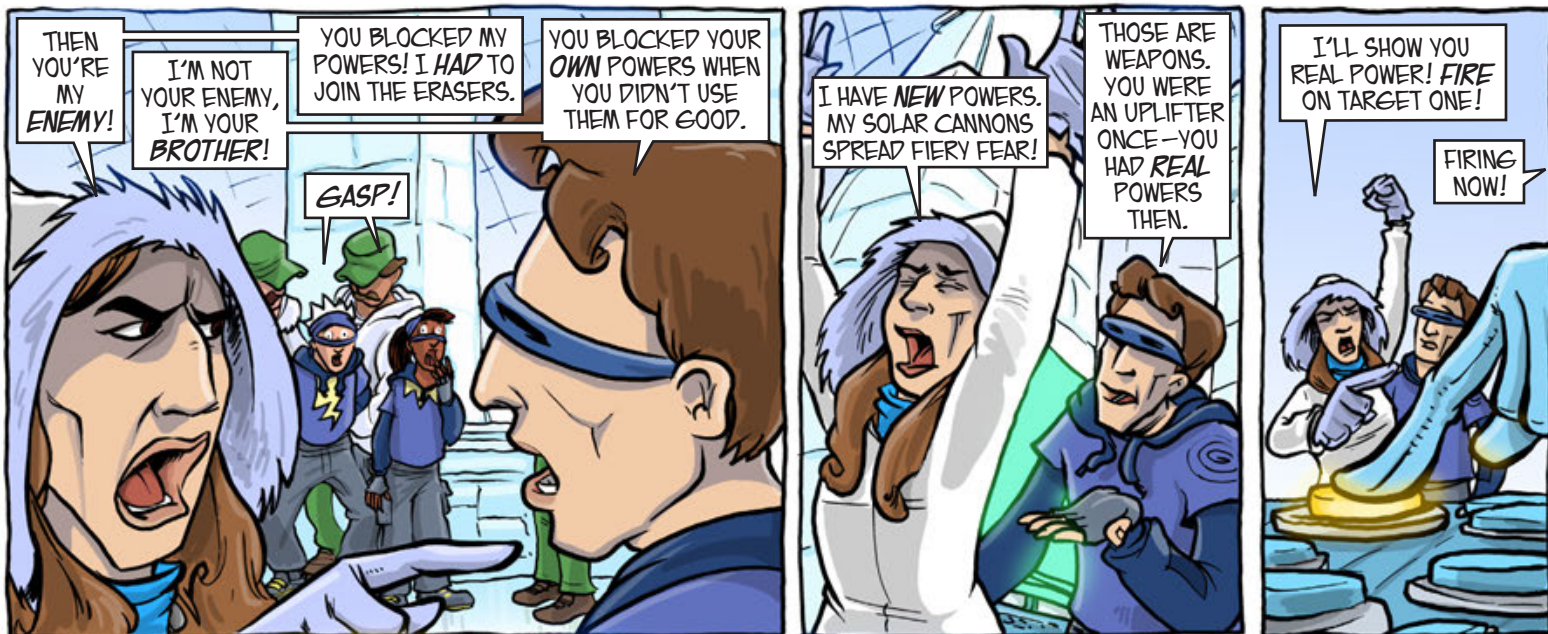
\*An annual celebration of Persian (Iranian) culture and the Bahá'í Faith



IN FURY'S ARCTIC LAIR...







THEN YOU'RE MY ENEMY!

I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY, I'M YOUR BROTHER!

YOU BLOCKED MY POWERS! I HAD TO JOIN THE ERASERS.

YOU BLOCKED YOUR OWN POWERS WHEN YOU DIDN'T USE THEM FOR GOOD.

GASP!

I HAVE NEW POWERS. MY SOLAR CANNONS SPREAD FIERY FEAR!

THOSE ARE WEAPONS. YOU WERE AN UPLIFTER ONCE—YOU HAD REAL POWERS THEN.

I'LL SHOW YOU REAL POWER! FIRE ON TARGET ONE!

FIRING NOW!



SHE'S BURNING THEIR CROPS! THEY'LL STARVE!

JOIN ME OR I TARGET CITIES NEXT.

STOP! THEY'RE INNOCENT.



I'LL NEVER HELP YOU!

DON'T MAKE ME DESTROY YOU—WITH ALL THE UPLIFTERS!

YOU CAN'T WIN.

LOCK THEM UP!



IN FURY'S ICE DUNGEON ...

IS FURY REALLY YOUR SISTER?

YES. SHE HAD AN AMAZING POWER TO HARNESS THE SUN. IN A BATTLE TO SAVE OUR PARENTS FROM ERASERS, SHE ACCIDENTALLY BLINDED ME.

OUR PARENTS DIED. SHE FELT SO GUILTY—AND ANGRY. AFTER SHE LOST HER POWERS, SHE DISAPPEARED. I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR HER.



NOW WE NEED TO STOP FURY—AND FIND LUNA.

WE'RE TRAPPED! THERE'S NO POWER ON MY U-PAD, AND MY ELECTRICAL POWERS AREN'T BACK.

I HAVE AN IDEA.



HOW WILL I FIND LUNA?

YOU'RE UPLIFTERS AND SIBLINGS. BELIEVE ME. IT'S A POWERFUL BOND.



DEEP IN THE ARCTIC ...

LIGHTNING? WHERE ARE YOU?

WILL LIGHTNING FIND LUNA BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE?





## Songs in Space

"Sounds are but vibrations in the air . . . even so, see how they move the heart." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

**H**ave you noticed how listening to music can change your mood? Upbeat songs can make you laugh or get up and dance. Other tunes can be calming or help you feel closer to God. Music can be even more powerful when you sing or play your own songs.

One fun instrument is the harmonica. It's so portable that an astronaut even played it in outer space! In 1965, a harmonica and some bells were the

first musical instruments in space. Inspired by an ancient Chinese instrument called the *sheng*, the harmonica was invented in the early 1800s.

Today, harmonicas are found in a variety of musical styles. Sound is created when a player blows out or breathes in. The air causes reeds inside the frame to vibrate. Make your own homemade version of a harmonica and experiment with sound.

### You'll Need

- Two jumbo craft sticks about  $\frac{1}{2}$ "– $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide (1.3–1.9 cm)
- two 3" x  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (7.6 x 1.9 cm) strips construction paper • white glue
- thick rubber band about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " (.6 cm) wide
- two thin rubber bands

MY HARMONICA  
MAKES MY  
SPIRIT SOAR!



## Make Your Own Harmonica

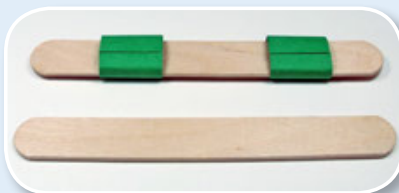
- 1 Lay one stick on top of the other. To make slider, wrap paper snugly around sticks. Secure with glue (keeping sticks free of glue).



- 2 Repeat with other paper strip. Sliders shouldn't overlap.



- 3 Remove bottom stick by pulling it out of sliders.



- 4 Stretch thick rubber band around papered stick. Sliders should be about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9 cm) from ends.



- 5 Place papered stick over other stick.



- 6 Wind small rubber bands around ends of both sticks to fasten them together. Make sure small bands don't touch sliders.



- 7 Move the sliders to change the pitch. Play with joy!





**Think  
BIG!**

**Search for the objects  
that are creatively  
used by this  
small family.**

**"The smallest atoms in the universal system are similar to the greatest beings of the universe." — 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

**I**magine yourself as a tiny creature, only four inches tall, living in a normal, human-size house. Your life would be full of obstacles. At four inches, it would take all of your ingenuity and strength to do simple things. How would you turn the giant doorknob or the faucets in the sink? How could you reach a table as high as a mountain? How long would it take you to get across town?

Even if you're not the size of a mouse, you still run into challenges.

Maybe your math homework is super tough, or you're arguing with your best friend. You can find ways to cut those problems down to size. Consult with others and think outside of the box to come up with solutions. Maybe a sibling can help you with math, or you can have an honest conversation with your best friend.

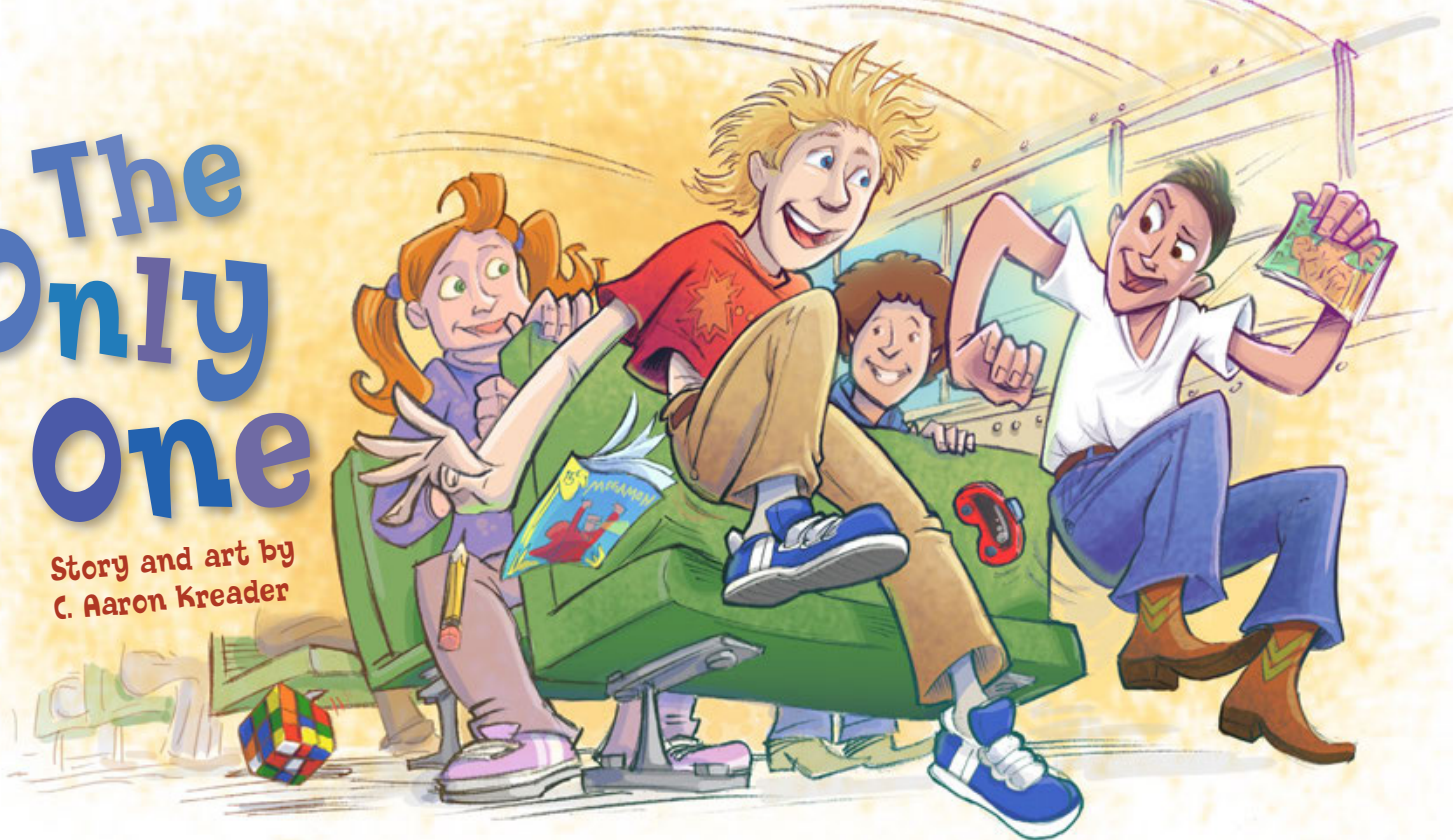
Facing problems large and small with a positive spirit can turn barriers into bridges. You'll build confidence and courage, too. And that's a *big* deal!

FIND THESE OBJECTS: COMB,  
FOUR BUTTONS, FOUR CRAYONS,  
POSTAGE STAMP, RING,  
SAFETY PIN, SIX SPOOLS, THIMBLE,  
WALNUT SHELL, AND A WATCH.



# The Only One

Story and art by  
C. Aaron Kreader



**T**oday was going to be different. I could feel it. Different could be good or bad, but in a small town, it's usually bad. Since I'm the only Bahá'í kid in a town where heavy rain is considered exciting, I try not to alarm people. But that's hard when the local pastime is digging into people's private lives. It's like living in a town full of detectives.

Teachers and friends ask questions after I miss school for a Bahá'í holy day. And after Christmas, "What did you get from Santa?" is always hard to face. But I'm a ninja at blending in.

I save a few of my birthday gifts from November until after the holidays. Or I change the subject by giving compliments to my inquisitors about their haircuts or shoes. This doesn't always work, so there are some awkward moments where I try my best to explain the faith I love.

"Hi, Saul!" Andy pounced into the bus seat next to me, which popped me into the air.

"Hey, Andy." I returned the favor, rising up and then landing on the bench to catapult Andy into the air.

We both burst into laughter.

Andy, Eddie, and Katy were all on my bus route, because our farms were close together. Eddie and Katy joined us, and that uneasy feeling about today vanished in giggles and games.

But as the school day rolled on, the feeling crept back. I became lost in thought, moving like a zombie through class, the lunch line, and eating—almost without blinking.

"You gonna eat those?" Eddie's finger hovered over my fries.

"Huh? Oh, go ahead." I was hungry, but I couldn't eat.

"You ready for class today, Saul?" Katy asked.

Time stopped. I stared at Katy. We were studying world religions in social studies, so Ms. Hanover wanted us to talk about our churches in class today. *That* must be why I felt weird all day. I became lost in the universe of my own thoughts. Andy, Katy, and Eddie—as well as Jeff and Laura—all looked at me from around the table.

"You're Jewish, right, Saul?" Detective Laura was hard at work.







I scanned Laura, looking for something to compliment—no new haircut. And I couldn't see her shoes. PANIC! I was about to freeze and make a fool of myself. I took a breath, finished chewing, and took a swig of milk to buy time. This was it. I would *wow* them. Yes! Tell them all about my faith, just like I had practiced in my mind. Gathering courage, I opened my mouth.

"Bahá'í," I smiled.

"Where are you going?" asked Laura. At first, I was just as confused as they were. Then I realized that she thought I said "Bye."

"Uh, no, I'm a *Bahá'í*." My courage was slipping—I had to move fast.

"What's that?" Jeff asked. The table was all ears, and I wondered if the whole lunchroom got quieter.

My face was hot. I blurted, "It's unity, and all people, with the equal races, WE ARE ONE!"

The silence around me confirmed my epic *fail*. I lurched up and ran, leaving my lunch tray behind. The class bell sounded as I dashed out of the lunchroom.

After school, I went to the river where trees were stacked along a steep bank. Whether they fell in a storm or from the work of beavers, I never knew. Andy and I imagined it was a huge fort. We forgot about our day and became heroes of our own world. As the shadows grew long, we lay in the fort, watching the sunset.

"What is a Bahá'í?" Andy asked, gazing at the golden sky.

Relaxed, I didn't think—I just spoke from my heart. "A Bahá'í believes there is one God and all the religions should be friends."

We sat in silence until Andy turned to me and said, "I want to be a friend of the Bahá'ís."

I stared out of our fortress and took a deep breath.

I might still be the only one, but at least I wasn't alone.



Are you the only Bahá'í at your school, or do you feel like "the only one" in other ways?

What's it like for you? What do you do when friends ask about you or your religion, whether you're a Bahá'í, Buddhist, Muslim, or another faith? Share your story with **Brilliant Star**.

Your thoughts and experiences can help other kids! Write to us at [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org).





# MUSIC CAFÉ

“Music, sung or played, is spiritual food for soul and heart.” —Bahá’í Writings

I THINK THERE ARE FUN THINGS TO FIND IN EVERY SINGLE DAY. I MAY NOT SEE THEM RIGHT AWAY, BUT WHEN I DO SPOT THEM, I FEEL JUST LIKE I’M HOLDING A...

## BOTTLE OF SUNSHINE

By Milkshake

G C G C (4th chorus, repeat doo doos) G Verse C

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo 1. I can't wait for the day to be-gin

7 G C G C G C

(Come on, bir-dies start sing - in' ear-ly) I get dressed up and I call my friends (Worms wig glin' ev - ery bo-dy's gig - glin')

13 Amin<sup>7</sup> D Amin<sup>7</sup> D C/D G Chorus C G

It's time to get out and play... Where do we go to- day? Oh... I got a big bot-tle of sun - shine... Mixed it up with a bowl full of day-

20 C G C D C G 1.2.4. 3.

dreams Poured it in - to a suit-case full of laugh-ter that I found... You won't find me sit-tin' a - round... Doo doo doo doo Doo Doo

27 D Bridge C G Amin<sup>7</sup>

There's on-ly so much time in the day Hey... And I don't have a min-ute to waste...

35 G C G C

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo

39 Amin<sup>7</sup> D Amin<sup>7</sup> D

I'm too bu - sy ma - kin' up... a back - yard pup - pet show... Oh I

### VERSE 2

Mom and Dad wonder what I do (I'm not slackin',  
time to get packin')  
With invisible friends and two big shoes (bells ringin'  
everybody's singin')  
Throw a party, get up and dance to a big-time  
rock 'n' roll band.

### CHORUS

### BRIDGE

### CHORUS (2x)

No you won't find me sittin' around  
Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo (5x) Yeah!



# THE SUNNY SIDE

The whistle blows, and the game begins! Your team is playing for the championship. Your heart is racing. You can't wait to get on the court.

It's natural to be excited before a big game. It's also easy to let competition get too serious, so you feel nervous, tense, or angry. Maybe you worry that you're not good enough. You can keep fear from taking over by training yourself to think positively.

Negative thinking can cloud your mind and make it hard to play your best. But when you look on the sunny side, you can concentrate on your strengths and enjoy the game. If something goes wrong, just shake it off. Then you'll have fun, no matter who wins or loses.

When it comes to attitude, the ball is in your court. By focusing on positive thoughts—in sports and in life—you make your world a whole lot brighter. Game on!

These players are about to get in the game, but one is more on the ball. Match each negative thought on the left with the positive thought that could replace it.

1 WHAT IF I MISS A BIG SHOT? EVERYONE WILL HATE ME.

2 I'LL NEVER BE AS GOOD AS THE OTHER PLAYERS. WHY EVEN TRY?

3 I HATE LOSING. IF WE DON'T WIN, I'M QUITTING.

4 IT'S NO FAIR THAT I HAVE TO SIT ON THE BENCH. I'LL PROBABLY BE HERE THE WHOLE GAME.

5 WHAT IF I TRIP AND FALL? I'D BE SO HUMILIATED.

6 THAT TEAM IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN US. WE HAVE NO CHANCE.

7 I'D RATHER BE HOME WATCHING TV OR PLAYING VIDEO GAMES.

8 THE SCORE IS REALLY CLOSE. I CAN'T HANDLE THE PRESSURE!

A THERE'S A LOT OF PRESSURE TODAY, SO I'LL TAKE DEEP BREATHS TO HELP ME RELAX.

B EVERYBODY FALLS SOMETIMES. IF I DO, I'LL GET BACK UP AND KEEP GOING.

C NO ONE MAKES EVERY SHOT. IT'S OKAY IF I MISS SOME.

D IT FEELS GREAT TO MOVE AROUND OUTSIDE.

E I CAN'T WAIT TO PLAY! BUT WHILE I'M ON THE BENCH, I'LL CHEER FOR MY TEAM.

F THIS GAME IS A CHALLENGE, BUT PLAYING A GOOD TEAM HELPS US TRY HARDER.

G I'VE WORKED HARD ALL SEASON, AND I'M A LOT BETTER THAN WHEN I STARTED.

H I THINK WE'LL WIN. BUT IF NOT, WE'LL DO IT NEXT TIME!





# Pardis Parker



"I'm proud of the fact that I'm doing what I love," says film director, writer, actor, and comedian Pardis Parker. Pardis was born in Sri Lanka and grew up in Canada. He loved comedy from a young age and longed to perform.

He earned a degree in computer science and psychology from McGill University in Montreal, then owned a successful health food store. In 2008, he decided to follow his dream. He wrote, directed, produced, and acted in his first short comedy film, *Afghan*, which earned over 25 awards and honors! He also started doing stand-up comedy in the U.S., Canada, and the UK. He made more short films and two music videos, winning many awards for his work. Pardis lives in Los Angeles, where he continues to create films and bring laughter to his growing audience.

**Q: What's your favorite childhood memory?**

A: One thing I always enjoyed is I would record these stand-up comedies from TV. When I went in to class . . . the teacher . . . would let the class watch for five or ten minutes . . . I was lucky. I had a pretty good run of teachers.



Pardis spent most of his childhood "just a stone's throw from Peggy's Cove," a town in Nova Scotia, Canada.

**Q: Why did you decide to volunteer for a Year of Service\* in the Solomon Islands?**

A: It was after high school, and I didn't know what I wanted to study, what I wanted to do in life. I did know that I wanted to be challenged. I wanted to be put out of my comfort zone . . . The Solomons were tropical islands that had a rainforest and so on. I felt as if that would provide the sort of adventure that I wanted. It was great. It was the most meaningful learning experience of my life . . . It allowed me to learn about myself, to learn about what I conceived [as] my own limits, the way that I was able to do things when there was only me to do it.

**Q: What kind of work did you do?**

A: There's no cell phones, there's no Internet, there's no television or anything, so there were pockets of Bahá'ís who hadn't really been in touch with the outside Bahá'í community for years and years and years. So I was with isolated Bahá'í[s] . . . to help them learn about being a [Bahá'í].

**Q: When joking with friends, it's easy to unintentionally hurt someone's feelings. How can we avoid this?**

A: It's important to realize that there's a difference between having fun *with* someone and making fun *of* someone. There's no benefit if one person is losing. You want to be able to find comedy where everyone's able to benefit and enjoy it, and not at someone else's expense . . . Comedy also means to uplift people. And the best comedy embraces the world . . . Make jokes where everyone can enjoy them . . .



Questions and  
Answers with an  
Inspirational Bahá'í



Left: Pardi wrote, directed, produced, and starred in the 2011 film, *The Dance*, a funny love story in which not a word is spoken.

Below: Pardi performs at a comedy club in California, U.S., in 2009. He doesn't get nervous and says stand-up comedy is like "having a conversation with . . . a large group of people."

**Q: How did you decide you wanted to be a writer, director, comedian, and an actor?**

A: It was something I'd always wanted to do, and I got to the point where I couldn't *not* do it anymore. So I went forward. *Afghan* was the first thing I did. I didn't have any training or any experience or anything before that. So I just learned on the fly how it was, hired a bunch of crew, I wrote something, and, you know, we were in Halifax, and we shot it, and we got lucky . . . The guy that acted in it was a comedian. I . . . asked him about stand-up and how that worked, and it was simple. You write some material up, and you find an open mike somewhere, and you start, and you keep going, and over time, you get better.

**Q: You've acted on several TV shows. What's that like?**

A: It's fun. There are probably a lot of kids who think that it's real glamorous, but it's not. Actually, it's a lot of waiting around on sets. You say your lines a bunch of times, and you go home. It's fun and it's not very difficult, but it's not nearly as exciting as people think it is . . . On all of these shows, you're working with so many talented people . . . the best in the business. So they really make your job easy.

**Q: What advice do you have for kids who want to pursue a life in comedy or film?**

A: Go for it. We need more talented voices out there. There's no magic way or an easy way to get started. Everyone starts out the same way. With comedy, you just go and start doing open mikes, amateur nights. And with film, we're living in an age where it's a lot easier to get a camera and to get friends together and to make something. You don't need to have a huge budget, or any budget, to tell a good story. Have an honest voice, and you'll create work that's meaningful.



**Q: In this issue, we're exploring the joyful adventure of life. In your eyes, what makes life a joyful experience?**

A: It's the people you're with. It's your friends and family. It's the company you keep. Surround yourself with good people, and you'll have a good time.

**Q: If you had one wish for our readers, what would it be?**

A: I wish that they find what their passion is in life and they put themselves in a position where they're able to pursue it . . . If there's something you think that you can do, you should do it. The only limits you have in life are the ones you put on yourself.





**A** Messenger of God called the Báb ("the Gate" in Arabic) brought a new faith to Persia (now Iran) in 1844. Authorities who wanted to stop the Báb imprisoned Him and killed thousands of His followers. He faced a firing squad on July 9, 1850. But when the smoke cleared, He was nowhere to be seen, and the ropes had broken! When guards found Him in His prison cell, He calmly said, "Now you may proceed to fulfill your intention." A second firing squad completed the execution. The Báb taught that another Messenger, Bahá'u'lláh, would bring an age of peace. Bahá'ís honor the Báb on July 9 each year.

## Sunday

## Monday

## Tuesday

## Wednesday

## Thursday

## Friday

## Saturday

1

**Canada Day**  
Check out the Trans Canada Trail, stretching over 10,439 miles (16,800 km)!

2



**UV Safety Month (U.S.)**  
Wear sunscreen to protect yourself from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

3

4

**Independence Day (U.S.)**  
Did you know? The Statue of Liberty once served as a lighthouse.

5

6

**My Goal for the Month:**

7



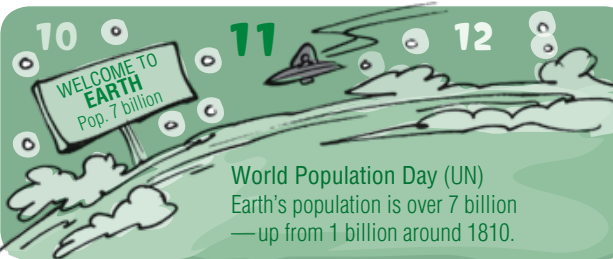
**Tanabata (Japan)\***  
Wishes are written and hung on bamboo branches.

8

9

**MARTYRDOM OF THE BÁB**

10



**World Population Day (UN)**  
Earth's population is over 7 billion — up from 1 billion around 1810.

11

12

13

**BAHÁ'Í MONTH OF KALIMÁT (WORDS)**

14

**Bastille Day (France)**  
Celebration of French culture and liberty

15

16

17

18



**Nelson Mandela International Day (UN)**  
South Africa's first black president was co-winner of a Nobel Peace Prize.

19

20

**Ramadan begins (Islam)**  
A time of fasting, prayer, and reflection

21



22

**Did you know?**  
Not all fireflies glow, but each species that does has its own blinking pattern.

23



24

25



**Birthday of Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic**

26

27

28



**London 2012 Olympic Games (July 27–Aug. 12)**  
The five rings on the Olympic flag symbolize unity among five continents.

29

**VISTA MEANS ...**

**Cosmo's Word Challenge**

- a) Stamp on a passport for travel
- b) A party or gathering
- c) A broad or far-reaching view

30

31



**WHY DID THE FARMER PLANT SEEDS IN HIS POND?**

**HE WANTED TO GROW WATERMELON!**





# AUGUST 2012 • 169 Bahá'í Era

**W**hat do you dream about for your future? Are you excited about being an astronaut exploring outer space? A scientist finding new ways to use green energy? A photographer exploring cultures around the globe? No matter what adventures you imagine, you can start achieving them now. Write down your goals, and think big! Then write small steps you can take to move toward those dreams. Share your progress with friends and family. One study found that updating a friend about your goals each week gives you a boost toward success. Where will your enthusiasm take you?



**Sunday**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

**Saturday**

**From Cosmo's Bookshelf**

Party Tips, by Sella Brate

Cool Hobbies, by N. Joyserself

Jokes and Riddles, by U.R. Funny

101 Card Games, by Al Beatcha

Every 19 days, Bahá'í Feast is held on or near the first day of the Bahá'í month.

**1**  
**BAHÁ'Í**  
**MONTH OF**  
**KAMÁL**  
(PERFECTION)

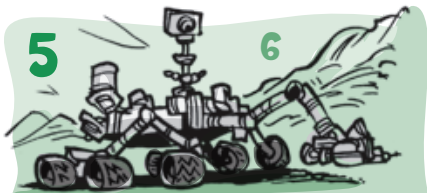
**2** HOW DO SOCCER PLAYERS STAY COOL DURING A GAME?

**3** WE STAND NEAR THE FANS!



**5**

**6**



NASA's rover, *Curiosity*, lands on Mars this month.



**7**  
National Night Out (U.S. and Canada)  
Neighbors unite to prevent crime.

**9**

International Day of the World's Indigenous People (UN)  
Celebrates native cultures and promotes their human rights

**10**

**11**

**My Goal for the Month:**

**12**

**13**

**14**



International Youth Day (UN)  
What is your favorite way to help others?

**15**

**16**

**17**

Near Hawaii, whales let dolphins ride on their heads! Playing between species is very rare.



**18**

Children's Book Week (Aug. 18–24, Australia)  
This year's theme: Champions Read

**19**

World Humanitarian Day (UN)

Eid al-Fitr (Islam)  
End of Ramadan, the month of fasting

**20**

**BAHÁ'Í**  
**MONTH OF**  
**ASMÁ'**  
(NAMES)

**21**

**22**

**23**



If you could visit any spot in the world, which would you choose?

**24**

**25**



Write down five things you're grateful for each week.

**26**

Women's Equality Day (U.S.)  
On this day in 1920, women won the right to vote.

**27**

What's your dream for our world?  
Martin Luther King shared his on this day in 1963.

**28**

**29**

La Tomatina (Buñol, Spain)  
About 40,000 people enjoy a world-famous tomato fight.



**30**

**STUPENDOUS**  
**MEANS ...**

**Gosmo's Word Challenge**

- a) Not very clever
- b) Marvelous, extremely impressive
- c) Straps over shoulders to hold up pants





# SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

## Fred Mortensen (1887–1946): A Dangerous Journey By Gail Radley



Fred Mortensen's life changed dramatically after meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One meeting was in Minnesota, U.S., in 1912 (left).

"Look at the swell bunch of bananas," said Fred Mortensen's pal, gazing into the closed grocery.

"Gee, I wisht I had some," said another.

"Do you?" asked Fred. A bulldog barked inside the store, daring him. Fred broke the window and grabbed the bananas.

Fred was born in Iowa, and he grew up tough and hard in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He fought, stole, and drank alcohol to impress his buddies. In 1904, when Fred was about 17, he and his gang robbed a train. Fred's little brother, Turk, grabbed a big mailbag.

Fred saw Turk struggling under its weight as they raced away from the train with the police chasing them. Fred grabbed the bag so Turk could escape. As bullets whizzed by, Fred leaped over a 35-foot wall and broke his leg. His next stop was jail.

### Power of the Spirit

Fred's life took a turn. His lawyer was Albert Hall, a Bahá'í. Albert told Fred about Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, and

His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Something stirred in Fred's heart. He was puzzled, but in time, Albert's words drew him like a magnet draws iron.

"It was . . . the power of the Holy Spirit drawing one, who wished to be drawn," Fred wrote. Later, guided by Bahá'í teachings, Fred transformed. But his adventures weren't over.



In 1912, Fred heard that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Maine, at what is now Green Acre Bahá'í School. Eager to meet him, but with little money, Fred hopped trains from Ohio to Maine, riding on top of or beneath the cars. Belching smoke through the night, coal-driven trains delivered him to New Hampshire. A boat and streetcar ride later, he

was at Green Acre. What a sight he was, rumpled and grimy from his long, dangerous journey!

### Unforgettable Meeting

The next day, Fred still looked shabby compared to others waiting to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Fred was certain he would be last—but suddenly, his name was called.

'Abdu'l-Bahá smiled and took his hand. "Welcome! Welcome! You are very welcome," he said, then asked

three times, "Are you happy?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá also asked Fred where he'd come from and about Albert Hall. Then came the worst question: "Did you have a pleasant journey?"

Fred hesitated, afraid to tell about stealing rides. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked again. Looking into his sparkling eyes, Fred thought, *He knows—and I must tell.* Reluctantly, he told the truth about his trip.

When he looked again into 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eyes, the love he felt pouring from them filled Fred with joy. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave him fruit, kissed his cheeks, and even kissed his dirty hat!

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá left Green Acre, he invited Fred to ride to Massachusetts and stay a week with him. He also gave Fred money for a comfortable ride home. A year later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "That trip of thine . . . to Green Acre will never be forgotten. Its mention will be recorded eternally..."

After meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Fred dedicated the rest of his life to the Bahá'í teachings. He served the Faith until his death in 1946 at age 59.



# Hoshi's Adventures:

## THE MYSTIC EXPLORER

If you could travel to any spot on Earth or beyond, where would you go?

I'm Hoshi, and I live on a ship called the *Mystic Explorer*. I help the captain of the *Mystic* go on fantastic expeditions around the globe—and even in outer space! We're always traveling and making new friends, and I love it! We have lots of fun learning

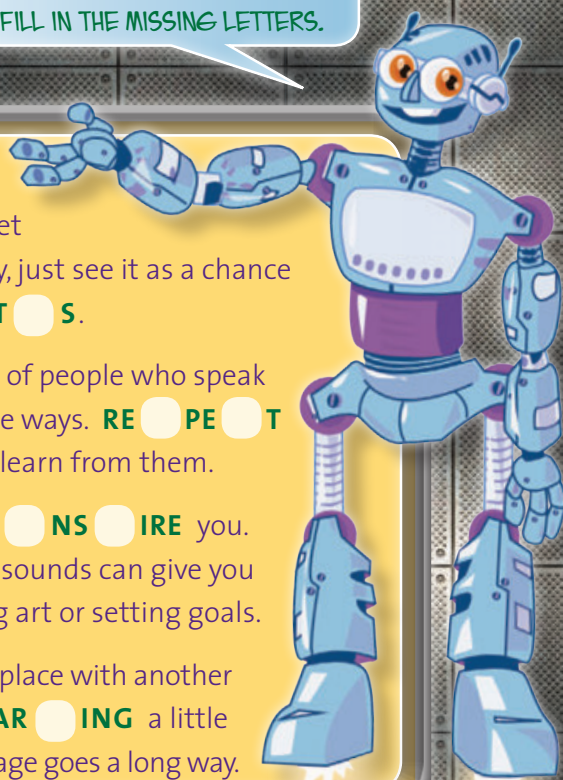
about different cultures and ways of life.

We're inspired by new people, places, and ideas. Sometimes we set off in one direction, then get curious about a different path and veer off course. It's cool to be spontaneous!

Would you like to explore the world with us on the *Mystic*? Welcome aboard! The most important thing to pack is your sense of adventure.

READY FOR SOME FUN TRAVELS? CHECK OUT MY TIPS AND FILL IN THE MISSING LETTERS.

1. Keep an  **PEN** mind and follow your curiosity. Discover new things about your destination—and yourself.
2. Be brave and **T**  **Y** out new foods and experiences.
3. Any trip will have a few bumps in the road. Always keep a **P**  **SIT**  **VE** attitude.
4. It's great to make plans, but save room for surprises, too. Be  **LE**  **IBLE** and enjoy the unexpected.
5. If you're waiting for a plane or stuck in traffic, be **PA**  **IEN**  with delays. Find ways to have fun.
6. Even with a map, you may get lost. Don't worry, just see it as a chance to find new **PAT**  **S**.
7. The world is full of people who speak and act in diverse ways. **RE**  **PE**  **T** differences and learn from them.
8. Let your travels  **NS**  **IRE** you. New sights and sounds can give you ideas for making art or setting goals.
9. When visiting a place with another language, **L**  **AR**  **ING** a little bit of that language goes a long way.



Location > Earth



Location > Iceland > Northern Lights



WHICH CREATURES TELL THE FUNNIEST JOKES?

STAND-UP CHAMELEONS!

FUNKY MONKEY COMEDY CLUB

DOWN

1. Treble Chef finds \_\_\_\_ things in every single day. (p. 20)
2. Being \_\_\_\_\_ is linked to happiness. (p. 29)
3. Yasmin's coolest adventure would be \_\_\_\_\_ around the world. (p. 13)
5. Let your travels \_\_\_\_\_ you. (p. 27)
7. Hoshi helps to navigate a ship called the \_\_\_\_ Explorer. (p. 27)
8. Facing problems with a positive spirit can turn barriers into \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 17)
11. All living things on Earth depend on this to survive. (p. 7)
12. Bahjī means \_\_\_\_\_ in Arabic. (p. 3)
13. Like otters, people benefit from \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 2)
15. Football is called \_\_\_\_\_ in some countries. (p. 10)
17. \_\_\_\_\_ feasts are held around the world in a spirit of joy and friendship. (p. 6)

ACROSS

4. One of the first musical instruments in space (p. 16)
6. Pardis says, "The only limits you have in life are the ones you put on \_\_\_\_\_." (p. 23)
9. Saul spoke from his \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 19)
10. When it comes to attitude, the \_\_\_\_\_ is in your court. (p. 21)
14. Fred Mortensen hopped \_\_\_\_\_ to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (p. 26)
16. Has a positive effect on the body (p. 4)
18. Sign of a great thinker (p. 5)
19. The first hot air balloons were flown in \_\_\_\_\_. (p. 9)
20. Jeremy wants to be an \_\_\_\_\_ athlete. (p. 12)

## FROM OUR MAILBOX



I get so excited when [Brilliant Star] comes in the mail, and by the next day, I [have] completed all the puzzles and read every single page. It helps me to be a better person and always think about others.

—Anisa P., age 12, Michigan, U.S.

## ANSWERS

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

Page 2: 3 otters at TL, 4 at TC, 4 at TR, 3 at CR, 1 at BL, 3 at C

Page 9: Rooster at C, robot at CL, soccer ball at CL, zebra stripes at CR, penguin at BR, lightning bolts at CL, dragon at CR, musical notes at TC

Page 10: A) 6, B) 3, C) 1, D) 7, E) 2, F) 4, G) 5

Page 11: England, Madagascar

Page 17: Comb at TC; buttons at TL, TC, BL, C; crayons at TC, BL, CL, C; stamp at CL; ring at CL; safety pin at BC; 3 spools at TL, 1 at BC, 2 at BL; thimble at BC; shell at BC; watch at C

Page 21: A) 8, B) 5, C) 1, D) 7, E) 4, F) 6, G) 2, H) 3

Page 27: 1) open, 2) try, 3) positive, 4) flexible, 5) patient, 6) paths, 7) Respect, 8) inspire, 9) learning



# Fun in the Sun

"The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all... Thy gifts encompass all..." —'Abdu'l-Bahá

**L**ike the light of a sunny day, God's blessings are all around us. But just as clouds can block the sun, it's sometimes hard to see all the good stuff in our lives. You can fix that with an attitude of gratitude. Studies find that being grateful is linked to happiness, stronger relationships, and even better sleep.

Have you ever hit the beach for a day of fun and found yourself grumbling that it's too hot or too

crowded? Don't be crabby. Look for the positives. Isn't it great to be with friends and family, feel the warmth and breeze, and build sand castles? Take a deep breath and let the joy flow in.

Earth is full of wonders large and small. Whether you're exploring shells in the sand, wonderful whales, or sites across the sea, use your imagination to make every day a new adventure.

These kids are having a *whale* of a good time at the beach. Help them find their way to the Castle of Gratitude.







“Joy gives us wings!  
In times of joy our strength  
is more vital, our intellect  
keener, and our understanding  
less clouded.”

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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