



# RILEY'S RAINFOREST

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

## Are You Altruistic?

**I**magine you're eating lunch with your friends when you notice a lonely kid looking for somewhere to sit. Your table is full, but you quickly grab a chair and invite him to squeeze in beside you.

When you do something kind without expecting anything in return, that's altruism. You might give up time, comfort, or money to help someone. Some scientists say it's part of human nature to be altruistic. One study showed that kids two and younger can see when someone needs help and offer it. If an adult drops an object and struggles to retrieve it, a toddler will pick it up and hand it over. Other studies find that most people's first impulse is to cooperate.

That's good news for our health, since people who help others tend to be happier and healthier. Volunteering time on a regular basis may increase our sense of purpose and connection to others.



Altruism can also be contagious. When we witness other people doing kind acts, we're likely to be kinder ourselves.

It's not always easy to choose altruism. We can be selfish, too. Making service a daily goal can help. Whether you give up free time on a Saturday to serve the homeless or give your little sister the bigger scoop of ice cream after dinner, sacrificing for others can benefit both you *and* them.

So when you see the chance to grab a chair and invite a new friend to join you, do it! When you spread kindness, everyone at the table wins.

## Explore & Soar: Helping Games

**C**an the games you play inspire you to be altruistic? They just might! Some studies show that when people play video games in which the goal is to work together or help others, they're more likely to be helpful in real life. When you're looking for new games, try to find ones that:

- ☐ Have goals that include saving people, animals, or other characters
- ☐ Present challenges that you cooperate with others to overcome
- ☐ Encourage positive interactions with other players
- ☐ Don't include strong violence, which can make people act aggressively

## Curiosity Canopy



**T** rue or False? People who volunteer may actually live longer.

*True.* Studies show that people who participate in volunteer service for an hour or more per month may live longer than those who don't. That means more time for fun, family, friends—and helping others!

