

JULY 2025

WISH UPON A STAR



**Exercise
& Mental
Health**

**Astronomy:
Band-aid
for the
Soul**

**Get Inspired
by a local
Woman in
Science**

**Artificial
Intelligence
Poetry**

**Pet
Photos
pull-out!**

**Celebrate
women in
science!**

**Crossword
Puzzle
Inside!**

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About the Cover:

This special fifth year issue's topic is "Mental and Physical Health and Wellness". The cover art shows Dr. Dingolay surrounded by several new friends while trusty Ramajay, the tardigrade is safely tucked into his pocket. Dr. Dingolay's new friends are the feel-good chemicals in our brain that helps us navigate life positively. To find out who they are, solve the crossword puzzle on page 19. Cover design and artwork by Farishta Copilah.

Editorial

Greetings!

This is our fifth year as an organization and our fifth issue of “WISH Upon A Star”! I do feel a tremendous sense of pride and gratitude to all who supported us on this wishful journey to the stars borne out of a desire to give back to underprivileged children and others in the society. We continued to grow from strength to strength each year. New events have now been included, giving us a packed annual agenda. We have remained totally offline in an era of social media but we will consider revisiting this. It is thought that one needs this to get such an organization to have traction and visibility to achieve its aims. The organization is not advertised or promoted anywhere. It has all been the word of mouth – and the power of one is more than ever abundantly clear to me how it can escalate exponentially.

Each of our issues has a theme, and for this special edition of our fifth anniversary – the theme is “Physical and mental health and well-being”. This is a topic that is dear to each and every one of us. We pass through this Earth but once, let’s make it the best it can be! There are many of our supporters in our membership who appear in this issue and it is heartwarming to see their engagement and the energy they bring to the ventures!

We were able to kick off a long overdue initiative – fundraiser for the WISH Foundation. Our inaugural event was held on 14 November with a lecture on “From the cradle of humankind to the cradle of civilization: Humans’ journey out of Africa” followed by a tour of the Life Sciences Museum at the University of the West Indies. It was an exciting intellectual journey for all the participants. As has happened in the past, we get requests for support for other needy situations and in 2024 Grenada was hit badly by hurricane Beryl. We were happy to support an effort that took much needed food items and water to stricken communities.

A landmark achievement for us as an organization was when we were awarded the most impactful community project at the UWI principal’s research awards. We continue to be inspired by all these folks who support us who I refer to as angels – none of this could have been possible without you! For that, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making the world a better place.



Prof. Shirin Haque
CEO/Founder

Meet the WISH Team

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller



The WISH Team is actually many persons, or angels you never meet or see but who spread their kindness and generosity silently to make this world a better place and to give a hand to those who need a helping hand. That's our base, the many many people who make the magic happen for all who WISH Upon A Star! However, when it comes to logistics, planning and the nitty gritty – this is where the executive team and the board of directors come in. At left, the team receives the UWI Principal's award for the most impacting community outreach. (L to R: D. Hamilton, S. Haque, B. Ramdhanie, D. Sharma).

Prof. Shirin Haque

"What do you do for your mental health?", we asked them.

is the CEO and Founder of the Women In Science for Hope Foundation we lovingly call the WISH foundation. She is a Professor of Astronomy at the University of the West Indies and a Science and Technology Laureate of the Caribbean Sabga Award for Excellence among many other awards. When it comes to her mental health – nothing like getting lost in doing crafts from embroidery, acrylic paint to resin crafts, making bags and jewellery. It puts her in the flow zone. Other moments of relaxation come from cooking and baking, reading a good book, watching movies and searching for wildflowers to dry them for her crafts. She is very much a loner and always gets a dopamine kick from learning something new.

Mr. Deva Sharma

is the treasurer of the WISH Foundation. He is an architect who has worked in the United States and the Caribbean and with several projects such as the airport, Brian Lara stadium, Centre of Excellence in Trinidad as examples. What does he do for his mental health and well-being? "I spend my mornings meditating in my garden and listening to the sound of the birds in the environment."

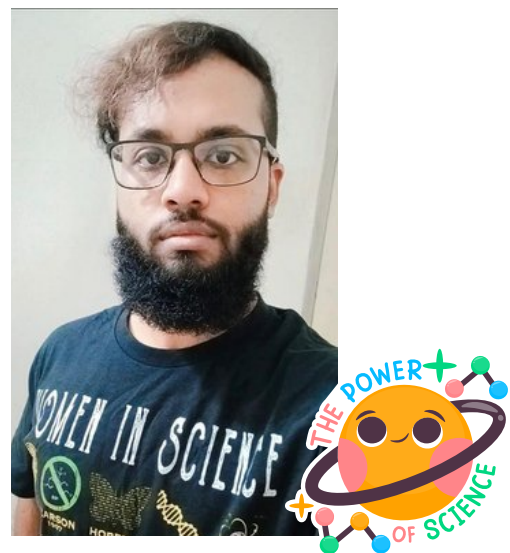
Ms. Darnelle Hamilton

is the Secretary of the WISH Foundation. She is a Science teacher at Corpus Christi College in Diego Martin. When it comes to mental health, this is what she shared. "My mental health thrives at the beach! When I am stressed or anxious the best remedy for me is a trip to the sea. I absolutely love the ocean's rhythmic movement, literal music to my ears that helps bring a sense of peace to me."

Ms. Bhanumattee Ramdhanie

is the Public Relations Officer in the WISH Foundation, and is an MPhil. research student in faculty of Engineering at the University of the West Indies. When it comes to her mental health and well-being, this is what she added. "Personally, cooking, baking, working on art projects, taking a drive to the beach or simply spending time with loved ones all help me to decompress after a long day or week. I've learnt that it's the small things that help me to recover mentally after stressful periods. In everyday life, the simple things help me find balance."

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN SCIENCE!



Pets, Nature and our Mental Wellbeing

"Dolce far niente", is Italian for the sweetness of doing nothing or stop and smell the roses. Have you noticed that when you interact consciously or not with certain places or animals, you feel present in that point in time? You focus on the act of being there, all the questions, worries and challenges melt away or seem far off? Think about when you're at the beach. river, gardening, playing with the cat, dog, horse, rabbit.

These activities make one focus, provide a release and allow you to not care about anything else at that moment. Studies have shown that owning and caring for a pet, or even volunteering at animal shelters provide structure, improve communication skills and social interactions, gives one a sense of purpose, something to look forward to daily. It is particularly useful for assisting those who struggle with ADHD or are on the autism spectrum.

When we care for a pet playing, feeding, bathing, taking it out with us or for medical check ups; that provides a form of regular schedules and priorities, Play and feed allows us to interact with the pets and bond with them. They are great keepers of

secrets, a non judgmental ear to express any fears, worries or ideas and disappointments. They are perpetual sources of love and companionship.

I'm sure that some of you may know of a friend, acquaintance or relative who have expressed their gratitude for their pets. I know of clients who have said:



Or they have simply said:



Similarly the flowing waters of the beach waves, the rivers and even a water feature seem to provide a sense of calm and tranquility. Gardening, weeding and tidying up an outdoor space surrounded by nature provides focus and removes the mind from other concerns.

Exercising in nature, exploring areas of nature by yourself, in a group or with a pet makes you concentrate on other thoughts. Breathing in a different air space, engaging your eyes, ears, nose and sense of touch can be exhilarating, joyful and relaxing.

Give yourself a break from time to time, go volunteer at an animal shelter, take a walk in nature with family, friends and pets. Breathe, listen, look, touch and relax.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Chin is a UK trained veterinarian, operating a first opinion practice in Trinidad. She enjoys helping the public and their pets have a long, healthy relationship together.

Apart from keeping up to date with the latest medical and nutritional information to help her clients, she enjoys reading on a vast range of topics, spends as much time outside exploring and searching for plant and animal models and rears the occasional moth, butterfly and ladybug.

EXERCISE AND

Physical activity provides many benefits for children and adolescents. It builds strong bones and muscles. It also helps you move better and think more clearly. Being physically active is good for your mental health too. Youths who are physically active report less anxiety and depression, have greater confidence, improved thinking skills and better outlook on life.

Unfortunately, the World Health Organization (WHO) finds that 80% of adolescents (age 10-19) are not getting the recommended amounts of physical activity.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is any type of movement. Exercise, on the other hand, is a planned, structured type of physical activity.



How much physical activity does an adolescent need?

Physical Activity Type	Recommendation	How often
Aerobic	60 min per day of moderate to vigorous intensity activity	4-5 days per week
Muscle and Bone Strengthening	1-3 sets 20-30 min sessions	2- 3 days per week

- Moderate exercise includes fast walking, biking, swimming, mowing the lawn, dancing.
- Vigorous exercise includes running, heavy yard work, swimming laps, aerobic dancing.
- When starting an exercise program, start by doing lesser amounts and then gradually increase.
- It is especially important to reduce the time spent sitting.

MENTAL HEALTH

STRENGTH TRAINING

- Decreases feelings of depression
- Makes you feel good about yourself
- Helps you to believe in yourself



MIND BODY EXERCISE (YOGA, TAI CHI ETC)

- Helps you manage stress
- Helps decrease your feelings of stress and anxiety
- Improves concentration



AEROBIC EXERCISE (SWIMMING, RUNNING, BIKING ETC)

- Makes you feel better
- Makes your brain stronger and smarter



TEAM SPORTS

- Lowers your chances of suffering from mental health problems
- Makes you feel part of a team
- Makes you feel better about yourself
- Improves your social skills

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES (HIKING, BIKING, SWIMMING, BIRDWATCHING, KAYAKING)

- Connecting with nature improves your mood and decreases stress
- Provides opportunities to be with friends and family

DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 out of 7 10–19 year-olds globally experience a mental health disorder
- In Trinidad & Tobago, 79% of females ages 11-17 and 86% of males ages 11-17 are physically inactive

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN HELP!

- Decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Improves self-esteem
- Reduces stress
- Improves attention



Author: Michelle Gobeil has a BSc in Kinesiology from the University of Waterloo, Canada. She is a retired Clinical Exercise Physiologist and Certified Diabetes Educator.

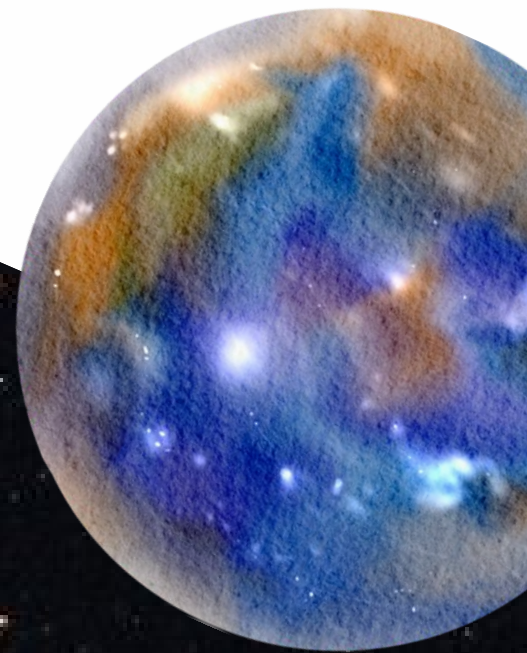
BAND-AID FOR THE SOUL



Astronomy is all about the science of the universe and the skies. As night time comes around and the place is engulfed in darkness, the stars begin to glint and shine for us and sometimes the moon is a beautiful crescent and at other times, it is a full moon like this giant lamp in the sky brightening up the darkness.

So, what could astronomy possibly have to do with mental health? Have you ever noticed, that just looking up at the stars has a calming effect on you? Students who study astronomy have said to me, knowing that the sun is going to rise the next day and exactly how the moon will look lends stability to when there is chaos in our lives. We can predict such from the science. But it is much more than the predictability.

BBC recently reported that “One study published in February 2024 found that people with a greater connection to the night sky had better mental health and felt happier.” We can often be overwhelmed by a



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prof. Shirin Haque is an astronomer who is passionate about sharing the wonders of the skies and has an MPhil in psychology with a deep interest in mental health. You can share this excitement with her at her YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@caribscience

lot of stimulation from noise and sights during the day – all the hustle and bustle because there is a lot of activity. Such activity reduces in the night and it is quieter and calmer and that lends to feeling a sense of peace.

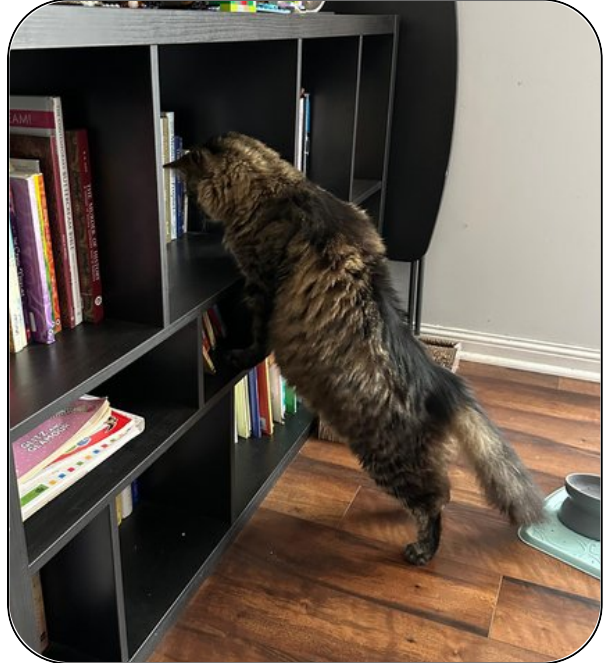
Adrian West, astronomer and presenter of the Night Sky Show live events, calls this "a Band-Aid for the soul". When you feel awe and wonder at anything, science has also shown that this is very good for your health as it reduces blood pressure and boosts feel-good hormones.

Realising how important astronomy and stargazing can be for your health – even major organisations such as “International Astronomical Union” has launched a project called “Astronomy for mental health”.

Remember always!! Safety first when you go stargazing as you will be in dark areas. So, it is always a good idea to go with groups and adults who know a bit about the stars to show you the wonders of the night. No special equipment is needed. There is so much you can do with just your eyes and curiosity to learn about the skies. How wonderful that the only side effect is – that this is good for your mental health!



Our Pets!





Did you know that Almost Every Child in Trinidad and Tobago is Bilingual?

If you are growing up in Trinidad and Tobago and are already of school age, you may have noticed that your teachers speak a different way compared to your family and friends.



What did you yesterday
after school, Ruby?



Ms Roberts, ah did gone
dong de road tuh make
grocery wit meh mudda

In our country, we are educated in a language known as English, which is used in our textbooks and end of term tests, while outside of the classroom we use another language known as Trinidadian English Creole (or Tobagonian English Creole, if you live in Tobago). These styles of speaking have been established as **distinct languages** by scientists in the field of **linguistics**, who study human languages.

Before this distinction was established, the languages that we speak outside of school were treated as 'broken speech', but linguists have rejected this incorrect and unscientific perspective.

This year, linguists have teamed up with space scientists and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to document 286 World Languages by placing them on a memory disk that will be sent to the Moon. Included in this memory disk made of raw nickel designed to last billions of years without power, resistant to cosmic radiation and extreme temperatures are three languages from Trinidad and Tobago: Trinidadian English Creole, Tobagonian English Creole, and Trinidadian French Creole (also known as Trinidadian Patois), along with more than 20 other Caribbean languages.

This preservation of world languages and culture all the way to the Moon truly shows how important our own Trinbagonian languages are. And, yes, it does mean that **almost every child in Trinidad and Tobago is bilingual!**

Tips on translating

Translating between two languages can be done from one **word** to another, for example:

Standard English: **You**

Trinidadian English Creole: **Yuh**

Translating between two languages can be done from one **idea** to another, for example:

Standard English: **Don't lie now, did you steal this?**

Trinidadian English Creole: **Doh mamaguy meh dis owah, yuh tief dis?**

Try your own translations

Can you translate these famous space sentences from Standard English to Trinidadian English Creole?

The eagle has landed!

The eagle refers to the spacecraft that placed the first humans on the Moon in 1969. Try using one of our popular local birds so your reader can really cherish your translation!

Houston, we have a problem.

Once famously said by an astronaut during a space mission to Mission Control in Houston, USA, it is now used to describe things that are not going according to plan. It is very often used as a joke. You can try using a local city or town, even your own.

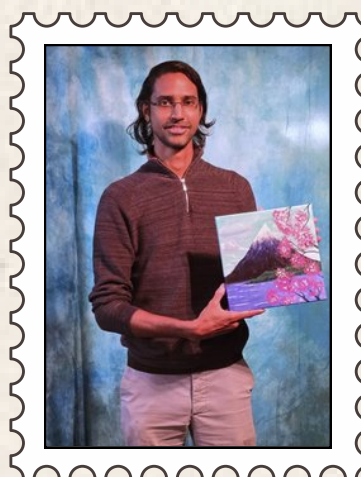


Translation Challenge!

Now try translating this quote by Dr. Camille Alleyne, a Trinbagonian-born Aerospace Engineer who has had a successful career working at NASA.

"I would love to see people from outside our region thinking about the Caribbean as technologically advanced and incorporating all these new technologies into our way of life."

(You can use dictionaries to look up words you are unfamiliar with)



Author: Mr. Dev Singh received a Physics B.Sc. and has nearly a decade of experience in Aviation Meteorology at Trinidad and Tobago's international airports. He is dedicated to making science and language enjoyable and accessible, through his

company Mosaic Productions which organizes entertaining outreach events nationwide.

Interview with Gabrielle Motilal

Gabrielle Motilal attended Marabella North Secondary School and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from the University of the West Indies, winning multiple awards that allowed her to study in Japan and conduct research at NASA Ames alongside top scientists. Gabrielle won the highly competitive and prestigious Fulbright Scholarship from the US Embassy, gaining her Masters degree in Materials Science and Engineering at University of Florida. She assumed leadership roles in the Society for Women Engineers and was inducted into the elite UF Engineering Leadership Circle. Upon graduating, she enjoyed working for Tesla towards a more sustainable future making battery cells for electric vehicles. Gabrielle remains dedicated to driving innovation, empowering women, and shaping a more sustainable future.



Graduation!

What were some of the biggest influences in your life?

Growing up my mother always chanted, “books before boys”. Two decades later-she was spot on! I’d love to joke with her about that very real life advice she gave to a 7 year old, haha. Unfortunately, she passed away when I turned 12. Sadly, my mother never had the opportunity to go to school like I did because long ago the government never paid tuition and same with my dad. So I grew up in a humble home. Mom taught me that education will take me to a better life and trained me to study hard, always. On her last day, I promised her that I will finish my education to the fullest and so I continue on with that promise to this day, some 15 years later, chasing our dream of a better life through education. My family and our faith in the almighty is the reason I am rooted in success.

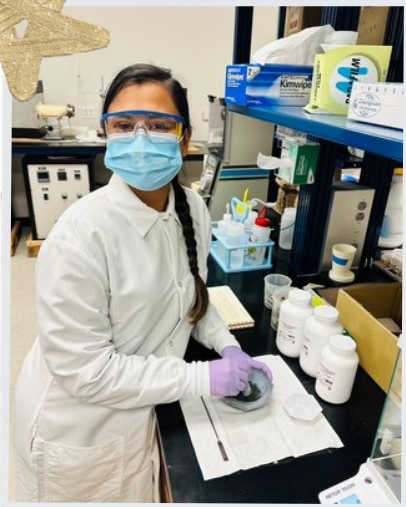


What were some of the biggest challenges you had to overcome?

The challenge of not knowing. Coming from a humble background, without a mom and my folks not being formally educated... I did not have proper guidance or any guidance at all when coming to school. Every decision was me hoping I chose “right” so a lot of times it was easy to feel that I was not good enough. This feeling is called “imposter syndrome”. Even though I won so many awards, this feeling of not belonging lingered. The higher in education I climbed, the more there was to overcome. However, realizing weak points is a good thing. Then taking actions to strengthen weaknesses greatly reduces that imposter feeling. I am enough. Even if others think differently, know to yourself that you are exactly where you need to be, and show up for yourself. Always.

Tell us a fun fact about yourself that's hard to guess.

Facing things head on! I grew up terrified of water. But to work offshore for BPTT, I had to pass a survival test that involved being strapped down inside a helicopter being fully submerged underwater while being flipped upside down! I took five swimming classes, learned to swim, and faced my biggest fear head-on. The funny part is that I almost did die during the training. One time the window was super difficult to knock out and the other time, the seatbelt refused to unbuckle and without even realizing, I ripped the entire thing out and resurfaced with the seatbelt still strapped on to my shoulders! I passed and survived to tell the tale.



Battery lab work

What advice do you have for young people wanting to get into science?

My love for science began with watching the moon and stars. My love for science grew as my curiosity grew. Choosing science was a no brainer for me! If you feel like this... "Oh, I want to know how this thing works? Why does it work?", then science is for you too! I have realized that if you are passionate about something, to live a fulfilling life - do your best to stick with it, be it a job or hobby! Try speaking with a guidance counselor at school about a career that suits you. Happiness can be found there.



Share your favourite quote with us.



Tesla desk selfie

My favorite quote is a local Trinidadian saying... "What is for you, is for you". Throughout my life, despite various challenges, somehow things always worked out. Even when I felt like there were better candidates, they still chose me. However, the opposite is also true. There were times when I was not chosen despite my best efforts. I recall not winning a scholarship after dreaming about it every single day for months. Well this resulted in me grieving every single day for months after that - truly devastating! Only to win a **10 times** even better scholarship a couple months later!

What do you do for mental health and well-being?



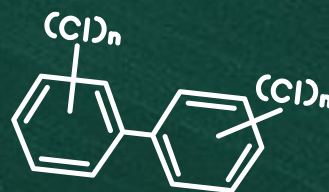
Mental health is wealth and a main priority. Self-care is my way of maintaining good well-being. Prayer works wonders. Exercise, even taking a stroll outside. I absolutely love listening to music while hammocking - this may be my hobby? Cleaning can be really therapeutic too, actually. Watching a Korean drama and chatting with family or friends.

WOMEN AND GIRLS' DAY IN SCIENCE COMPETITION FUN!

2025 marked ten years since the United Nations marked the observance of the International day of women and girls in science. On their website, they note "Gender equality in science is crucial for building a better future for all, yet women and girls continue to face systemic barriers and biases in pursuing scientific careers."

At the WISH Foundation, we marked the observance this year by running a competition on the women and girls in science. Here is the competition below. Why don't you see if you can solve it too?

A WOMAN OF MYSTERY
BARELY REMEMBERED BY HISTORY
SOUNDING BOARD IS HER GAME?
MAVERICK SOUNDS LIKE HER NAME!
HUSBAND GETS ALL THE GLORY
HERS IS A FORGOTTEN STORY.
WHO IS SHE?



$$E=mc^2$$

Imagine our delight, when the first correct entry came from a WISH Foundation member Christopher Mahadeo - the winner for the prize of a "Women In Science" tee! Congratulations to Christopher! Many people loved his tee so much, they decided to order themselves! So, enjoy the spread on pages ... of persons wearing Women in Science tees!



WINNER

Here is Christopher's winning entry which solves the puzzle perfectly.

"A woman of mystery, Barely remembered by history" - It was often debated whether or not her contributions were significant or even existed at all in his work despite her and Einstein being close since college and she was just overlooked (patriarchy basically).

"Sounding board is her game" - Even though it was debated whether or not she contributed, there is literally proof in the exchange of their letters that she supported him and his/their ideas.

"Maverick sounds like her name!" - Kind of self explanatory lol, it sounds like her name.

"Husband gets all the glory, Hers is a forgotten story." - Einstein is world famous, even to those that don't even care about science meanwhile Mileva is almost forgotten to history unless you're a science nerd like me.



$$V = \frac{4}{3} \pi r^3$$

WHO IS MILEVA MARIC?

PHOTO: Mileva Marić in an 1896 portrait (Bernisches Historisches Museum / Public Domain).

BORN: 1875

DIED: 1948

BIRTHPLACE: Titel, Austria-Hungary

SPOUSE: Albert Einstein (1903-1919)

Everyone has heard of the great Physicist Albert Einstein! Very few know of his first wife Mileva Marić whom he later divorced. Mileva Marić excelled in most subjects during the early years of her schooling. Marić moved to Zurich in 1894 where she could prepare for a university education, because women in Serbia were not allowed to attend university and she studied Physics and Mathematics together with Albert Einstein. It is likely that she helped with some of his groundbreaking theories in relativity from the letters they exchanged but little is known about her.

A poem by AI - ChatGPT

*** A Child's Gentle Mind ***

In a world of wonder, bright and wide,
Children's spirits dance inside,
But shadows sometimes softly creep,
Disturbing dreams that make them weep.

A giggle hidden, a frown concealed,
Silent battles they may yield,
Their minds like gardens, tender, new,
Need love's sunlight to thrive and grow.

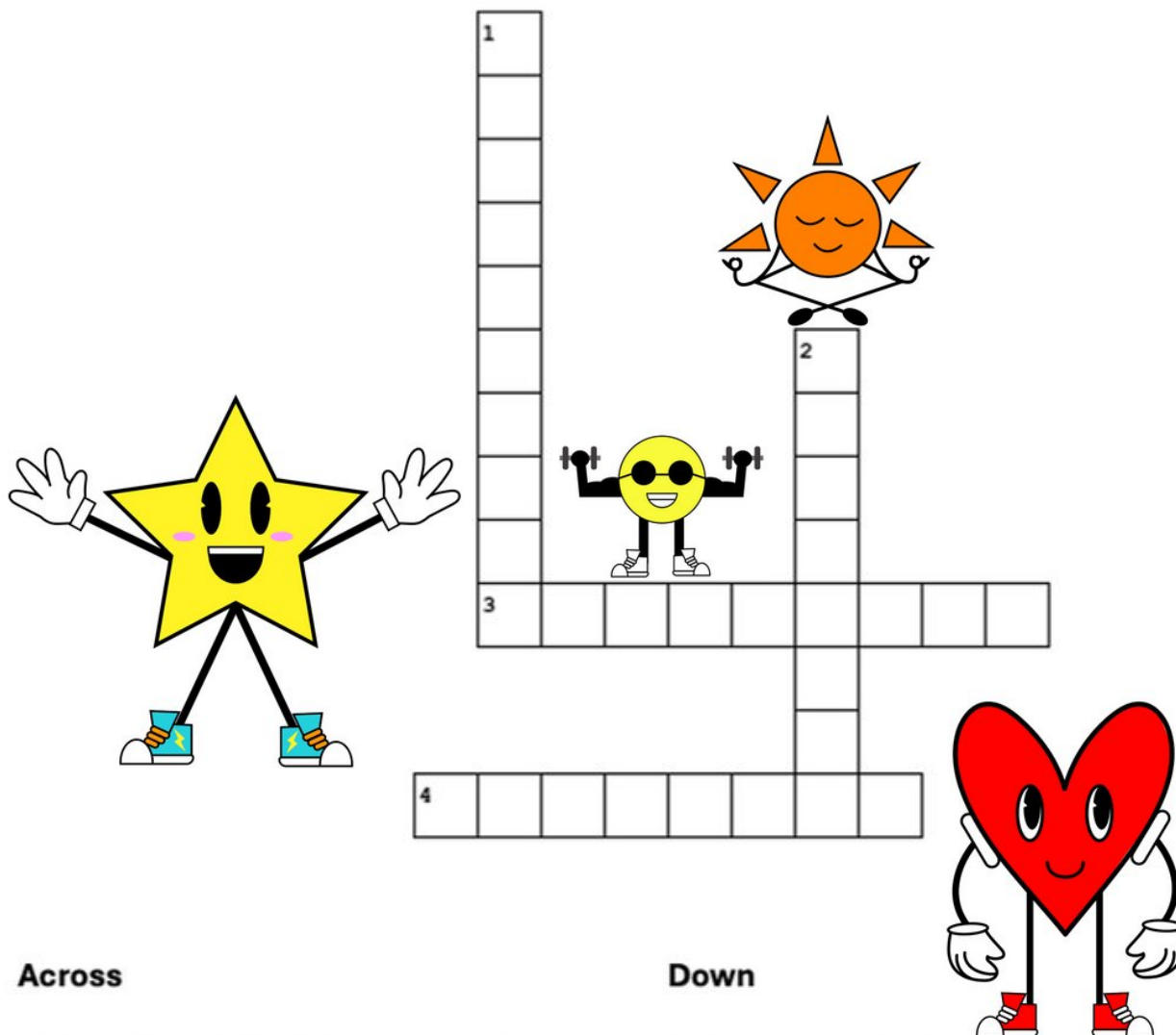
Listening ears and hearts so kind,
Help foster peace within their mind,
For every child, a story's spun,
Of hopes, fears, and battles won.

Let's nurture kindness, patience, grace,
Create a safe, warm space,
Where mental health blooms like spring,
And children boldly learn to sing.

For in their joy, our future's bright,
With understanding and gentle light,
They'll soar beyond the clouds above,
With hearts sustained by care and love.



Fun Feel-good Chemicals Crossword Puzzle!



Across

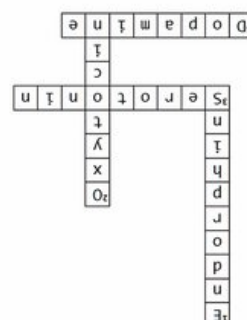
3. This chemical is linked to mood regulation
4. "Reward" chemical associated with pleasure

Down

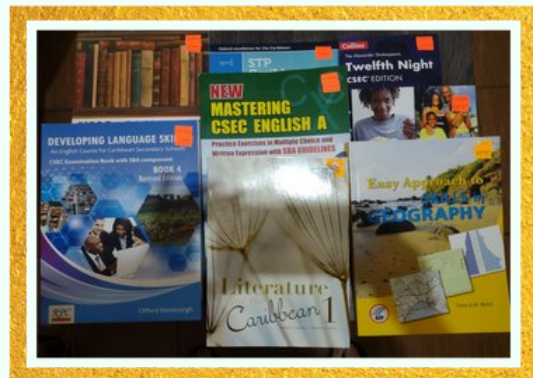
1. A natural painkiller released in response to pain and stress
2. This is known as the "love hormone" released in social bonding



Flip the book upside down to see the answers!



The W.I.S.H. Foundation Activities



The W.I.S.H. Foundation Activities



*If you WISH to support
and volunteer with the W.I.S.H.
Foundation in any way at all,
contact us at 1-868-684-9823
or email us at
WISH.Foundation@hotmail.com*





FUN FACT

Octopuses don't actually have tentacles. They have eight limbs, but they're arms (for most species). Scientists define tentacles as limbs with suckers at their end. Octopus arms have suckers down most of their length.

A comet smells like rotten eggs, urine, burning matches, and...almonds. Traces of hydrogen sulphide, ammonia, sulphur dioxide, and hydrogen cyanide were all found in the makeup of the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

Snails have teeth. Between 1,000 and 12,000 teeth, to be precise. They aren't like ours, though, so don't be thinking about snails with ridiculous toothy grins. You'll find the snail's tiny 'teeth' all over its file-like tongue.

There's a planet mostly made from diamond. Called 55 Cancri, it's around twice the size of Earth and some 40 light-years away from us within the Cancer constellation.

The biggest butterfly in the world has a 31cm wingspan. It belongs to the Queen Alexandra's Birdwing butterfly, which you can find in the forests of Papua New Guinea.

A lightning bolt is five times hotter than the surface of the Sun. The charge carried by a bolt of lightning is so intense that it has a temperature of 30,000°C.