

PRADER-WILLI SUPERHEROES

THE COMIC



SARAH-JANE
JUDGE

NEIL
BRATCHPIECE



ILLUSTRATIONS BY NEIL BRATCHPIECE.
WRITTEN BY SARAH-JANE JUDGE,
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE TOLLERVEY LAB
AND OUR PWS SUPERHEROES AND THEIR FAMILIES.
THANKS TO EVERYONE AT THE WELLCOME CENTRE
FOR CELL BIOLOGY FOR THEIR HELP AND ADVICE,
ESPECIALLY DAVID, OLA, ALEX, SOFIA, AMANDINE
AND MARIA FOR FEATURING AND TRANSLATING.

AND EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPERHEROES

BETH, HAZEL, DARREN, KIRK, JOHN, GLEN, ALICE,
JAMES, ROSIE, KEITH FROM CLARE HOUSE
AHMED FROM EGYPT
MARIA FROM GREECE
TOBIAS FROM AUSTRALIA
MILLIE FROM ENGLAND
DORIAN FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
MARY ROSE AND MARTHA FROM IRELAND



THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE SCOTPEN WELLCOME
ENGAGEMENT AWARD (WELLCOME PROJECT NUMBER 217078/Z/19/Z)



BETH! COME QUICK!



MY TAROT CARDS SAY DANGER'S COMING TO CLARE HOUSE!



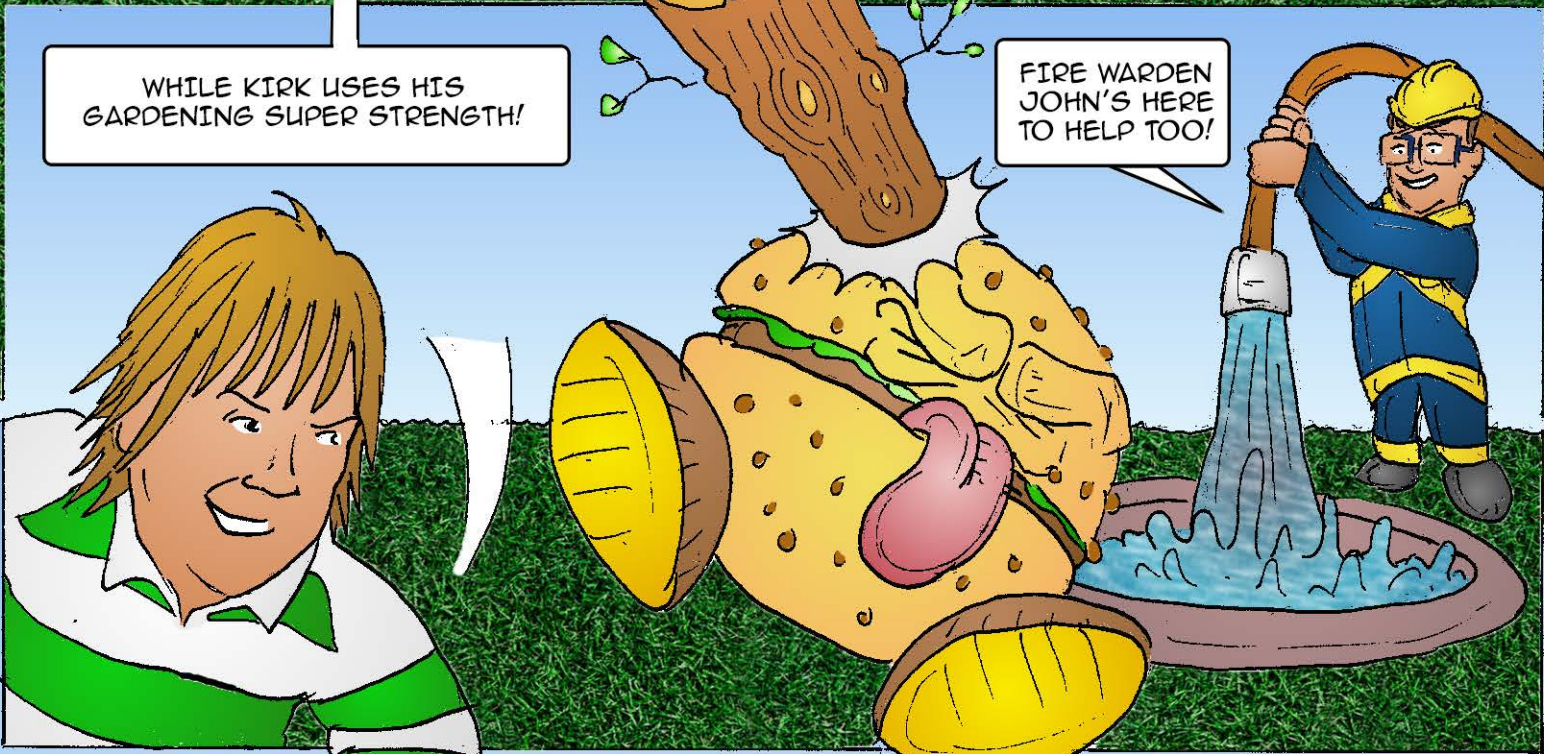
THE CHROMOSOME 15 MUTANT IS APPROACHING WITH ITS MONSTER SQUAD! CLARE HOUSE...ASSEMBLE!





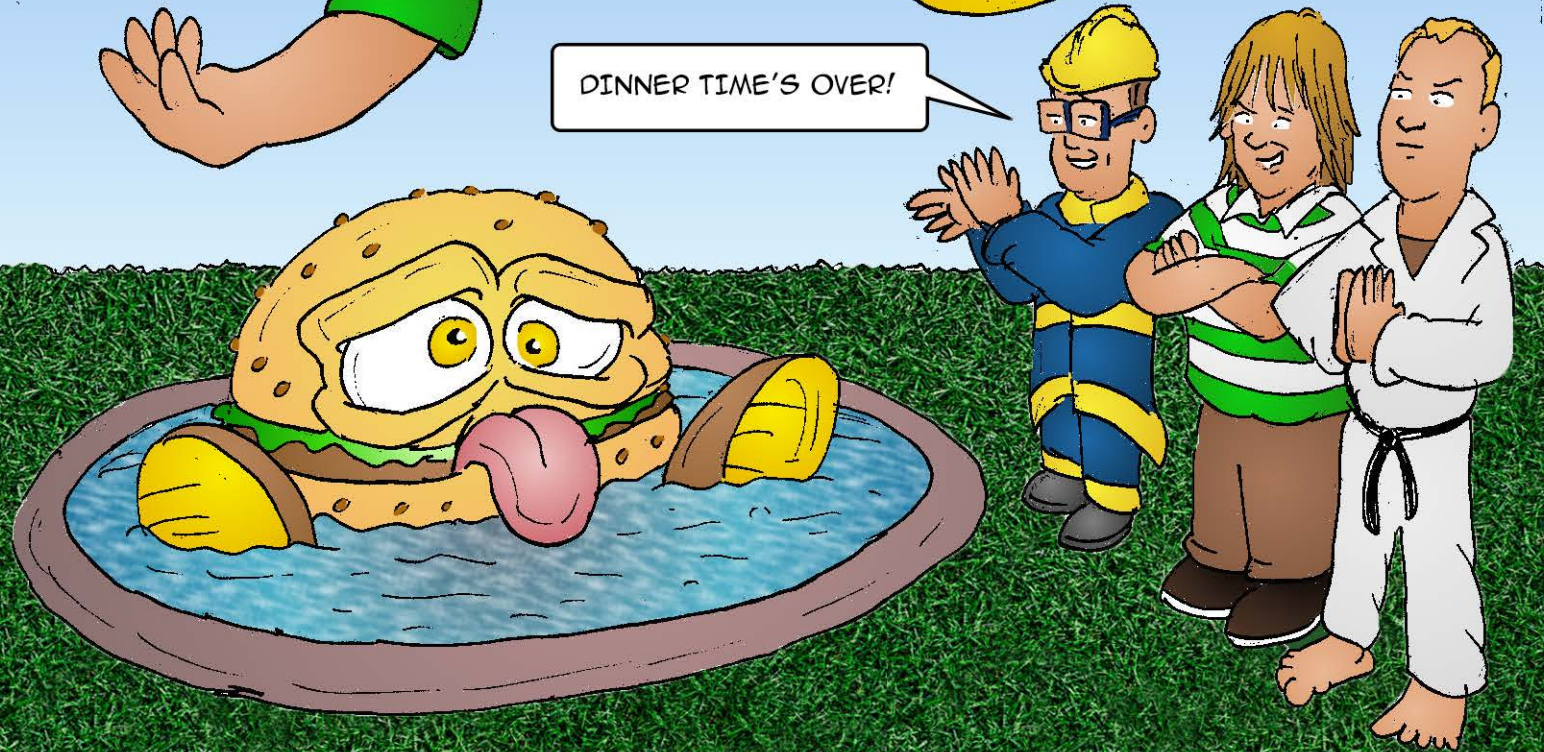
HI...YA!

DARREN CAN BEAT THE HUNGER MONSTER WITH KARATE...



WHILE KIRK USES HIS GARDENING SUPER STRENGTH!


FIRE WARDEN JOHN'S HERE TO HELP TOO!




DINNER TIME'S OVER!



GLENN, DAZZLE THE BULLY MONSTER WITH DRAG ALTER EGO TRIxie!



ALICE CAN BLIND IT WITH HER UNICORN CRYSTAL ART!



POWER OF THE WOLF!

GOOD WORK JAMES, NOW HE'S JUST STICKS AND STONES!

OH NO, HERE COMES THE PAIN MONSTER. ROSIE, HELP HAZEL WITH HER FIRST AIDER SKILLS!

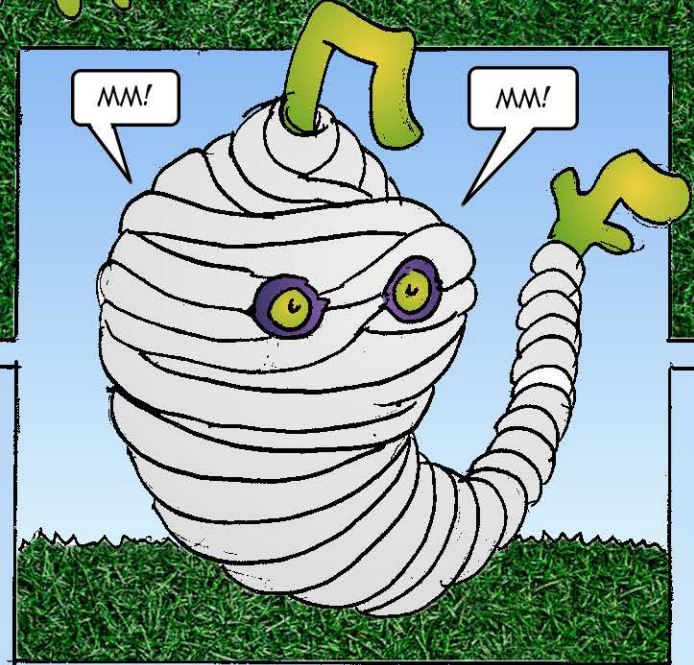


LET'S WRAP THIS UP!



MM!

MM!



KEITH CAN USE SUPERPOWERS FOR SOME PAIN RELIEF!



JUST THE CHROMOSOME 15 MONSTER ITSELF TO DEAL WITH NOW, BUT WE HAVE MEDICS AND RESEARCHERS TO HELP US!

WITHOUT THE OTHERS IT'S POWERLESS!



I'LL CUT YOU DOWN TO SIZE!



NOW DO YOU PROMISE TO BEHAVE YOURSELF?

OKAY, OKAY.



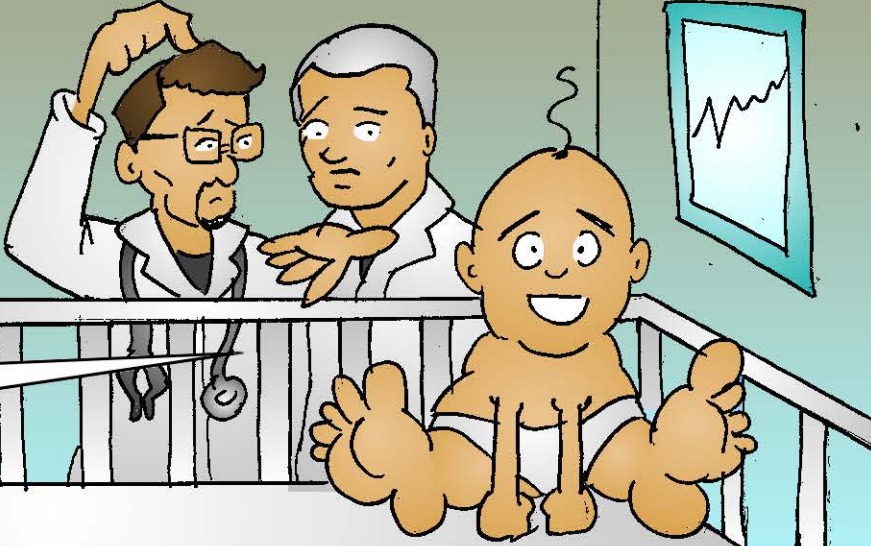



HI THERE, MY NAME IS AHMED... BUT HERE IN EGYPT, I'M ALSO KNOWN AS MY ALTER EGO... THE FITNESS PHAROAH!



YOU SEE, I HAVE PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME WHICH MEANS THAT I HAVE HYPERPHAGIA. AS A RESULT OF THIS I NEVER FEEL FULL, SO I THINK ABOUT FOOD A LOT!

WHEN I WAS BORN, NOT MUCH WAS KNOWN ABOUT THE CONDITION IN EGYPT, SO I WASN'T DIAGNOSED FOR QUITE A LONG TIME.







LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH PWS, I STARTED TO PUT ON A LOT OF WEIGHT WHICH EFFECTED MY HEALTH. WITH THE HELP OF MY FAMILY, I STARTED TO DIET AND EXERCISE EVERY DAY AND GOT HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER.



I WAS EVEN INTERVIEWED ON THE TV ABOUT HOW WELL I WAS DEALING WITH MY CONDITION.



FITNESS PHAROAH



IN THE FUTURE I'D LIKE TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE WITH PWS KEEP FIT AND HEALTHY SO I PLAN TO STUDY TO BE A PERSONAL TRAINER.



HI, I'M MARIA AND HERE YOU FIND ME, OUT RINGING BELLS TO HELP RAISE AWARENESS OF PRADER-WILLI, A SYNDROME THAT I HAVE. I THINK IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT PWS AND HOW MUCH PEOPLE WITH IT CAN ACHIEVE.

I WORKED VERY HARD AT SCHOOL, AND WITH ONLY A LITTLE EXTRA HELP IN SOME SUBJECTS, I MADE MY DREAM OF GETTING INTO DRAMA COLLEGE COME TRUE.



IN THE PAST I'VE WORKED IN A MICROBIOLOGY LAB, AND AS A NURSERY NURSE.



BUT IT'S NOT ALL WORK FOR ME, I ALSO LOVE CRAFTING AND SWIMMING IN THE SEA. ANOTHER DREAM IS TO BE ABLE TO SWIM UNDERWATER LIKE A MERMAID IN THE WARM GREEK SEAS!



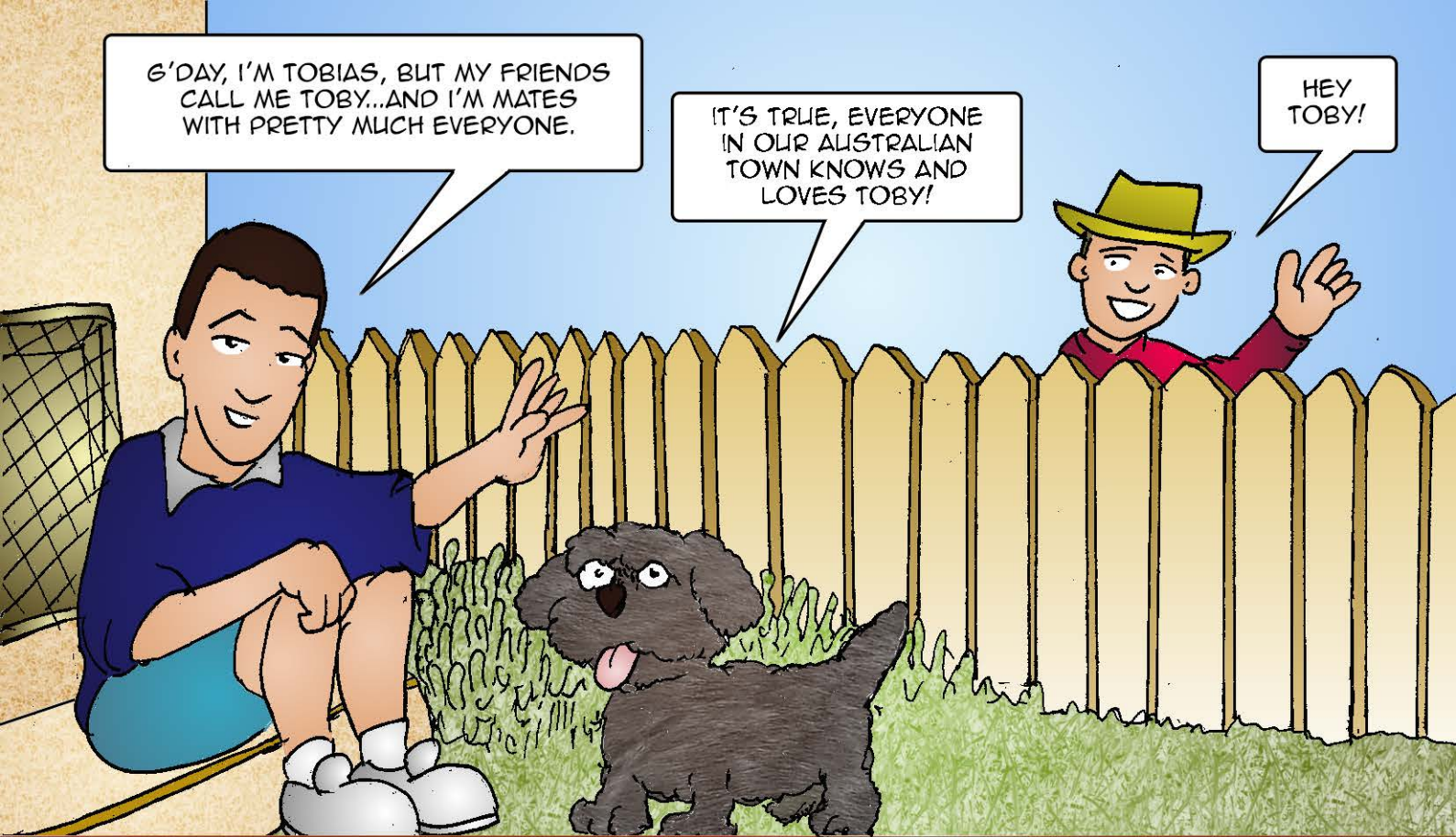
...BUT WITH THE HELP OF MY FAMILY, FRIENDS AND SUPPORT GROUPS LIKE BEST BUDDIES, I REALISED THAT DIFFERENCE CAN BE A GOOD THING. AFTER ALL, NOT EVERYONE CAN BE A STAR OF STAGE AND SCREEN LIKE I PLAN TO BE!



G'DAY, I'M TOBIAS, BUT MY FRIENDS CALL ME TOBY...AND I'M MATES WITH PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE.

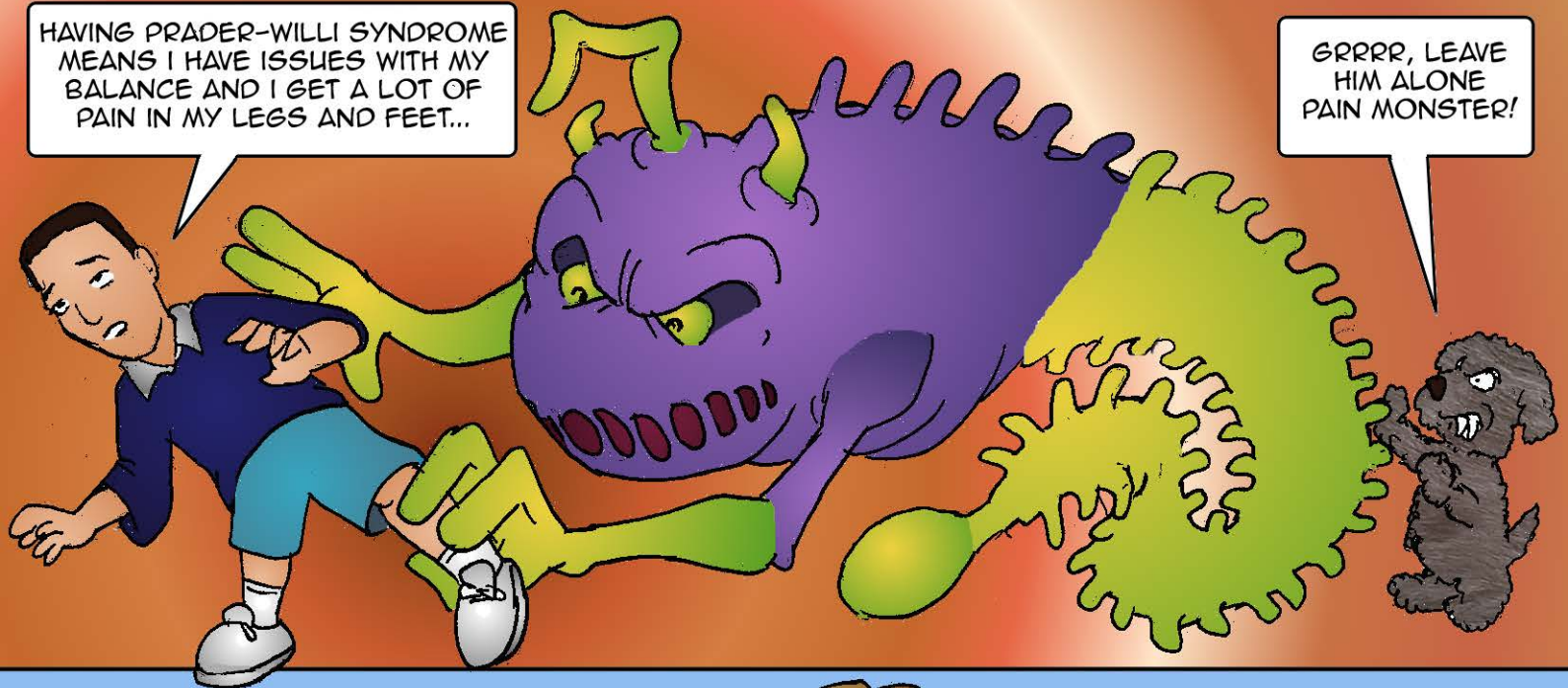
IT'S TRUE, EVERYONE IN OUR AUSTRALIAN TOWN KNOWS AND LOVES TOBY!

HEY TOBY!



HAVING PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME MEANS I HAVE ISSUES WITH MY BALANCE AND I GET A LOT OF PAIN IN MY LEGS AND FEET...

GRRRR, LEAVE HIM ALONE PAIN MONSTER!



..BUT I POWER THROUGH THAT TO MAKE SURE I'M FIT AND HEALTHY, WALKING 2KM EVERY DAY WITH MILLIE!

IS HE WALKING ME? OR ME HIM?

COME BACK, YOU!





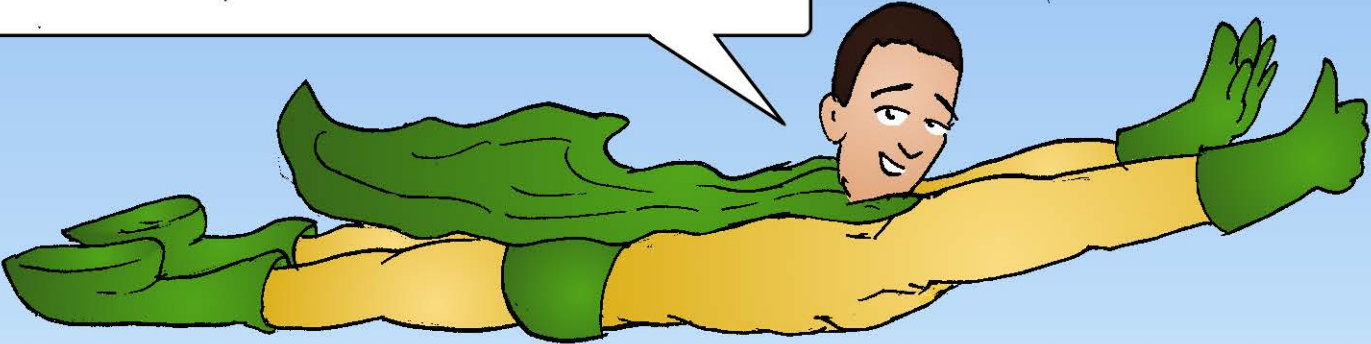
I GO TO A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL AND DO THE SAME CLASSES AS EVERYONE ELSE. I LOVE ART AND P.E....BUT DEFINITELY DON'T LOVE MATHS.

MY FAMILY SAY MY SUPERPOWER IS BEING PRECISE AND ORGANISED. I WEIGH OUT MILLIE'S FOOD VERY CAREFULLY EVERY DAY.

YUP, NEVER EVEN ONE SNEAKY EXTRA BISCUIT!



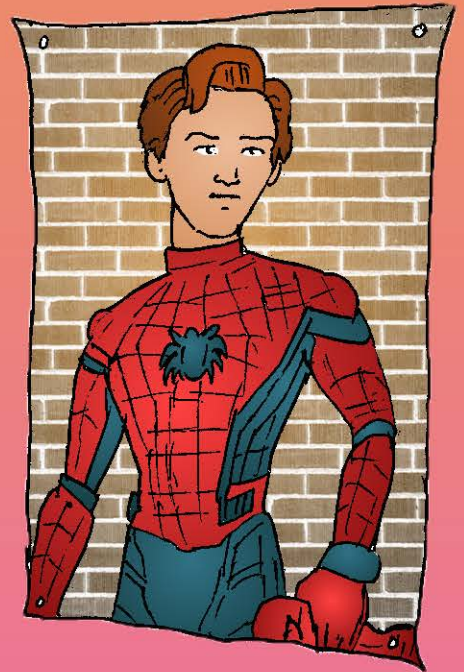
REALLY, I THINK MY SUPERPOWER IS BEING FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL, AS I JUST LOVE TO HELP EVERYONE.



HE REALLY IS A GOOD BOY!



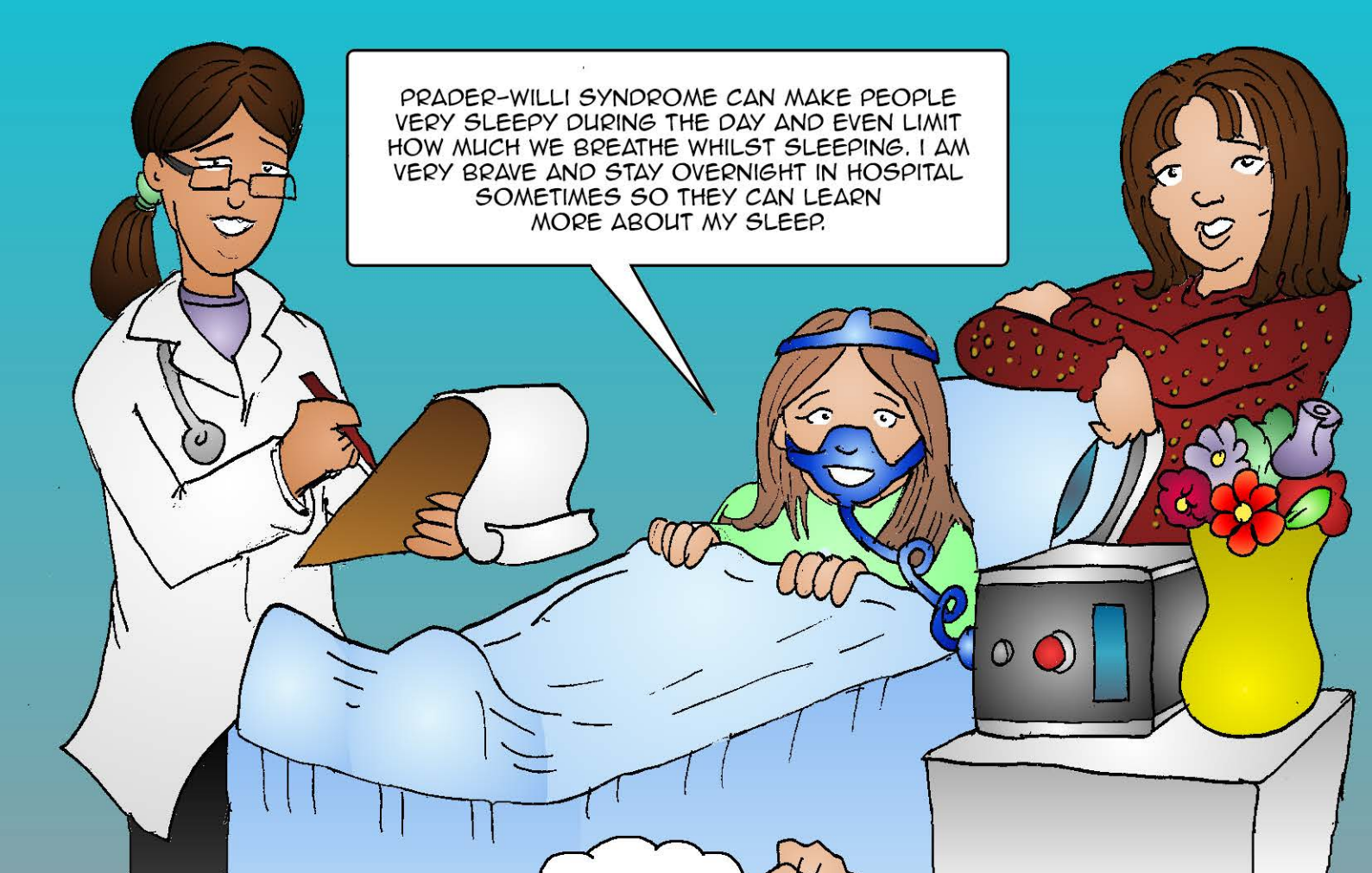
HI, I'M MILLIE. I LIVE IN ESSEX,
NEAR LONDON, AND I'M PRETTY
MUCH YOUR TYPICAL TEENAGE GIRL.
I LIKE WATCHING TV, SPENDING TIME
WITH FRIENDS AND OF COURSE,
THINKING ABOUT BOYS.



UNLIKE MOST TEENAGERS
THOUGH, I HAVE A
CONDITION CALLED
PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME.
IT EFFECTS ONE IN 15,000
PEOPLE, MAKING
ME PRETTY SPECIAL



PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME CAN MAKE
EXERCISING REALLY HARD, BUT I'M LUCKY TO
HAVE MY FAMILY AND MY MATE COBY,
A FAMOUS FOOTBALL PLAYER,
TO HELP ENCOURAGE ME.



PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME CAN MAKE PEOPLE VERY SLEEPY DURING THE DAY AND EVEN LIMIT HOW MUCH WE BREATHE WHILST SLEEPING. I AM VERY BRAVE AND STAY OVERNIGHT IN HOSPITAL SOMETIMES SO THEY CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT MY SLEEP.

MUM KNOWS I'VE HAD A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP ON MY SLEEP APNEA MACHINE WHEN I WAKE UP WITH BRIGHT RED LIPS.

WHO NEEDS LIPSTICK?

PWS MIGHT IMPACT MY SLEEP, BUT IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T STOP ME DREAMING...

YAWN!



IN THE FUTURE, IT'S MY DREAM TO BE ABLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY, LIKE MY HERO HARVEY PRICE, WHO HAS PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME TOO!



MY NAME IS DORIAN. I LIVE ON A SUNNY ISLAND IN THE CARIBBEAN CALLED THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

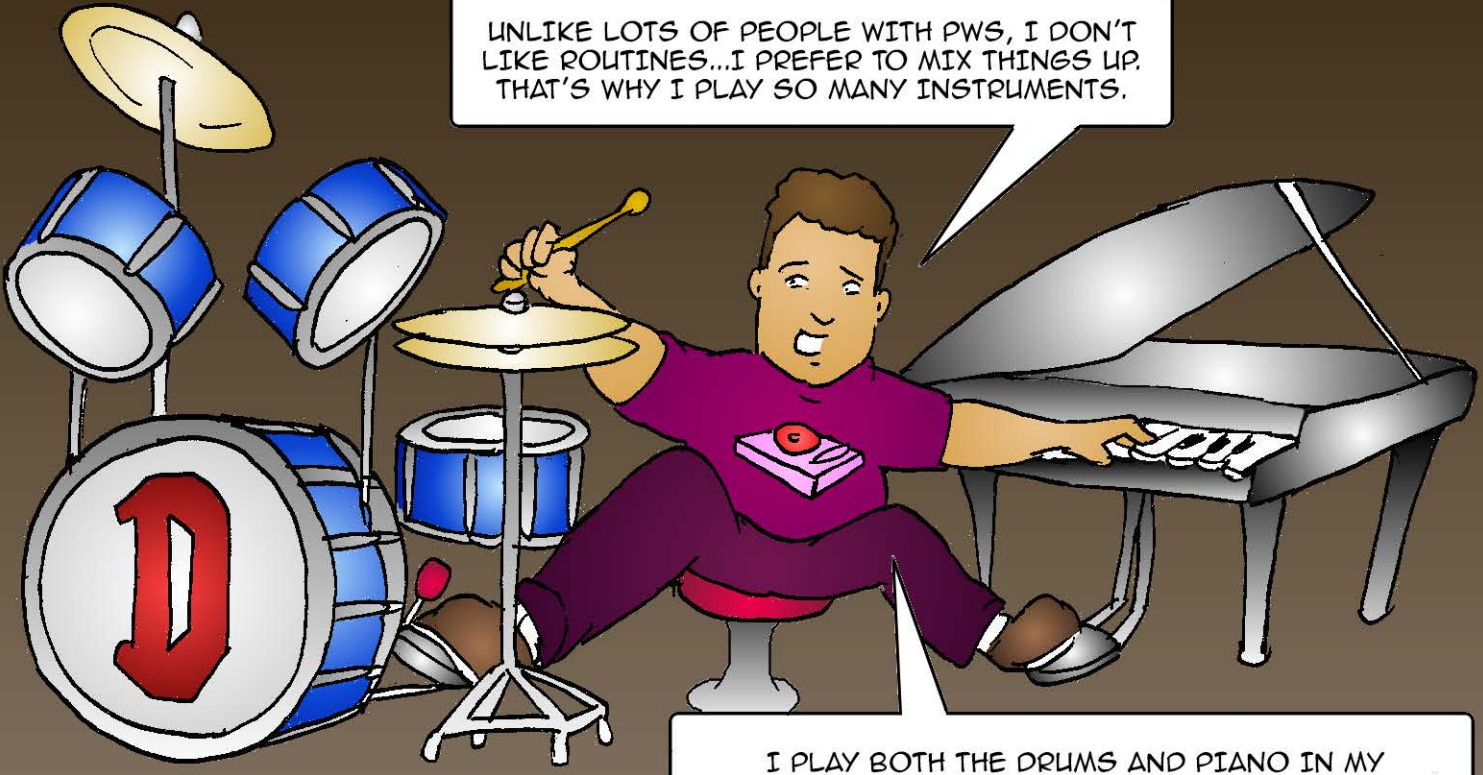
LOTS OF PEOPLE COME ON HOLIDAY HERE FOR OUR MUSIC, DANCING AND OUR FOOD, AND I LOVE ALL THESE THINGS TOO!



I GO DANCING AT ZUMBA CLASSES WITH MY MUM...

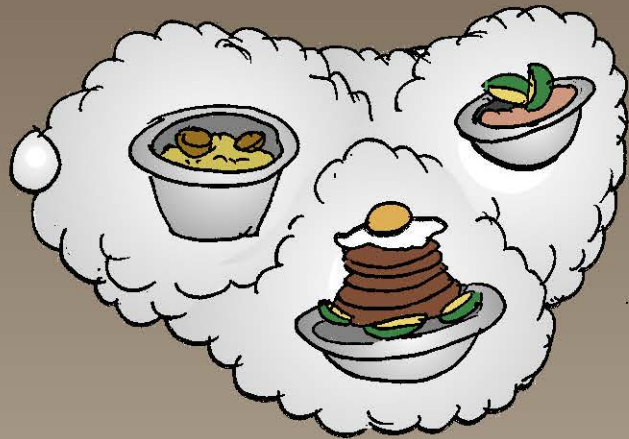
...AND LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH PWS, I LOVE EVERYTHING TO DO WITH FOOD... WATCHING COOKING SHOWS, PLANNING MEALS AND OF COURSE EATING...JUST NOT AT THE SAME TIME!

UNLIKE LOTS OF PEOPLE WITH PWS, I DON'T LIKE ROUTINES...I PREFER TO MIX THINGS UP. THAT'S WHY I PLAY SO MANY INSTRUMENTS.

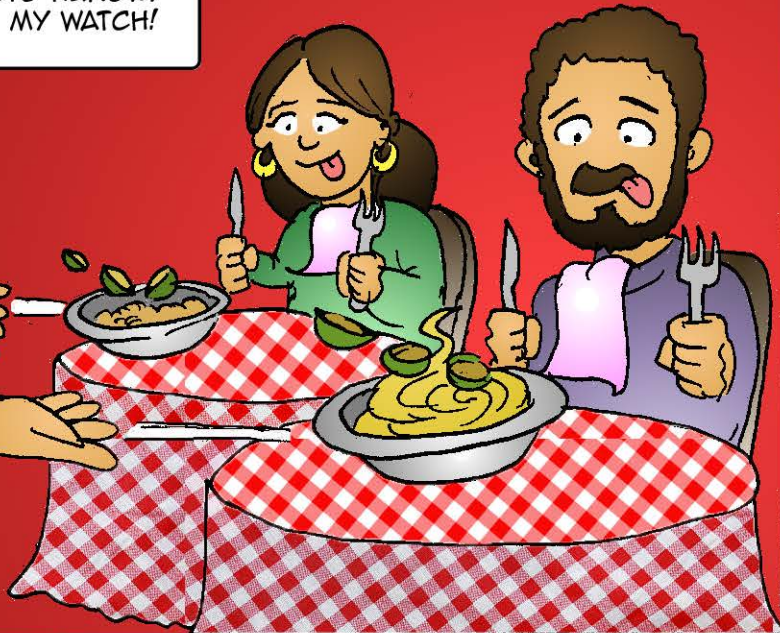


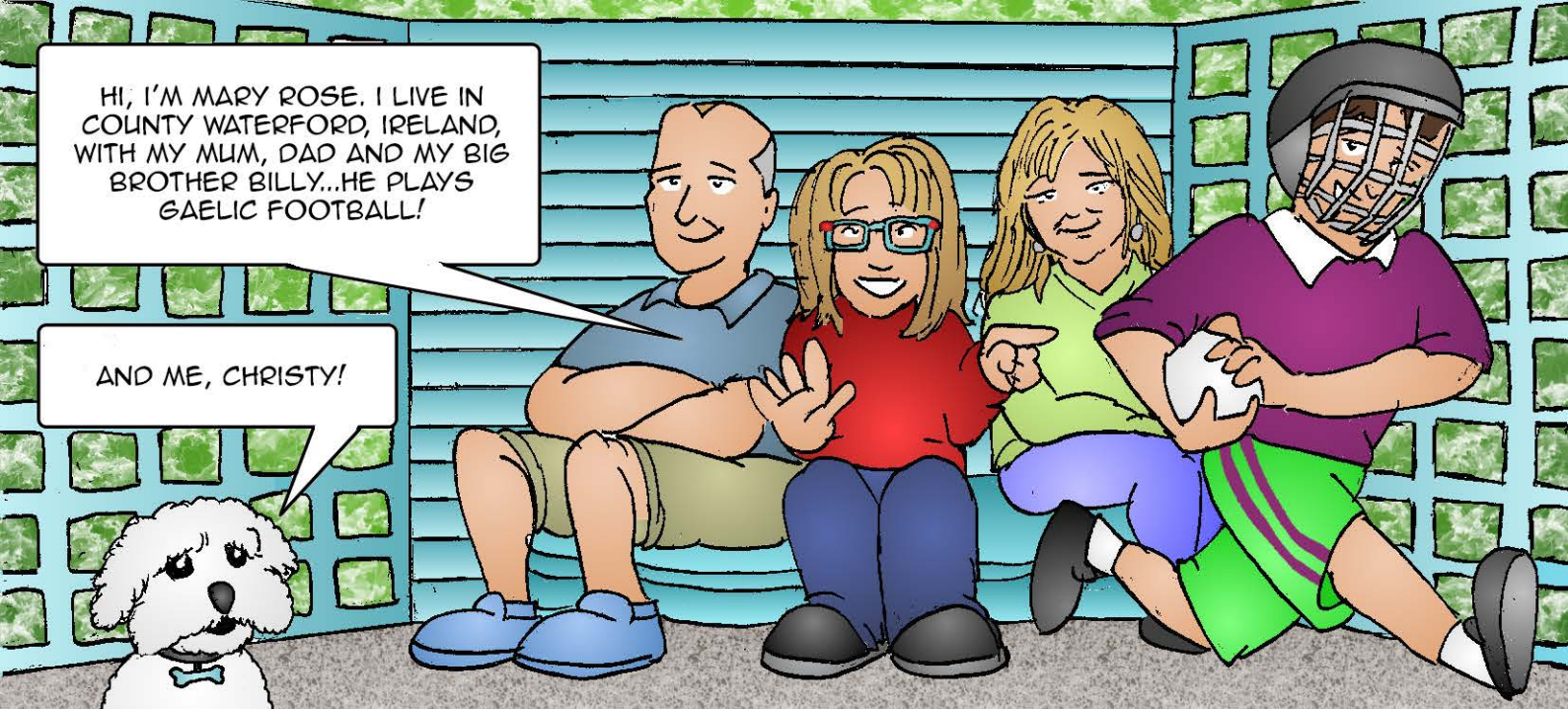
I PLAY BOTH THE DRUMS AND PIANO IN MY SCHOOL BAND...BUT ALSO NOT AT THE SAME TIME!

HAVING PWS CAN BE HARD. I HAVE TO GO TO SPEECH THERAPY. I CAN ALSO BE STUBBORN AND MOODY SOMETIMES, BUT THAT'S JUST BECAUSE I'M HUNGRY.



WHEN I GROW UP, I WANT TO BE A SUPER SPEEDY CHEF, SO NO-ONE GETS HUNGRY OR MOODY ON MY WATCH!





HI, I'M MARY ROSE. I LIVE IN COUNTY WATERFORD, IRELAND, WITH MY MUM, DAD AND MY BIG BROTHER BILLY...HE PLAYS GAELIC FOOTBALL!



AND ME, CHRISTY!



BUT BILLY ISN'T THE ONLY ATHLETE IN THE FAMILY, I'M AN ABSOLUTE WHIZZ ON MY TRIKE!

SLOW DOWN MARY ROSE!



LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME, I HAVE SCOLIOSIS,...

...A CONDITION WHICH CAUSES MY SPINE TO CURVE, CAUSING ME A LOT OF PAIN...BUT IT DOES MEAN I GET A SUPERHERO STYLE ARMOUR BRACE WHICH HELPS TO STRAIGHTEN MY BACK AND LENGTHEN MY NECK.



IS THAT NOT MY FOOTBALL HELMET THOUGH?

WEARING THIS GEAR, I REALLY FIT IN AT THE CAPE-ABILITY CLUB, A GROUP OF ADDITIONAL NEED TEENAGE SUPERHEROES...

...AND THEIR PARENTS...

...WHO MEET EVERY WEEKEND TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN OUR DIFFERENCES.

THEY ALL WEAR CAPES...GET IT?

LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH PWS, I TAKE GROWTH HORMONES TO HELP ME GROW...

THE SAME ONES AS SUPERSTAR FOOTBALLER MESSI!

...AND WITH OPERATIONS TO STRAIGHTEN THE SPINE, I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO DITCH THE PAIN AND ARMOUR IN FUTURE.

SHE'LL ALWAYS BE OUR SUPERHERO THOUGH!

1984, FRANCE. IN THE DISTANT MOUNTAIN OF RESEARCH PAST, THE YOUNG RESEARCHER DAVID TOLLERVEY MEETS THE SNO-MAN FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HEY, WHAT DO YOU DO?

OH MY MISSION IS TO COLLECT RNA FROM CELLS AND HELP MAKE IT WORK BETTER.

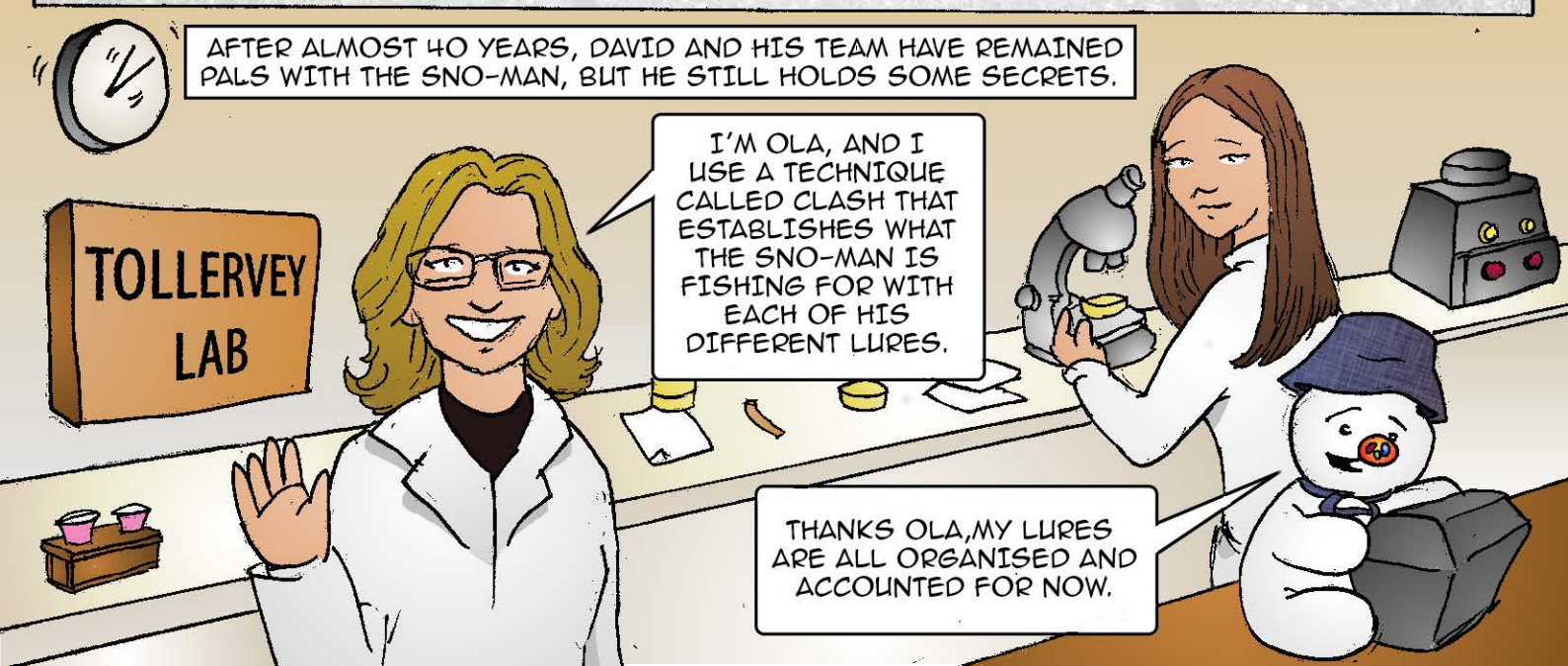
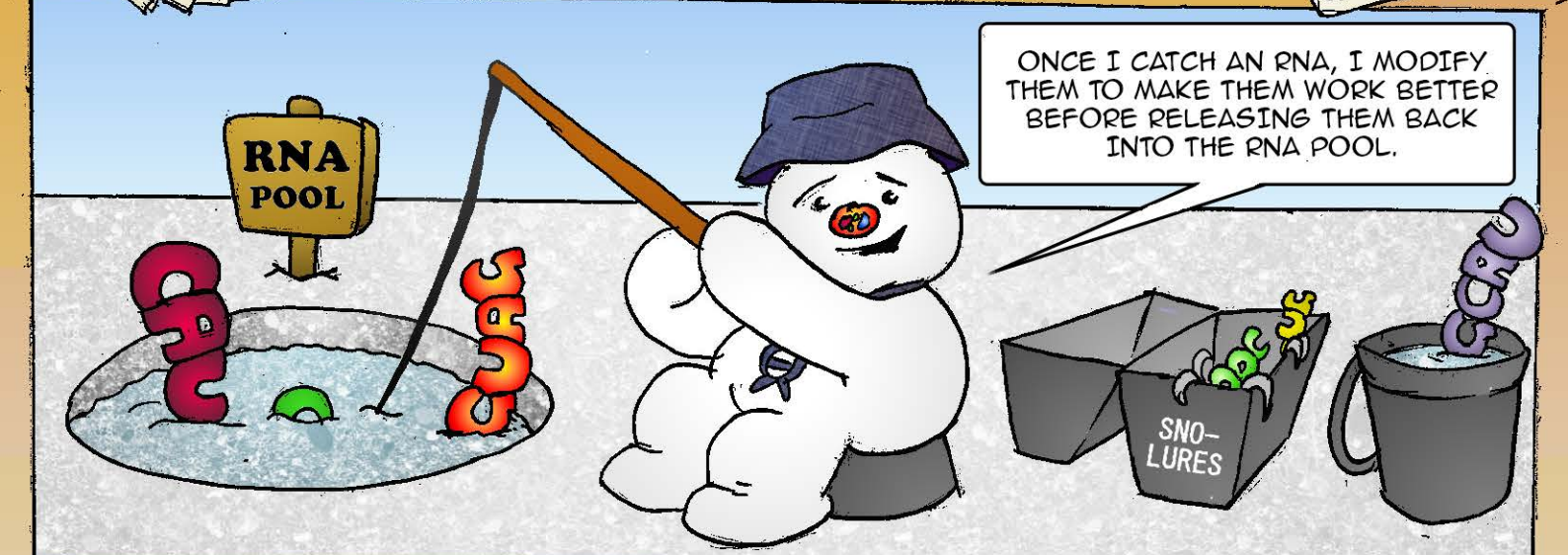
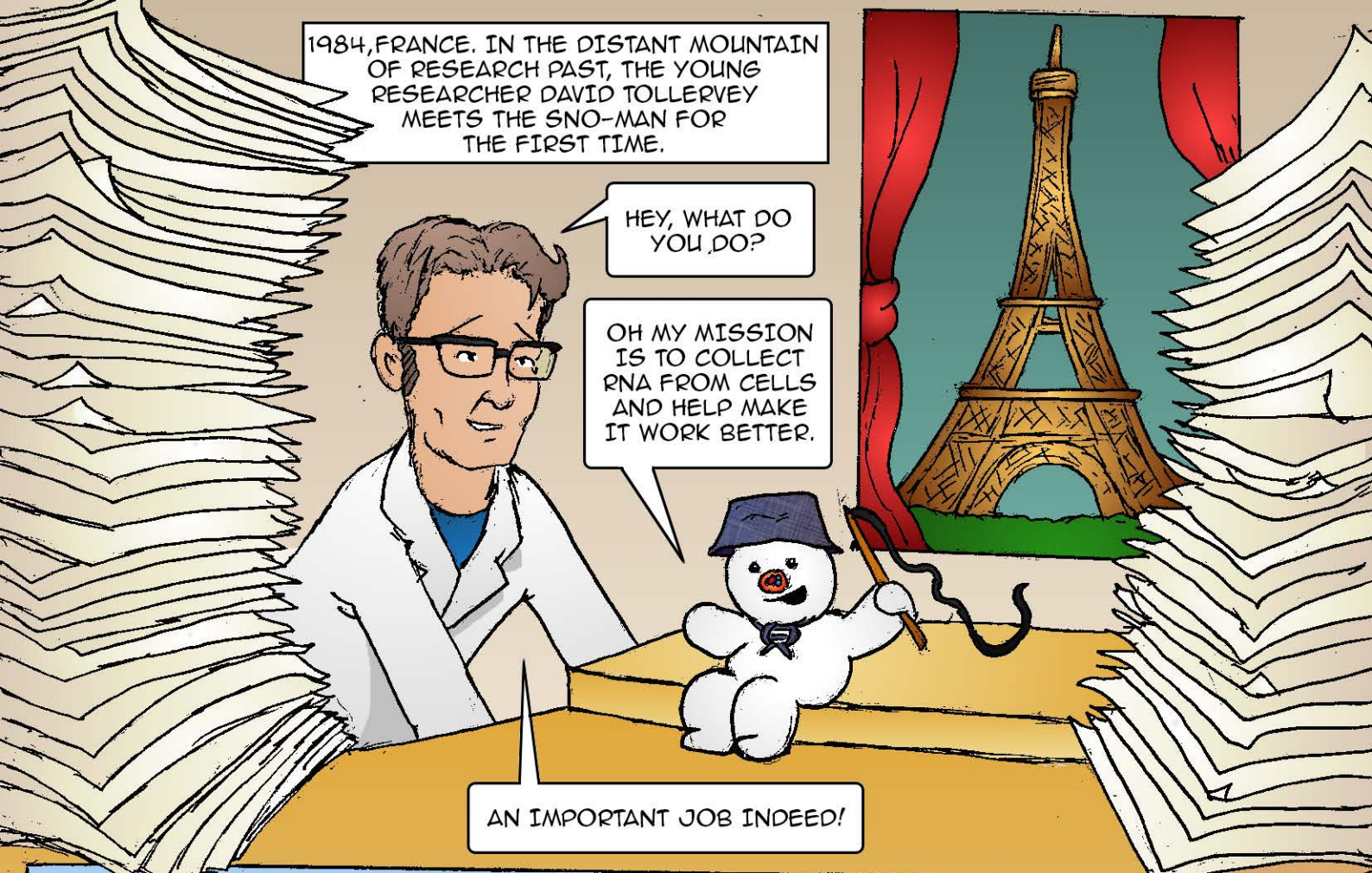
AN IMPORTANT JOB INDEED!

ONCE I CATCH AN RNA, I MODIFY THEM TO MAKE THEM WORK BETTER BEFORE RELEASING THEM BACK INTO THE RNA POOL.

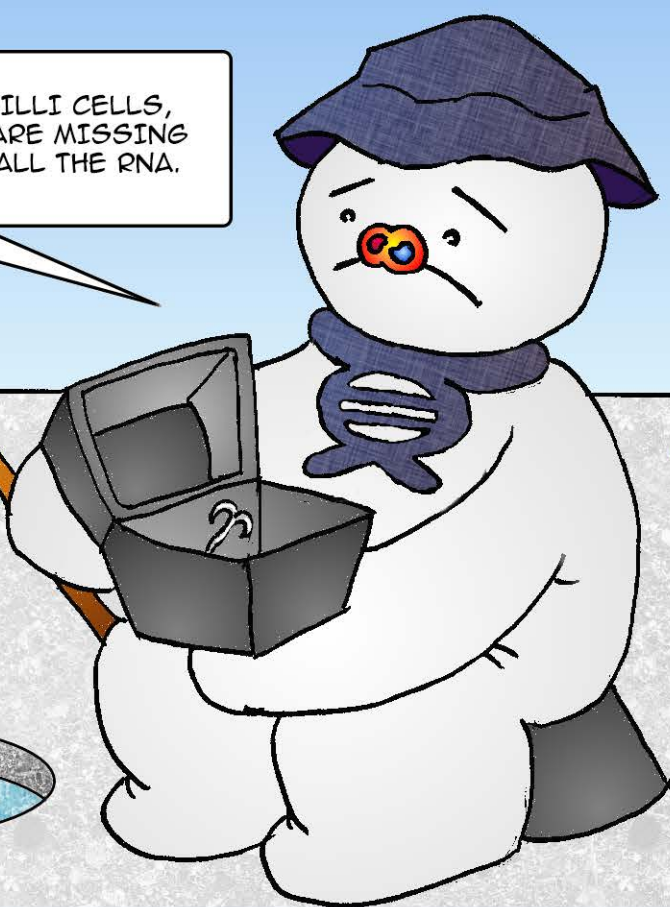
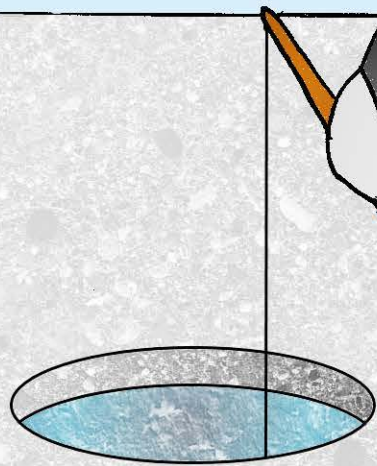
AFTER ALMOST 40 YEARS, DAVID AND HIS TEAM HAVE REMAINED PALS WITH THE SNO-MAN, BUT HE STILL HOLDS SOME SECRETS.

I'M OLA, AND I USE A TECHNIQUE CALLED CLASH THAT ESTABLISHES WHAT THE SNO-MAN IS FISHING FOR WITH EACH OF HIS DIFFERENT LURES.

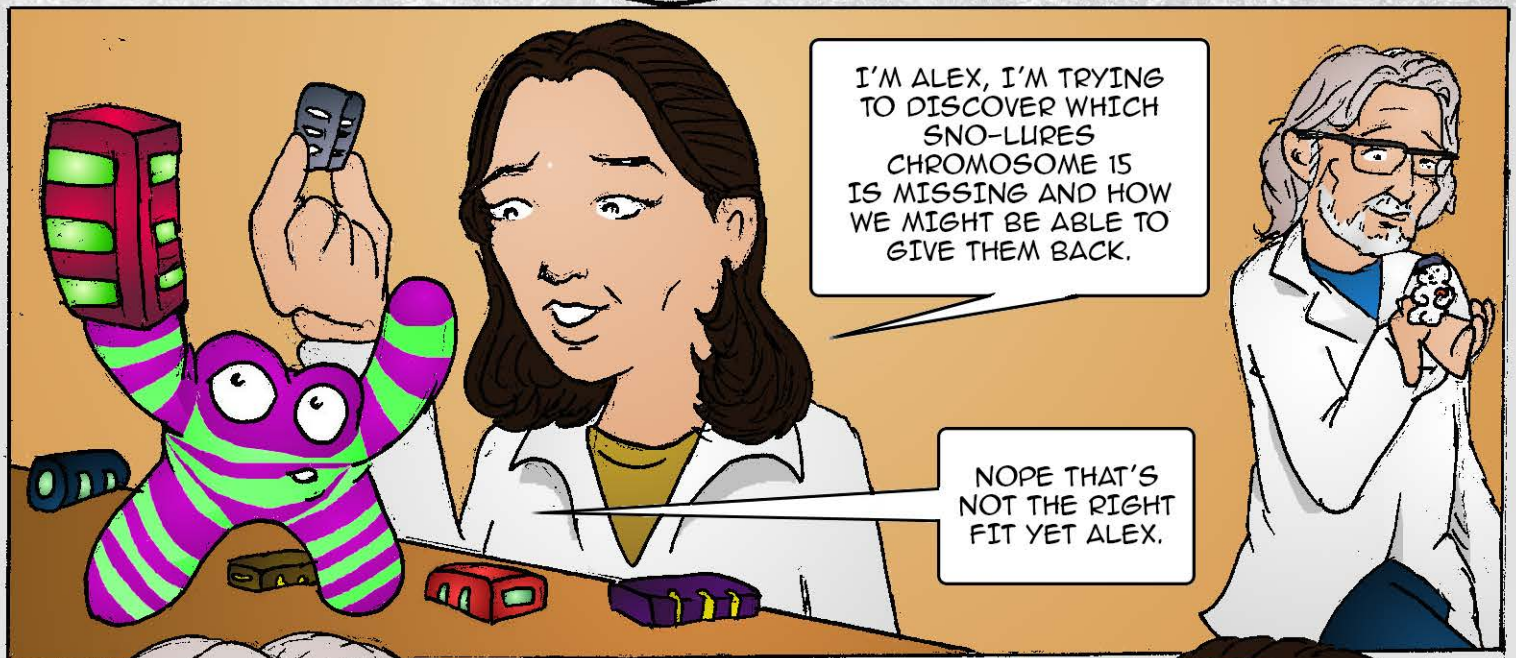
THANKS OLA, MY LURES ARE ALL ORGANISED AND ACCOUNTED FOR NOW.



IN THESE PRADER-WILLI CELLS,
SOME OF MY LURES ARE MISSING
SO I CAN'T MODIFY ALL THE RNA.



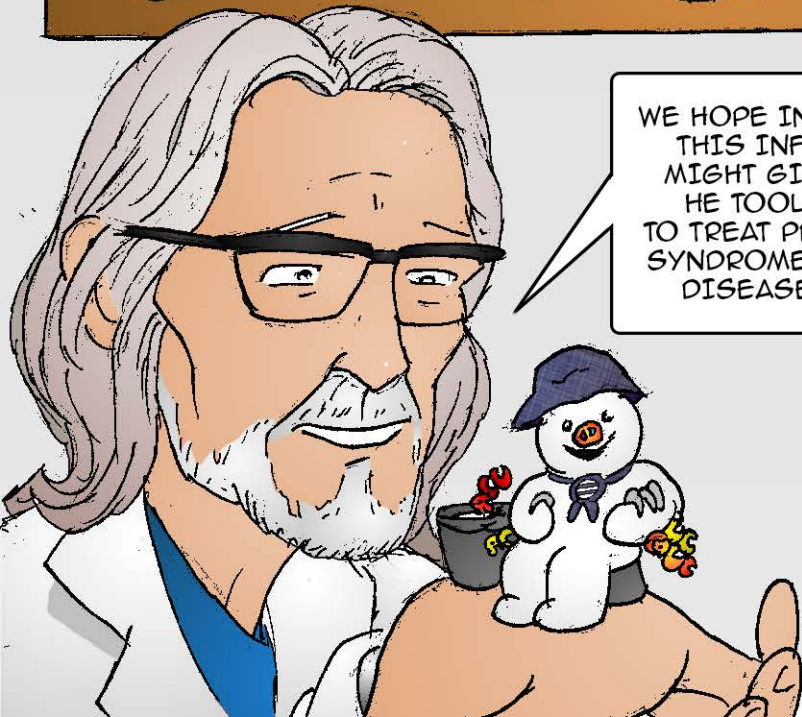
MWAHAHA YOU CAN'T
HAVE THESE LURES!



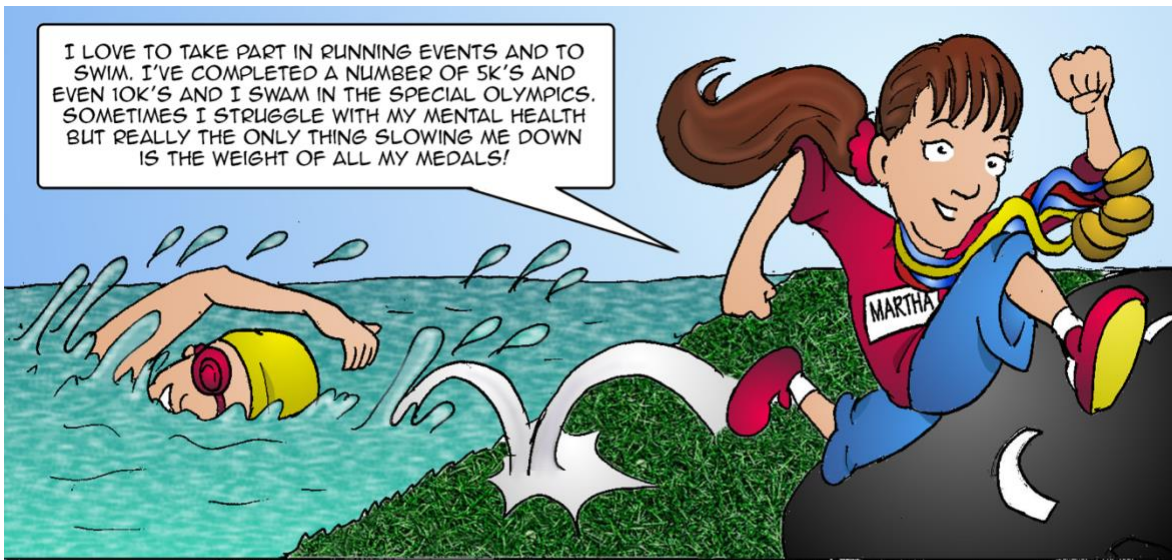
I'M ALEX, I'M TRYING
TO DISCOVER WHICH
SNO-LURES
CHROMOSOME 15
IS MISSING AND HOW
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO
GIVE THEM BACK.

NOPE THAT'S
NOT THE RIGHT
FIT YET ALEX.

WE HOPE IN THE FUTURE,
THIS INFORMATION
MIGHT GIVE MEDICS
THE TOOLS NEEDED
TO TREAT PRADER-WILLI
SYNDROME, AND OTHER
DISEASES LIKE IT.



NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES!



I LOVE TO TAKE PART IN RUNNING EVENTS AND TO SWIM. I'VE COMPLETED A NUMBER OF 5K'S AND EVEN 10K'S AND I SWAM IN THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS. SOMETIMES I STRUGGLE WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH BUT REALLY THE ONLY THING SLOWING ME DOWN IS THE WEIGHT OF ALL MY MEDALS!



I WORK AS A CROSSING GUARD. I WALK TO MY 3 DAILY SHIFTS WHERE I HELP CHILDREN TO GET TO SCHOOL SAFELY. I ONCE SAVED A TODDLER FROM BEING HIT BY A CAR WHEN I SAW HIM GET OUT OF HIS VEHICLE WITHOUT HIS PARENTS NOTICING. I'M PROUD TO HAVE SUCH AN IMPORTANT JOB.



I WON A LOCAL ELECTION TO BECOME A YOUTH COUNCILLOR IN MY AREA. I CAMPAIGN ON ANIMAL RIGHTS AND THE COST OF HEALTHY EATING FOR FAMILIES. I LOVE BEING A VOICE FOR THE ISSUES I CARE ABOUT, AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REPRESENTED AT ALL LEVEL OF POLITICS.