



Issue 83

BrainWise Collaborates with Rotarians to Promote Problem-Solving Skills

The BrainWise program will be presented to more than 700 leaders attending the 2023 Rotary International (RI) Zones 26 and 27 Institute, to be held in San Diego on November 8-12. The two zones represent 30 districts in the Western United States and comprise 1700 clubs and 67,000 members. Attendees will learn about programs and resources that support and enhance their clubs' wide-ranging projects.

Our presenters include Rotarians and community partners who are BrainWise trainers and instructors. They will teach about the brain, the 10 Wise Ways to *Stop and Think*, and show participants how to apply BrainWise skills to prevent and solve problems. The session will demonstrate how individuals without science or education backgrounds can teach others problem-solving skills.

Participants will:

1. Recognize that everyone is born with Lizard Brain (limbic system) fight or flight reactions but need to be taught Wizard Brain (prefrontal cortex) thinking skills;
2. Learn how the 10 Wise Ways build brain pathways;
3. Understand why thinking skills must be practiced to be retained or they will be replaced by the Lizard Brain's impulses/survival instincts; and
4. Receive information to develop a Call For Action (CFA) to help them implement BrainWise into applicable club projects.



Young Rotary BrainWise Graduates

Evidence-Based, Universally Applied Program

During the session, we will use examples that address Rotary International initiatives for mental health, empowering girls, and literacy. Participants will learn that BrainWise is taught across cultures, ages, and education and can be integrated into existing programs, daily living activities, and community projects. They will receive summaries about program outcomes and URL links to articles in scientific publications. They will learn that BrainWise has been taught to illiterate young women targeted by sex traffickers in China and youth in India, and that U.S. Indian Health Services certified BrainWise as a program proven to benefit Alaska Natives and Native Americans.

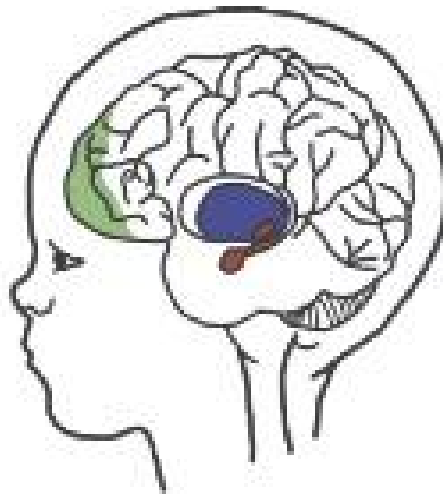


Teaching and Learning about the Brain is FUN!

As a public health nurse, I explained medical problems to children, adolescents, and adults without science backgrounds. Many youth and adults were under-educated, but they welcomed the information I gave them. I was perplexed when they did not follow through with the important tasks of keeping appointments, taking medications, getting help, and other health practices.

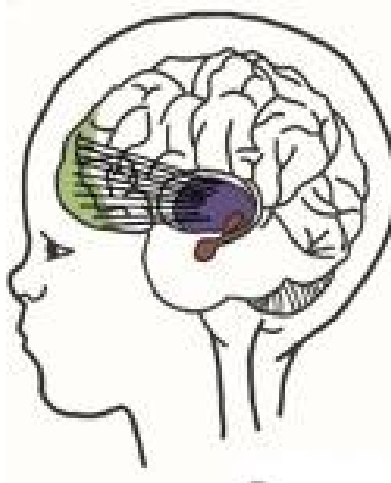
This puzzling contradiction became clear later when researchers found that “no one is born with thinking skills--they must be learned.” I expected my patients to follow through with the information I gave them, but how could they if they were never taught problem-solving skills? This *aha!* moment led me to develop BrainWise and the 10 Wise Ways with teachable activities.

The brain has traditionally been the domain of scientists. It is complex and daunting, and advances in the realm of brain science are seldom shared with nonscientists. BrainWise changes this by teaching brain discoveries using terms like the Wizard Brain (thinking brain in the prefrontal cortex behind the forehead) and the Lizard Brain (emotional brain in the limbic system in the back of the head, above the neck).



**Child Brain Showing No Connections to the Wizard Brain
Wizard Brain (Green), Relay Center (Blue), Lizard Brain (Red)**

They will learn how BrainWise applies Nobel Prize winner Dr. Eric Kandel’s research on neuroplasticity that found neural pathways are created when something new is learned. BrainWise calls this “building brain connections” and participants draw a line to the Wizard Brain on their brain picture every time they learn a Wise Way.



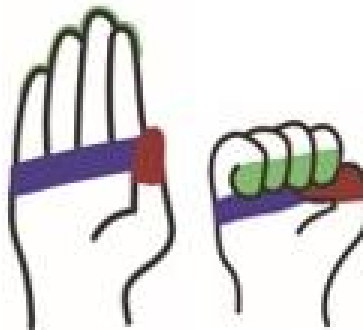
Child Brain Showing The 10 Wise Ways Connected to the Wizard Brain

The 10 Wise Ways are familiar behaviors, such as recognizing red flag warnings, managing emotions, and setting goals, but BrainWise additionally links them together with the brain. The approach even helps young children understand they must learn skills and build brain connections in order to *Stop and Think* to make good decisions.

Teaching tools include using visual signals like the *Stop and Think* Hand Brain and celebrating Wizard Brain thinking by sharing Brain Bumps.



Brain Fist



Stop and Think Hand Brain

(Wizard Brain Green, Lizard Brain Red)



Brain Bumps

Customized Examples and Traditional and Digital Teaching Tools

Institute participants will learn they can choose problems specific to their projects and integrate BrainWise into their existing programs or new projects. Our demonstrations will show BrainWise used in two different populations:

1. Teen presenters will lead participants in a game of BrainWise BINGO to demonstrate how they can use games as teaching tools. They will also learn they can reinforce BrainWise in stories (hard copy and digital), ranging from Dr. Suess to Harry Potter or use educational devices like Leap Frog and Leap Pad. Other teaching tools they can use are online or paper and pencil versions of games like Kahoots and Jeopardy. (link to [Urban Teens newsletter](#), link to [10 Wise Ways Kaiser Kahoots newsletter](#)).
2. Jared Greenberg, M.D. will present findings from his 2022 pilot study teaching BrainWise to hospitalized homeless veterans at Los Angeles Veterans Administration Medical Center. The data will be analyzed and published later, but participants will learn how BrainWise was adapted for this challenging population and how a group of Veterans with histories of homelessness and hospitalizations received the

program. Dr. Greenberg will share how Veterans and other volunteers can teach BrainWise. ([link to VA newsletter](#)).

Call to Action

Rotarians are leaders in providing service above self. Everyone benefits from learning about brain development and thinking skills to help prevent and manage problems. As a Call to Action, session attendees will get help in learning how to use BrainWise in club projects, including a Q&A session with the presenters and QR codes that provide BrainWise resources, materials, and evaluation tools.

We are grateful to the thousands of teachers, counselors, social workers, and health professionals who have paved the way for parents, teen educators, and volunteers to successfully teach BrainWise. They have seen results and want to share the program with others. We appreciate the Rotary International Zones 26 and 27 Institute's desire to help make this happen.



Thank You,

Dr. Pat

On a Lighter Note

Watch BrainWise instructors share their experiences and inspiration for teaching BrainWise:

