Brain Awareness Week

What is a neuroscientist?

Neuroscientists study the central nervous system, the brain and spinal cord. We study how the brain controls our behavior, how our sensory systems work, how parts of the brain communicate with one another, and how disease affects the brain.

Why do we study the brain?

We are curious about how the brain works and how it is responsible for what we do, how we feel, and how we hear and see what's in the world around us. We are also interested in helping people with diseases that affect the brain and people with brain injuries. Injuries or diseases that affect the central nervous system include hearing loss, blindness, Alzheimer's disease, Epilepsy, and spinal cord injury that causes paralysis.

Fun Facts

- Our brains have many wrinkles; these little folds allow our brains to fit into our skulls. If you flatten out your brain, it is about 2.5 ft x 2.5 ft.
- There are about 100 billion neurons in your brain; that is similar to the number of stars in the galaxy.
- Information in the brain travels along axons, which are similar to cables. They can transmit information as fast as 268 miles per hour!

Common Myths

- We only use 10% of our brains - FALSE! We actually use 100% of our brains and we know that damage to any region of the brain can cause changes in our behavior or abilities.
- Every time you learn something new, you get a new wrinkle in your brain - FALSE! However, when we learn something new there are new connections formed by the cells in our brains.
- A baby's brain is fully formed when it is born - FALSE! A lot of the brain is developed after a baby is born. New cells and new connections between cells are made.
- People with bigger heads are smarter - FALSE! Having a bigger head or a bigger brain doesn't mean you're smarter. There are many animals that have larger brains than us, but we can do things that many animals cannot do.
- When we get older, our brains don't make any new cells - FALSE! There are several regions in the brain where cells are made throughout our entire life.