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Did you know?

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Section 6: Did You Know?

... that a 10-year-old girl recently discovered a molecule and co-authored her first scientific publication?

Dr Judith Kamalski

During a chemistry lesson at her school, Clara Lazen from Kansas City was given a box of model atoms, a short explanation of the basic rules of bonding atoms and given free rein to play with them as she liked. The molecule she produced intrigued her teacher, Kenneth M. Boehr. He had never seen it before, so sent a picture to his friend Robert W. Zoellner, Professor of Computational Chemistry at Humboldt State University in California.

Professor Zoellner too had never seen a compound of this kind. His calculations proved that it could, theoretically, exist but that it would be a potential high energy density molecule – an explosive compound. He wrote up his findings adding Clara and teacher Kenneth Boehr, as co-authors, with the affiliation "Border Star Montessori School". Clara must be one of the youngest co-authors ever on a scientific paper!

References:

Zoellner, R.W. , Lazen, C.L., Boehr, K.M. (2012) "A computational study of novel nitratocarbon, nitritocarbonyl, and nitrate compounds and their potential as high energy materials", Computational and Theoretical Chemistry, Vol. 979, pp. 33-37.