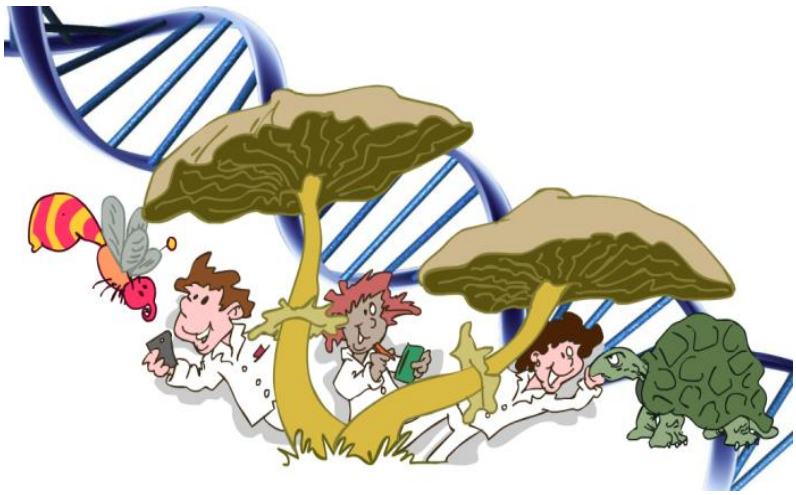

GATEWAYS ON LOCATION

for gifted Year 3 and 4 children with a

love of creative writing and science

'SCIENCE YOUR STORIES!!'

at Writers Victoria, Level 3, The Wheeler Centre, 176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *ON LOCATION* program will run over two full days.

How could you write a story with bacteria as the main characters? Or a mystery with fungi as an important clue? Or what if your hero just happens to be obsessed with winning a Nobel Prize? In this program we'll use science as a leaping-off point for our creative writing. You'll get the chance to read about some wacky and fascinating science information and be inspired to spin it into your very own piece of fiction.

Day 1: Scien-spiration

Our world is full of strange and wonderful scientific research, which could inspire your stories. Did you know that trees use underground fungi to communicate with and to feed each other? That the oxygen you breathe was once in the lungs of a dinosaur? That bacteria help the bobtail squid to glow in the moonlight as a form of camouflage? Authors have been inspired by science even before Mary Shelly wrote of Dr Frankenstein using electricity to bring his monster to life. We'll explore the stories of different historical scientists in our set text *How to Win a Nobel Prize* and see how the authors were able to turn scientific discoveries into a wonderful novel.

Next, you'll choose one of four specific areas of science research, for example the glow-in-the-dark bacteria that camouflage the squid. We'll discuss the ways character ideas might grow from these. You'll have time for wild brainstorming where you imagine all kinds of human and non-human characters on microscopic or astrophysical adventures. We'll try writing paragraphs from different points of view so we can explore writing different voices. What happens if we write from the perspective of a glow-in-the dark squid? How is the story different if the bacteria inside the squid are telling it? Or what if your narrator is the scientist in the laboratory discovering this interspecies friendship?

We'll put our characters under a metaphorical microscope. What might their problems be? What needs and desires drive them forward? How can we make them even more fascinating? Ailsa will ask a lot of questions so have your character-building imaginations at the ready.

By the end of the first day we will be brainstorming intriguing and outrageous plots inspired by your characters and the science.

Day 2: Plotting the twists

You've chosen some noble, hilarious or adorable characters and thrown them in with a petri dish of story ideas. Maybe you want to take bacteria to Saturn? Or perhaps you're on an underground quest riding a tardigrade! It's time to talk about how true to the science your story will be. How can you be inspired by the information, not chained to explaining it? How can we show, rather than tell about the research we've done? Like proper scientists, we'll graph our plot points as a narrative arc and compare our graphs with how other science stories (including *How to Win a Nobel Prize*) have been told.

Then we'll get into the nitty gritty experiment of putting words into sentences. Like a scientist recording new data, you never know what you'll discover while you're actually writing. We'll try different ways of 'getting into the flow' of our writing and pay attention to what factors keep our creativity burning.

We'll take breaks from this focused writing time to discuss the challenges and inspirations so far and look over how we're using language. You'll have the opportunity to analyse your draft as you write. Is the point-of-view character still working? How are you going with embedding the science into a ripping page-turning story? There may be a time where you need to dig up one more science fact or shift a plot point along on your narrative arc. Stopping writing to make changes can be a useful part of the process.

By the end of our time together you should have written a story draft and taken some time to edit it. We'll finish by celebrating the science adventures you've created. Congratulations! Let's talk about who you're going to share them with and how…

What to Bring:

- Set text: *How to Win a Nobel Prize* by Barry Marshal and Lorna Hendry: you should read this text before the program
- A notebook
- Pencil case including grey lead, eraser and coloured pencils
- A yummy snack and lunch (no nuts please)
- A drink
- If the weather is cold/wet on the day, please dress appropriately

About the presenter

Ailsa Wild was a professional acrobat and whip-cracker who ran away from the circus to become a writer. She is the lead writer of *Small Friends Books*, a science adventure series starring microbes, molecules and mucus, where the bacteria are the heroes. Ailsa also wrote the *Squishy Taylor* and *Naughtiest Pixie* series. Her collaboration, the science-based graphic novel *The Invisible War* was a CBCA notable. Ailsa's books have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Korean, Hebrew and Cantonese.