STEM HEROES

Rachel Zimmerman

12 YEAR OLD INVENTOR

Rachel Zimmerman was born in 1972 in Canada. Even as a young girl, she loved science and coming up with ideas to help people.

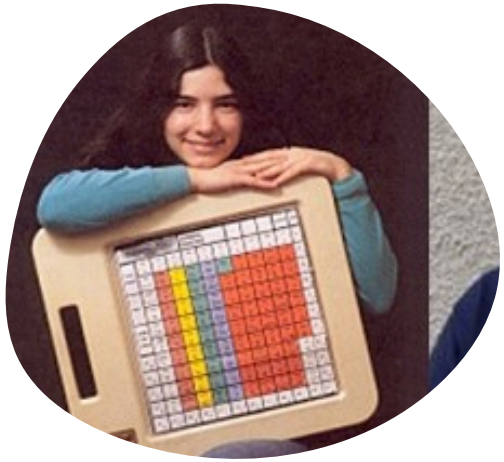
In 1984, when Zimmerman was 12, she invented the Blissymbol Printer for a school science competition. This machine helped people who can't speak to communicate.

It worked by letting people choose from a special set of symbols on a touchpad. The machine would then turn those symbols into written words on a screen. She won many awards for her invention, and it has helped people all around the world in both English and French. It now even has a voice output.

Zimmerman continued studying science and has worked with important organisations like NASA and the Canadian Space Agency. She uses her skills to solve even bigger problems, especially ones related to space.

Rachel Zimmerman's invention has helped many people with disabilities, and she's inspired young people, especially girls, to follow their dreams in science. She showed that even young people can create things that make the world a better place.

INVENTORS & MAKERS



1. How old was Rachel Zimmerman when she invented the Blissymbol Printer?
2. What did her machine turn symbols into?
3. The text says the machine helped people "communicate." What does "communicate" mean?
   a. share ideas or messages with others
   b. get very angry
   c. listen to music
4. Why do you think Zimmerman has inspired young people?
5. In your own words, explain why Rachel Zimmerman is a STEM Hero.