My Family Life...

I have the coolest family. My dad is a computer scientist for the Army – Hooah! – and my mom is an engineer who works for the U.S. government. Mom and my twin sister, Cyndi, love working with electronics and gadgets. Cyndi loves to take things apart, so we all have fun using computers and playing with cool gadgets. Sometimes Cyndi and I get into arguments, though, especially when she takes my computer games apart, and then they don't work quite right after she puts them back together. We spend a lot of time traveling with our dad all over the world when we're not in school. We've been to Europe, Asia, and even Hawaii. Being a snow leopard, I especially like Asia. But the four of us always stay connected on social networking, video chat, and email.

How I made my first video game...

From the time I can remember, I always wanted to be like my dad. I used to watch him work on computers at home when I was little, and then my parents gave me a video game. It was awesome! After I mastered the game, I wanted to know how it worked so that I could make one even better. I asked Dad, and he showed me some basic computer programming. He showed me some tools I could use and gave me some great tips. I didn't know computer programming was so important to making a video game, so that's when I started to read about creating computer games. I used the Internet and created a social networking site to find resources and talk to other kids like T. Top® who enjoy designing computers and computer games. But Mom or Dad always sit with me when I first meet people online to make sure it's ok to talk to them. Pretty soon, I was learning how to shoot lasers from spaceships to save the earth and help snow leopards find their way through cryptographic mazes in snow drifts and mountains so they could find clues to help get them home. It was cool!

My twin sister...

My twin sister, Cyndi, and I take turns traveling with Dad. We both love traveling to Asia and staying connected on the web. She shows me the latest electronic gadgets and computer programs, and I use them when creating cool features in my games like better graphics. We also play the games against each other when we're not doing homework or chores, but I always win. In fact, I have the highest scores in the neighborhood. Sooner or later, though, Cyndi is going to figure out my games and beat one of my scores, so I have to stay sharp. I like keeping in touch with Cyndi and playing computer games with her.

How I met the CryptoKids®...

I go online to tell other kids about my games. I share ideas about new games, and we talk about how to make the older ones better. That's when T.Top® wrote to me the first time. After Dad said it was ok to talk to him, T.Top® told me about robots he wanted to design that would get things for him, like his cell phone so that he doesn't have to stop what he's doing when working on new designs. Well, I figured why not make a game that could do the same thing. I designed a game where the player has a robot and could make it do all sorts of things, like hunt for those missing keys in his room, take out the trash, or clean his room so his mom doesn't bug him. Players try to get as many chores done in the shortest amount of time to get the most points. I am also working on a game where the players have to find missing items in their house. They tell a robot where to look for clues and then they have to piece everything together for the answer. T.Top® loved the idea. He gave me some computer programming and design tips to make the robot more realistic.

Cybersecurity...

I like exchanging information with other kids about video games and computer stuff, but I found out the hard way that you have to be really careful. I got an email from someone I didn't know, and I opened it up, and it contained some malware that messed up my computer. I had to get Dad to fix it, and it took him a long time. He said it was my fault, too, because I didn't have my security software set for automatic updates. He also said that viruses and malware and other bad stuff can move easily from computer to computer, especially if your computers are connected with each other or "networked" like my family is; so the problem doesn't just end with me. That was a real wake-up call! Now I make sure that my security software updates regularly, and I also make sure I know who is sending me stuff before I open it. I told all the CryptoKids® about this, and we've been checking out www.staysafeonline.org for more information about cybersecurity. The stuff on my computer is really important to me, and I don't want anyone getting in and messing it up again!

Age: **13**