

NOTICE TO THE READER

When choosing the best submissions for Tiny Step Stories, we screened over 200 stories to determine the ones that best benefit you, the reader and their families. The top 21 stories that have been selected are wide ranging in topic from why we should not be scared to make new friends; the flood of the century and why we should never steal. Stories that can uplift you and make you smile and stories that you can learn by and even make you a bit sad. All in all, we thank everyone who has contributed to this publication and we hope that you enjoy each one.

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If you have a story that has a moral theme to it, feel free to send it to the address above. The story should be typed, 2 pages or less and contain a moral. If your story is selected to appear in future printings you will receive 10 copies of the the published book with writing credit when completed. The story should be written for ages 3-9.

It's Ollie the Owl

Hi Kids !!! It's me again, Ollie the Owl. Sure hope you liked all my health tips in our last book *Sick But Not Scared.*

In this book, you will be reading stories on morals such as why you should not steal, why helping others is so important and some ideas about right and wrong ways of doing things.



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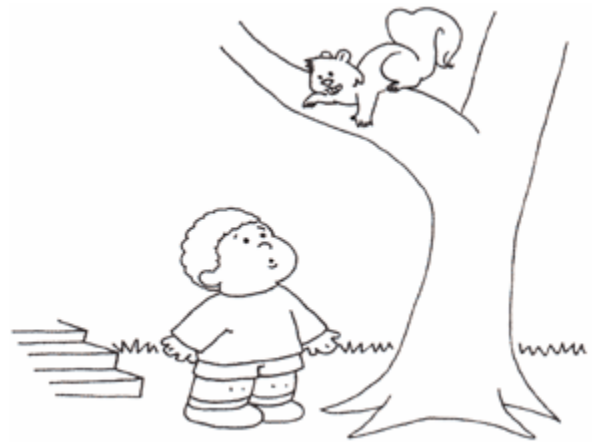
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MARTIN MAKES A FRIEND

by Doug Thompson

Martin sat on the stairs in the front of his new house and watched the children play in the park. Martin had moved away from his old house and his old friends. When Martin thought about his old friends, it made him cry. Martin was a sad little boy. "Why are you crying?" he heard a little voice ask. Martin looked around, but saw no one. "Why are you so sad?" the voice asked again. Martin looked up and saw a squirrel sitting on a branch, his paws folded neatly across his chest. "Perhaps if you could tell me why you are so sad, I could help you be happy," the squirrel said. Martin rubbed his eyes and looked at the squirrel again "Excuse me," Martin said in his most polite voice, "but squirrels can't talk."

The squirrel looked startled. "They can't?" he asked looking around quickly. "No sir," Martin answered, "animals can't talk, except in the movies." "Only in the movies you say?" the squirrel said as he slowly rubbed his furry little chin. "What is a movie?" he asked, throwing his little furry paws into the air, almost falling off of his branch. Martin giggled. "Movies are make believe."



"You don't look sad anymore," the squirrel said. "Because now I have someone to talk to," Martin said. "We just moved here and I don't have any friends yet."

The squirrel scampered down the tree and sat beside Martin on the stairs. "My name is Perry Squirrel." He put his little furry paw out to shake. "And what is your name?" "MY name is Martin " and he shook Perry Squirrel's paw "But look at all those children playing across the street," Perry Squirrel pointed. "You could play with them." Perry Squirrel looked at Martin, then across the street at the children playing in the park.

"Why are you different than them?" Perry Squirrel asked. "You have two arms." He looked across the street "They have two arms." Martin looked at his arms. "You have two legs and they have two legs." Martin wiggled his legs back and forth. "They are all running and jumping," Perry Squirrel said. "Can you run and jump?" Martin stood up and jumped down the stairs. He landed on the ground and started to run back and forth



Perry Squirrel sat on the stairs clapping his little paws together. Martin came back and sat down. "Yes, I can run and jump," he answered. "Why are you different?" Perry Squirrel asked. "Because I have different colored skin so they might not like me," Martin answered.

"I am different than you," Perry Squirrel said "Don't you like me?" "Yes, I do," Martin answered. "But they might not like me." "Will you wait right here for me?" Perry Squirrel asked Martin. "I will be right back." Perry Squirrel jumped back onto the tree, scampered up the big branch and out of sight. "Please wait for me," Perry Squirrel called back. "I shall only be a moment."

Martin sat on the stairs and waited. He saw Perry Squirrel jump out of the tree, across the street, in the play ground and scamper over to where the children were playing. Soon Perry Squirrel ran back to the tree and disappeared once again into the branches.

The children stopped running and jumping. They were walking over to Martin's new house. "Hello," a little girl said. "My name is Sarah. This is my friend John." A boy stepped forward and smiled. "What is your name?" he asked. "My name is Martin," he answered. "Would you like to come over to the park and play with us?" Sarah asked. "I'll have to ask my mother," Martin smiled. "I'll be right back."

Martin ran into the house. "Mother! Mother!" he called. "Mother, may I go to the park and play with my new friends?" His mother smiled. "Yes, you may, and after you and your new friends finish playing, I will fix you all a snack." Martin smiled. "Thank you, Mother," he said and ran out the door. Perry Squirrel was sitting on the stairs when Martin came back out.

"You see, Martin," Perry Squirrel said, "people should like people for who they are, not what they look like, or what they sound like. Everybody is different, but that is what makes the world such an interesting place to live." Martin smiled at Perry Squirrel. "Would you like to come to the park and play, then have a snack later?" Martin asked Perry Squirrel. Perry Squirrel scampered back to the tree. "I wish I could stay and play with you Martin," Perry Squirrel said as he climbed onto the branch, "but I have to keep on collecting food for winter. You go play with your new friends and I'll see you next spring." "C'mon, Martin," his new friends called. "Let's go play."

Martin looked up and Perry Squirrel was gone. "See you next spring," Martin called and jumped down the stairs.

The End

BLIND AS A BAT

by Virginia L. Sperl

Deep within the tropical rain forest there were three familiar sounds that rang through the jungle air everyday; BONK! SLIDE! PLOP! The creatures living there knew all too well who and what were making those noises.



"There goes Gully again!" said Chester the chimpanzee, to his friend, Arnie the anteater. Arnie shook his long nose up and down, nodding in agreement. "Everyday that crazy bat flies through the forest, crashing head-first into a tree, slowly sliding down the trunk and plopping himself onto the forest floor. Then he sits there and waits for the stars to stop circling his head before he continues on his way."

"When is Gully going to realize it's time he went to the eye doctor and had his eyes examined! I'm tired of hearing Bonk! Slide! Plop! every day. It interrupts my banana eating time," replied Chester.



"I heard that!" piped up Gully as he sauntered over to his friends, still shaking his head to clear the dizziness. "I keep telling you that I don't need to see an eye doctor. I'm just not paying attention. I promise that from now on I'll be more careful."

"Gully, you make that promise everyday and the next day we still hear Bonk! Slide! Plop! When are you going to face it that you may need glasses?" asked Chester. "It's not a big deal, Gully. Arnie and I will even go with you to your appointment if you like."

"No way! Bats can't wear glasses! What happens if they fall off while I'm flying, or I keep getting them dirty, or..." "Or what, Gully? What if the kids at school laugh at you? Isn't that what's really bothering you?" asked Arnie.

"No, of course not! I don't want to talk about this anymore. I have to get going. Bye." shouted Gully as he soared very carefully through the trees. Arnie and Chester looked at each other and just shook their heads in frustration. "That Gully is one stubborn bat," said Chester.

The next day Gully glided through the forest trying to pay very special attention to where he was flying. Before he could do anything about it, he flew straight into a tree. This time the sounds of Bonk! Slide! Plop! were different, though.

Sitting on one of the tree branches was a mother koala bear with her young baby perched on her back. When Gully hit the tree, he made such a thump that the tree shook, causing mother koala and her baby to go crashing to the ground!

Luckily Gully had crash landed moments earlier and the koalas landed on his soft, furry back, cushioning their fall.

"Ouch! What the heck is on my back!" said an angry Gully turning his head to see what had hit him. Mother koala and her baby slowly climbed off his back. When she turned to Gully, she gave him a piece of her mind!

"I knew the moment something hit our tree that it had to be you, Gully! That's it; we have had enough! You could have caused a very bad accident just now. It's high time you went to see an eye doctor, Gully," Mother koala said as she cradled her frightened youngster.

"I'm very sorry," said a saddened Gully, lowering his head in embarrassment. "I guess you're right. Maybe the time has come for me to have a doctor look at my eyes."

The next day Gully made an appointment with the optometrist. Chester and Arnie accompanied their nervous friend to the doctor's office. To Gully's surprise, the examination wasn't scary and didn't hurt a bit!

"See, Gully, we told you it wouldn't be so bad," said Chester. "Come on Gully!" Arnie shouted as he grabbed his friend's arm. "Now is the fun part. Let's go and pick out some glasses for you!"

The two friends had a great time watching Gully try on many different styles of glasses. They giggled with each funny face Gully made. Finally he chose nice pair of black glasses with small round frames that perched perfectly on his tiny brown nose.

"Are you sure no one will make fun of me at school tomorrow?" asked a worried Gully. "Gully, some kids may say cruel things to you, but your true friends won't care. Besides, think of all those happy trees in the forest knowing you won't be bonking into them anymore!" giggled Chester.

Gully knew who his true friends were and the three of them laughed all the way home. For the first time Gully seemed to see things in a whole new light.



The End

THIS IS ``BIG FUN''

a true story by
Debbie Chalus

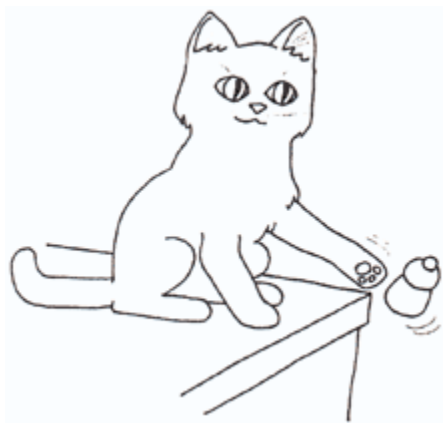
Tubby was about to have her first litter of kittens. Amy sat beside her on a chair watching and waiting. She was very excited. The first one to break the silence was a little black and orange kitten who had a good set of lungs. Then the second, the third, and finally the fourth. There were three black and orange females and one all black male with sparkling emerald green eyes. He came out complaining from the start. Amy knew he was special right from the beginning. Needless to say she decided to keep one of Tubby's kittens. The complainer. She named him Dino.



Dino was a mischievous, demanding little kitten. When Dino wanted something he wanted it NOW. Not later, but NOW.

Poor Tubby. Dino was always giving her a hard time. He would continually hide around a corner from her. When she would approach, Dino would spring out and jump right on Tubby. You could hear all sorts of noises from the two of them. Hissing, screeching and meowing. Dino would run away from Tubby so she couldn't get even with him. He seemed to put his paw over his mouth and laugh. Dino thought this was "**big fun.**"

Amy soon discovered Dino had a "thing" for strawberry ice-cream. Whenever Amy had a strawberry cone, Dino would sit on the back of the couch and pull Amy's hand toward him with his paw. He would then start licking the ice cream. Mmmmmmm, Dino thought this was "big fun."



Dino also liked to wake Amy up in the morning. If she didn't get up when he wanted her to, Dino would jump up on the dresser. Then he would knock things off onto the floor. Crash! Splash! Bang! Amy would have no choice but to get up. Dino would quickly jump off the dresser and run like the wind to the kitchen. Dino would sit there, demanding his breakfast. NOW! NOW! NOW! Dino thought this was "**big fun.**"

Then one bright sunny spring morning Dino wasn't on the dresser knocking thing down. Amy thought this was very unusual. Tubby was still sleeping quietly on the rocking

chair. But no Dino. Amy looked and looked. Finally from the corner of her eye Amy saw a black paw coming out from behind a chair. As Amy bent down she noticed something different about him. His eyes weren't sparkling, and his coat wasn't as shiny black as it was before. Dino looked up at Amy and gave a very soft little "meow". As Amy patted Dino she felt two lumps near his stomach. Amy knew this wasn't right, so she took Dino to his vet, Dr. Standish. Amy left him there so the doctor could examine him.

Amy waited nervously by the phone. Then at 2:30 in the afternoon, Amy got the call. It was bad news and the doctor wanted her to come to the office. When Amy got there, Dr. Standish explained Dino had "cancer". Dino could not be operated on because the cancer had spread throughout his body. There wasn't anything anyone could do to save Dino. Dr. Standish explained that the best thing for Dino was to be put to rest so he wouldn't have to suffer anymore. "What a horrid suggestion", Amy was thinking. How could she allow the doctor to do this to Dino? It took great courage for Amy to say "yes" to the doctor. Dino seemed to understand what was going on. He looked up at Amy and gave a very slow wink. It was as if he was telling Amy that it was O.K. In his own way he was saying "goodbye". He wouldn't suffer anymore. Tears flowed down Amy's face as she gently kissed Dino for the last time.



♡ IN MEMORY OF DINO ♡

Dino had lived to be 17 years old and he died with dignity. He had a long and happy life. He is sadly missed by Amy and Tubby. Amy learned that sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind.

ELLIE AND ZOEY

by F.E. Loubardias

"Ellie, Ellie," a voice was heard in the distance. "Come on, Zoey, it's time to go in. Left-right, left-right. Mom WAS right; you are a copycat. You are doing the same thing my right leg is doing....you're funny!"

It was nearing 8:00 p.m. and Ellie had to get inside. Her first day of school was tomorrow and she had to get ready. A lot had to be done and even a lot more to think about.

"Mom, Mom, I'm back!" Ellie shouted. "Oh, there you are, honey. Did you have fun in the backyard?" her mom asked. "I sure did and so did Zoey. She is so much help Mom...she helped me to climb the fence," Ellie said with a sigh and a huge smile on her face. "Oh, I am so glad... I told you Zoey would be a lot of help," her mom replied as she turned toward the stairs. "Yaa.... you were right, but...." Ellie hesitated. Her mom turned to face her daughter. "But what honey?"

With her head hung low Ellie asked hopefully, "But will everyone else like Zoey as much as I do?" Ellie's mom looked at her little girl with concern. Tomorrow her little girl was not only going to learn to count or say her ABC's properly, but the hardest lesson of all, how to belong and be accepted. "Come on honey, let's go upstairs and get ready for bed and we can talk about Zoey," Ellie's mom said reassuringly.

While Ellie headed for the bathroom to brush her teeth and wash up for bed, her mom seated herself at the edge of Ellie's bed. Ellie's mom definitely had to talk to Ellie about tomorrow and now was her last chance. Ellie didn't have a lot of friends and wherever Ellie went her mom was always there. It never came up before about Ellie and Zoey and why they have to be together. Even if it did, Ellie's mom always took care of it. You see, Zoey is Ellie's cane. Ellie has weak legs and her hip rocks back and forth. Zoey was given to Ellie a few months ago to help her walk and not to fall down as much. This year being Ellie's first school year, made Zoey more important than ever.

"I'm done!" Ellie exclaimed as she came into her bedroom. Ellie hung Zoey on the bedpost and proceeded to put on her pajamas. Her mom turned down the bed and Ellie slipped in. "Are you excited about tomorrow?" Ellie's mom asked. "I sure am but Zoey told me in the bathroom that she is scared that no one will like her," Ellie replied as she pulled the blankets up to her chin. As Mom tucked her little girl in, she took her seat at the edge of the bed again.





"You know, Ellie, I know Zoey is scared." Mom struggled for words and then continued as best as she could. "Well, well, you know the first day when you met Zoey? You were a little scared, weren't you?" her mom asked and Ellie nodded. "But once you started taking walks with her and seeing how much she helped you, you became best friends. Well, tomorrow will sort of be the same. You can talk about Zoey to the other children and tell them why you need her and show them how much she helps you. You can even let them hold her so they won't be afraid. Then once you all start playing

together and helping each other, Zoey will like the other children as much as she does you."

Ellie ruffled her blankets and quickly replied, "Hope Zoey doesn't like some other little girl more than me" With a little chuckle, Mom replied, "That would be some kind of miracle, Ellie, if Zoey EVER did that!" Ellie wrinkled her forehead in confusion.

"No, no, honey, Zoey is yours for keeps," Mom continued. "So do you think you and Zoey will be okay tomorrow?" "I think so. I'll make sure I hold on to Zoey really tight so she doesn't get nervous and fall down," Ellie replied, getting comfortable on her pillow. Mom kissed Ellie goodnight and reminded her about her prayers. As her mom headed for the door, she caught the ending of Ellie's prayer.



"Oh, and God, please help Zoey make new friends fast so she can have more friends to take walks with. AMEN!" As Mom turned off the lights, she nodded and whispered to herself, "AMEN."

PETER'S PEER PRESSURE

by Laura Truthwaite



This is a story that I have told my children many times and they always seem to remember it when it comes down to peer pressure.

Mr. Jones, the fourth grade teacher, was looking at the class. Everyone was being very quiet. He had that look on his face, you know, the look, the one that says I'm very disappointed. I had a big lump in my throat and my tummy felt all squishy. I looked over at my best friend Peter. He was just sitting there looking at the girl beside him and smiling. How could he be so calm? Mr. Jones sighed as the bell rang. *"Class, I hope the ones responsible come forward. This is a very serious crime and it will only get worse if things are not put right."*

I guess I should tell you what the crime is....well it all started on Friday. The fabulous field trip to the museum. It was great! They had a new dinosaur exhibit here and I was dying to see it. Peter had been acting very strange and hanging around with the bad kids. They thought they were so cool. They were always in trouble for something or other. Well, the leader of the bad kids was a boy named Mike. Mike dared Peter to steal one of the bones from the exhibit. Peter never backed down from a dare. So when we were leaving, Peter grabbed one of the bones and stuffed it in his back pack. I was shocked. I didn't think Peter would do it. The boys sat in the back and talked all the way home. When we got off the bus, I went over to Peter and told him that I saw what he did.

"Gee whiz, man, give me a break. I was just fooling around. They are not going to miss one old bone. They've got lots of them. Anyway, no one is going to know, because you are not going to tell." I did not know what to say but I knew that I didn't feel right. All weekend Peter and I played like nothing happened. But come Monday morning, well that's when all the trouble started.

The museum did notice that the bone was missing and had called in the police! The school was notified and Mr. Jones was going to be charged unless the bone reappeared. As much as I wanted to tell, I did not know what to do because Peter was my best friend and I did not want to get him into trouble. Anyway, we all left class and headed for home. Mike was waiting for Peter outside the school.

"Hey, Petie, maybe I should go tell that you stole the stupid bone. Then you would be in a lot of trouble and I would be a hero." Mike laughed and laughed. "Boy, did you ever do a stupid thing. Don't think that I want to be your sissy friend. Boys like you are going to get me into trouble." Peter looked really upset and ran home. I knew that something had to be done but what?

When I got home, I really felt sick. I couldn't even eat the monster chocolate chip cookies my mom had made! I really had a problem. Do I tell and lose Peter as a friend or not tell and let Mr.

Jones get in trouble? I heard my dad come home from work and I knew I had to talk to him about it. He was a great person to talk to. He made me feel all grown up. Everything I said to him was important and he was good at figuring out a mess. I went to meet him at the door.

"Hi, Sport, how was school?" He always calls me Sport. "Hi, Dad, can we talk man stuff? I have a problem." Dad looked at Mom with **the look** and told me to come into the living room. He sat in his big chair and pulled me onto his lap. I loved sitting there. It made me feel good.



I took a deep breath and told my dad everything. He had a funny look on his face but when I was done, he told me that I had to tell Mr. Jones right away. He said that Peter was not a bad boy but just a little confused and it was a good thing to help him by telling. I sure felt better at having told my dad, but to tell Mr. Jones was another matter all together.

Mr. Jones was glad that I told and he told the police. They were going to Peter's house to get the bone back. They said that Peter would not go to jail because the museum did not want that. They just wanted the bone

back.

Tuesday at school Peter wouldn't even talk to me. He kept looking at me funny though. I felt really sad because I knew that I had lost my best friend. After school my dad asked me how I was. I told him not too good because Peter did not like me anymore. I told him that I did not understand why Peter had stolen the bone in the first place.

My dad told me that sometimes kids do silly things to get other kids to like them. Even if it is a bad thing you sometimes want to do it to be cool just to get new friends. I did not think that I would like to do bad things just to get a friend. My mom came in and said that Peter was at the door and wanted to talk to me. I was very nervous because I thought he was going to tell me he did not want to be my friend anymore. He just stood there with his head down and asked to come in.

"I'm sorry I was mad at you for telling on me. I am kind of glad that you did because I knew it was wrong, but I was scared to tell anyone what I did."

I was shocked but really happy that my friend was back. We talked a lot about stealing and doing bad things. I guess it was a good thing I told since Peter was so scared. He decided that having one friend like me was better than having a bunch of friends that were only going to get him into trouble. I'm glad because I sure wouldn't want my best friend to be in trouble a lot. We have lots of fun doing the right things and staying out of trouble.

The End

NEW DOG ON THE BLOCK

by Joan Douglas (Dedicated to my grandson Nicholas George Van Dueck)

When the Mason family moved into their new house, George was excited and also a little scared. He had left all of his old friends behind in the country, but hoped that some of the neighbors here would have dogs for him to play with. George was a scraggy looking mongrel, one that the Masons had adopted from the pound. It was hard to say what kind of a dog he was. He appeared to be a little bit of this and a little bit of that. However, he had the softest brown eyes and everyone commented on how gentle and friendly he was.



During the first week he spent a lot of time exploring his new yard and was thrilled to see that the neighbors on both sides had dogs. On the left was a very cute chocolate brown poodle with a ribbon in her hair. He'd heard the elderly lady call her Penny. Whenever he saw her, George would take his favorite old ball and invite her to play, but she just ignored him. When Duke the dashing Dalmatian from the house on the right came out, Penny greeted him with a friendly bark and a wagging tail. They seemed to have so much fun together and they left poor George feeling sad at being left out of the game. He had such wonderful country games he could have taught them, like "Chase the Chipmunk", but they didn't seem interested. He was beginning to wish they hadn't moved here. It was lonely without friends. It was no fun having a ball if he had no one to play with.

About a month later, on a cold, dark December night, the street was still and quiet George had gone to bed. He slept on an old blanket on the floor, in the same room as the Mason children. During the night George was awakened by a peculiar smell....he didn't like it. He got up quietly and went downstairs to investigate. The smell seemed to be drifting in from outside, and he knew what it was. When farmers burned brushwood in the fields there was a lot of smoke, and this was the same kind of smell. He knew it could be dangerous and someone should be told.

Going back upstairs he started to bark and bark and bark. Mr. Manson called out, "Be quiet, George. We're trying to sleep."

George persisted, but when no one got out of bed he had to try something else. Dragging the blankets off the bed with his teeth, he awakened Nicky, the Manson's little



boy. Nicky got up rubbing his eyes and said, "Okay, George, what is it?"

George led him downstairs to the back door, and by now Nicky's father was right behind them. He opened the door and was horrified to see smoke coming from the neighbors house. First of all he called the emergency number for the fire department. Then he dressed and went outside to see the first fire engine arrive George followed him into the yard. The fire fighters, in their long coats and yellow helmets worked quickly. They unwound heavy hoses and someone was putting a ladder to a bedroom window. Mr. Mason told the fire chief that an old lady, Miss Bell, lived there with Penny, her little poodle. George wished that he could help, but the fire fighters seemed to have everything under control. Soon the ambulance arrived with flashing red lights. One of the firefighters was carrying the lady down the ladder, safely to the ground. They laid her on a stretcher and put her into the ambulance. A few minutes later George was happy to see Penny was being brought out from the same window, apparently unhurt. They all went back to bed.



Three days later, there was a knock on the door. Mrs. Manson went to answer it. There stood a smiling Miss Bell and she had Penny with her. They had come to say thank you for saving their lives. Mrs. Manson offered her neighbor a cup of coffee. As they sat at the kitchen table, Miss Bell explained what had happened that night

She had gone to bed without switching off the Christmas lights, and somehow they had started a fire. When Mrs. Manson told her how George had been the one to raise the alarm, she patted him and said, "Thank you, George.

You are a very clever dog."

Penny's tail was wagging furiously. She fully agreed. She had spotted the old red ball in a corner and wanted to play. "Will you be my friend?" she seemed to be saying.

They went out into the yard and chased each other with the ball. Duke heard them and came over to join in the fun. Later when George was called in for supper, Mrs. Mason gave him a big hug and said, "Thank you, George; now I have a friend too. I think we are going to like living here."

"Oh, yes," George said with his wagging tail. "Me too!"

The End

A FRIEND FOR DEA-JAE

By Conni Kroeger

Dea-Jae sat on a bench in the school yard, watching the other children play. They seemed to be having such a good time with each other on that warm spring day. She ran a hand through her auburn hair and wiped a tear from her green eyes. The six year old had been at her new school for four months, but had yet to find anyone to play with.



Each time she asked if she could join them, they always had an excuse why they didn't want to include her.

She and her mama had moved to Winnipeg from Cookstown after Christmas. Her mama had found a job with a publishing company, so Dea-Jae had to leave her friends behind. She was having a tough time settling in. The little girl didn't have any brothers or sisters, so she felt very lonely. Her mama spent a lot of time with her, but it just wasn't the same. She wished that she had someone her own age to play with.

Dea-Jae leaned against the wall of the school and closed her eyes. It was difficult being the new kid in town. Especially when it was the middle of the school year. The other children were already in their own groups and it wasn't easy trying to fit in. She wasn't rude to anyone. She usually got along with everybody, so this just didn't make any sense to her.

Just then, a quiet voice said, "Hi, my name is Jasmine. Are you okay?"

Dea-Jae sat up and looked over at the little girl standing in front of her. She was amazed at Jasmine's eye colour. One was green, just like her own, and one was hazel. She had never seen anything so wonderful before.



"Wow! Are your eyes ever pretty!" Dea-Jae exclaimed. "I wish mine were like that!"

"No, you don't," Jasmine sighed. "Then the other children would tease you, too. I hate my eyes."

"I think you should be proud of them," Dea-Jae said. "Not everyone has eyes like that. I think they make you extra special that way," Dea-Jae grinned.

Jasmine smiled then. "Thank you. Hey, why aren't you playing over there with the rest of them?"

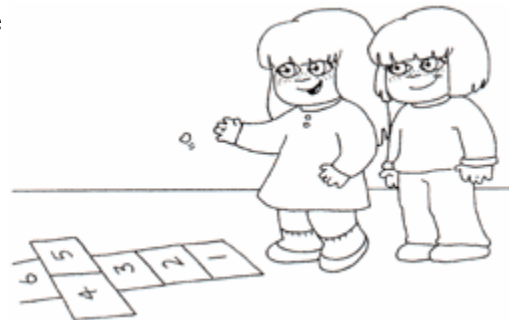
Dea-Jae leaned back against the wall again and stared out at the crowd of children on the playground. "They don't want to play with me. I just moved here from Ontario and I haven't been able to play with anyone. They don't even know me, yet they don't want me around them. I just don't get it."

"I know what you mean," Jasmine replied. "We laugh when we're happy and we cry when we get hurt. Some people just refuse to look at it that way. If we're not just like them, then we aren't worth their time."

She looked at the little girl sitting on the bench, "I'll play with you," Jasmine replied with a smile.

"You will?" Dea-Jae asked. She couldn't believe that this girl with the special eyes was willing to do that when no one else was. Jasmine didn't know her very well either, but she still wanted to play with her. It didn't matter if Dea-Jae was the new girl in town or not. Jasmine was still willing to be her friend.

Sure I will. Let's on " Jasmine laughed. She took Dea- Jae by the hand and led her over to the playground. The two girls giggled as they went up to a hopscotch board that wasn't being used.



"By the way, my name's Dea-Jae." The green-eyed girl smiled back at her new found friend as she tossed her rock on the first square of the game.

Just because we're different from each other on the outside, we are the same on the inside. It's because we're not the same as one another that make us special and interesting. If everyone was the same as everybody else, life would be pretty dull.

If you don't take the time to get to know someone, you might be missing out on a new friend.

The End

THE GIANT COOKIE

by Trevor Kriss

Chef Pierre made the best cookies in the entire town. Everyone loved his cookies.

From early in the morning to late at night, he was busy baking cookies to sell in his bakery shop. He was so busy that he had to spend every day baking cookies. He never had time to do anything else.

One day a stranger walked into Chef Pierre's bakery shop. "I hear you make the best cookies in town," stated the stranger. "That is correct," Pierre said. "Everyone loves my cookies so much and I am so busy that I have no time to do anything else but bake cookies."



The stranger winked at Chef Pierre and whispered, "How would you like an easier way to make as many cookies as you want? Then you could have time to do all the things that you want to do."

Chef Pierre laughed. "If only that were possible. I could go fishing, or walk in the woods, or read a book every afternoon in my hammock."

Chef Pierre was dreaming about all the things he could do instead of baking cookies. He did not notice that the stranger had left the bakery shop. However, on the counter where the stranger had stood was a bag of flour with a note attached to it. It said:

Flour for your cookie dough
To help make your cookies grow
Add some heat to make them rise
Watch them grow before your eyes

Chef Pierre wondered why the stranger had left so suddenly, but was delighted that he had left him more flour. Just that morning he had ran out. Instead of going to the grocery store to buy more, now he had enough to make another batch of cookies. Chef Pierre mixed the flour into a big bowl and made a batch of cookie dough.

He put the cookie dough into the oven, closed the oven door and turned on the heat. Chef Pierre watched the cookie dough instantly start growing bigger and bigger and bigger. It was now a one big cookie.

"Oh, no, the cookies are growing too fast. What should I do?" Then Chef Pierre remembered what the note on the flour bag said about "add some heat to make them rise."

He quickly opened the oven door, turned off the heat, and fanned the cookies with his apron. When the cookie dough cooled off, it stopped growing. Chef Pierre didn't know what to do. He thought about the stranger in his bakery shop and wondered if he might know what to do. So he left the bakery shop to go and find the stranger.

While he was out of the bakery shop, Chef Pierre's wife had come into the kitchen. She did not smell any cookies baking which normally was the case this time of day. She went over to the oven and saw the oven door was open.

"Silly Pierre is making one big cookie," she thought. "But how is this cookie going to bake if it is not in the oven?" So she put the cookie back into the oven, closed the oven door and turned up the heat.

Well, the cookie started growing and growing and growing. It was getting bigger and bigger and bigger. The cookie grew so big that it popped open the oven door and started filling up the entire kitchen.

Pierre's wife ran out of the bakery shop and yelled, "Help! Help! There is a giant cookie growing in the kitchen." Everyone came running to the bakery shop to see. They watched the cookie grow out of the kitchen and into the bakery shop.



By the time Chef Pierre, the fire department, and the police department arrived, the cookie had grown bigger and bigger and bigger. It now filled the entire bakery shop and was growing into the street.

The Chief of Police told Chef Pierre, "Do something quick or this giant cookie will take over the entire town."

Chef Pierre knew the sun's hot rays were making the cookie grow bigger and bigger and bigger than ever before. He told the fire Chief what they needed to do to cool down the cookie to stop it from growing. Then he quickly ran to the nearby school yard where all the town's children were playing. He yelled, "Free cookies. Free cookies. All you can eat."

The children all loved Chef Pierre's cookies and they ran toward the bakery shop as fast as they could. The children's eyes got big when they saw the giant cookie which was now the size of a city clock. But that didn't stop them from starting to eat the cookie.



The fire department hooked up their hoses to dairy trucks and poured cold milk on top of the giant cookie. This cooled down the cookie from the sun's hot rays. Now the cookie stopped growing.

Soon the cookie got smaller and smaller and smaller. Finally a little boy ate the last bit of the giant cookie. The people gave a loud cheer.

The mayor of the town asked the children what they would like as a reward for saving the town. They asked Chef Pierre, "Could you bake us some cookies tomorrow?"

Chef Pierre smiled and said, "Yes, free cookies for everyone tomorrow."

"Oh, no," said the Chief of Police. "No more giant cookies again."

Chef Pierre smiled and nodded his head. "Don't worry. No more short cuts for me." He went into the kitchen of his bakery shop and threw the flour into the garbage. Then he set off for the grocery store to buy more flour.

He realized that he loved baking cookies. He would have to start baking cookies very early tomorrow. He knew the children would be at his bakery shop first thing in the morning.

The End

BITTER-SWEET MEMORIES

by Mark R. Carpan

This is the story of Roland and his famous lemonade stand.

Roland was a very clever boy with a keen sense of how to make lots of money. No matter what came his way, he turned it into a great business for himself. His greatest success was his newspaper route, but he had to work very hard at it. He had all the things that every kid wanted because he earned so much from his efforts.

But Roland had a new idea up his sleeve. It was one that would allow him to make more money and work far, far less. He would open a lemonade stand, boasting the best lemonade in town.

His parents had always been proud of him and his success. When they heard about his new idea, they knew he would be number one in no time. His dad was so supportive, he handed Roland a crisp ten dollar bill to get the supplies he needed to get started.

So Roland went to the grocery store to get what he needed. He picked up a big bag of sugar and dozens of paper cups. But when he grabbed for the lemons, much to his surprise, he saw that the price was very high- fifty cents a lemon!

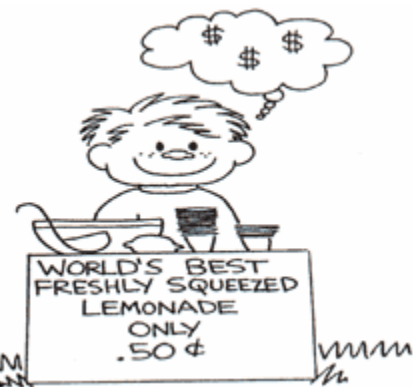
"This is an outrage!" he shouted to a stock person. "How can I make any money at selling lemonade if I must spend so much on lemons? It takes a lot of lemons to make just one pitcher of lemonade. What am I going to do?"

The stock person said nothing and continued to mop up a spill nearby. His yellow handled mop swung right to left across the messy yellow spill. But it seemed the more he mopped, the bigger the yellow concentrate spread. Roland became interested in this situation and moved closer for a better look. Actually, no one could miss the mess at all. The stock person was wearing a yellow apron, pushing a yellow handled mop and cleaning up a very bright yellow puddle of super concentrated yellow food dye.

"You could say, this mess stood out like a huge bowl of...," Roland blurted, but cut himself off. His keen and sharp mind suddenly raced, and he once again found a very clever way to make more money. "Like a huge bowl of lemonade!" he shouted. He was pleased to see the food dye on special for only ten cents, because it was so old.

"You don't want to take that," said the stock person. "It's so old it's as bitter as lemons."

Roland left the store and headed home with his great idea. He only spent half of what his dad gave him so he had



already made money without even earning a cent. He wondered if he should give his dad the change, but he thought, "Dad would want me to be successful at this, so I should keep this money as part of my profits."

The super concentrated yellow dye was great. When Roland filled his mom's huge punch bowl full of water and sugar it took only five drops of the dye to make the whole batch look incredibly delicious. The real test was when he took a cup and tried it. It was so good, it tasted like the real thing. He was very pleased and rubbed his hands together in anticipation of his profits.

He filled the bowl with ice cubes and moved it outside to the table he had prepared for his business. He grabbed one of his mother's fresh lemons and placed it on the table beside the bowl for effect. Then he wrote and taped a sign to his stand: **WORLD'S BEST FRESHLY SQUEEZED LEMONADE ONLY 50 CENTS.** "After all, the world's best should cost a little more than the rest," he thought.

He rounded up several of his friends and their parents to try the new creation and to spread the word around about how great it was. And it was fantastic! The combination of the cold ice cubes and the hot sun made the lemonade taste amazing. The first bowl was gone in no time. But Roland had now attracted a lot of interest in his "masterpiece."

"It's going to be hard, my friends," he teased, "but I will go the extra mile for you and squeeze another hundred lemons to make you all satisfied." The gathering crowd was impressed by his amazing attitude of service. He went home to prepare another bowl. Meanwhile many of the people who were there told others, so that when Roland came back, the crowd had become even bigger.

He told his good friend Steve to start serving the people while he went back to prepare more lemonade. He filled up his parents two large ice chests, five large beverage holders and his mom's best crystal punch bowl. He loaded them on his wagon and dragged them outside to the waiting crowds.

He did this three times, but the crowds would not let up. His buddy Steve told Roland he would help him squeeze lemons, but Roland told him no. He told him that he wouldn't want his best friend to have to work 'that hard' so Roland went back in for another load. By now he began feeling very tired from going back and forth. So while Steve served the lemonade, Roland sat down and counted the money. To his shock, he had earned over \$350.00! Suddenly, he felt VERY energetic again. He gave his friend five dollars for his help and began serving lemonade himself.

"Lemonade!!!" he shouted. "Come and get the world's best freshly squeezed lemonade." He felt so proud of himself and his idea. The people flocked around in a large mass. The whole scene began to look like a circus - full of talking, laughing and commotion. No one had any idea they had been lied to by this otherwise sincere and well-intentioned boy. But suddenly out of the loud confusion came a quiet and familiar voice that pierced right to the core of Roland's bones.

"Two, please," came the request from the lips of his proud father standing arm in arm with his smiling mother, whose eyes were full of tears. He slapped a five dollar bill on the table, gave his son a wink and said, "Keep the change. I knew you would be the best. We're so proud of you."

That was all it took to put an end to the lemonade stand on it's first and only day. Roland had managed to get by passing his fake on others without feeling the pinch of guilt he deserved. But he could not pass the test of pulling one over on his mom and dad. That hurt too much. He realized what he had done and returned every last dime to those he had betrayed from his town. He even paid back his dad the whole ten dollars he had given him.



Roland went back to his paper route. On weekends he worked with his good buddy Steve on a lemonade stand they started together after that eventful day. They squeezed the lemons together and truly created a bitter-sweet mixture of genius. But nothing ever matched the bitter-sweet genius of what Roland learned that day.

ASHLEY'S SPECIAL ROCK

by Kim Schotchenko

A group of children played in the park. One little girl named Ashley had something special to show to her friends. Everyone gathered around her and she reached into her pocket and pulled out a very shiny rock. It was black and it had all kinds of shiny parts to it that glittered like gold! It looked very valuable. Everyone took turns holding the rock and touching it. They were amazed at how the rock glittered. If you turned it just the right way, the shiny parts really sparkled in the sunlight.



"Is it a piece of gold?" asked Randy. "No," Ashley replied. "The rock has pieces of nickel in it. My dad gave it to me. He's a geologist and he studies rocks. He found it and let me have it."

"Wow! It sure is the prettiest rock I ever saw!" said Sara.

After everyone got to look at Ashley's rock, she put it back in her jacket pocket and all the kids decided to play on the swings. Sara really liked the rock. She really wanted to look at Ashley's rock some more but she was afraid to ask. Just then Sara saw Ashley take her jacket off and place it on the park bench. Then Ashley ran off towards the slide to play some more. Sara saw that no one was watching, so she went over to the bench and put her hand in Ashley's jacket pocket. She took out the rock and put it in her own pocket and ran home. Sara was very nervous because she knew she should not have taken something that did not belong to her without asking. But she was excited, because now she could hold the rock and look at it for as long as she liked. She turned it over and over and imagined that it was a magical rock that could grant powers and wishes, but after awhile Sara grew kind of bored and put the rock aside to do something else.

When Ashley got home and decided to put her rock away, she discovered that it was missing! She checked all of her pockets and became very worried and upset. "That was a present from Daddy! What will he say when I tell him that I lost it?" Ashley wondered.

When Ashley's father asked her what her friends thought of her shiny rock, Ashley began to cry and apologize.



"I'm sorry, Daddy! I don't know how, but I lost the rock somewhere!"

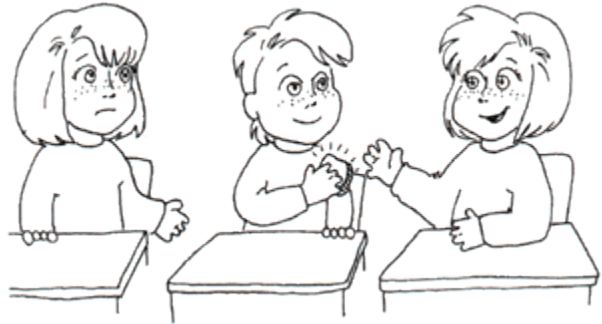
"Oh, well, now don't you worry! We'll look for it and if we can't find it, I'll find you another one!" he said. "It won't be the same..." Ashley mumbled.

The next day at school, Sara had Ashley's rock in her backpack. She wanted to present it for show and tell but she knew if she did that, she would get caught for stealing. Everyone at the park was in the same class as Sara. Even Ashley! "No," Sara thought. "Ashley will know that I took her rock without asking and be really mad at me."

So Sara showed something else. When it came time for Ashley's turn, she slumped in her seat and mumbled that she had nothing to show. She looked very sad, and suddenly Sara felt very, very guilty. Sara slowly raised her hand and with a quiet voice, she said, "Yesterday, I saw something that I really, really liked and I took it from my friend without asking. I would like to apologize and give it back now so she can show it to everyone."

And with that, Sara stood up, reached into her backpack and pulled out the rock. She handed it to Randy who passed it to Ashley. Ashley looked so surprised! But she got up and went to the front of the class and told everyone about her rock.

After school Sara approached Ashley in the playground and said that she was sorry for taking her rock. At first Ashley was mad, but then they were friends again. Sara promised to never ever take anything that wasn't hers again.



The End

A CHANGE OF HEART

by Candice McClune

"Give me that! I was playing with it first." That was all Jenny's parents ever heard her scream at her little brother, Stephen. It seemed like whatever he had in his hands, Jenny would be right there to take it away. Jenny was always told by her mom, "You have to share with your brother." "No, I don't like sharing," she would yell at her mom, folding her arms in front of her and turning her back away.

"Share, share, share. I don't know why I always have to share. Hmph, I'm never going to share," Jenny said angrily as she kicked her teddy bear that was lying on her bedroom floor.

Jenny was a four-year-old girl who was usually well behaved except when it came to this. "We've tried everything, Dear," said her mom in despair. "I guess it's not going to go away by itself," suggested Jenny's dad. So one day Jenny's mom and dad had a plan that might make her see that sharing is not only good, but sometimes necessary.

"Maybe if we tell her about sharing, she'll come around," said her dad. Jenny's mom sat her on her lap and smiled at her, "With four people living in the same house, we all have to do our part with sharing, Jenny."

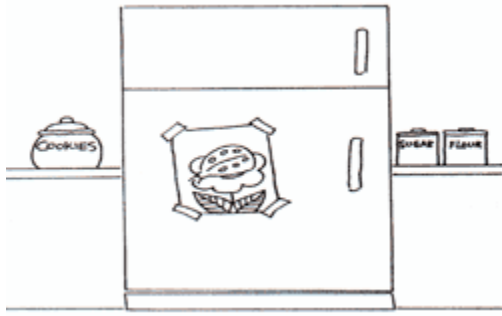
"When we share the food we eat and the water we drink, everything ends up working out just fine. I know sometimes sharing toys with Stephen is hard to do, but if you could treat him more like a friend instead of a pest, sharing might be a little more fun. Do you think you could try a tiny bit of sharing today?" Well, after all that explaining, the only thing that Jenny said was, "Hmph". Then she stomped out of the room.



Later on the same day, Jenny went to the kitchen table and sat down with her coloring book and crayons that she kept in a drawer with her arts 'n crafts. She shuffled through the book to find a picture she wanted to color. Stephen was busy on the living room floor playing with his cars and trucks, enjoying his time alone without being picked on by his big sister.

Mom gave Jenny a pat on the head and left the room to leave her to color. She was happily coloring when who should cautiously peek around the corner? Stephen. Jenny saw him at the corner of her eye, but she just kept on doing what she loved to do the most. Usually she wouldn't let Stephen get two feet beside her without giving him some kind of warning to keep away.





Stephen looked at the picture she was coloring. It was a little ladybug on top of a purple flower. "That's pretty," was all he said. For the first time Jenny smiled at something her little brother had said. She pulled out another chair at the table and said, "I'll let you color with me if I get to show Mommy and Daddy the picture when it's all done." Stephen was so happy that he didn't even mind. So Jenny helped him on to the chair, gave him a blue crayon and they both began a new picture together.

Their mom, who was getting the dinner ready, saw this amazing moment and was filled with joy. Maybe what she said to Jenny really helped. And to this day that picture still hangs on their fridge because it was done together.

*When you share,
It shows you care.*

The End

DIFFICULT CHOICES

by Jo-Anne Galloway

It was just the perfect summer day as Danielle and Nicole ran through the field picking some of the pretty wildflowers growing there. Even though they were sisters and sisters sometimes fight a lot, Danielle and Nicole always got along very well. Danielle had wanted a little sister for a long time before she finally got one, so she was always happy to spend time with Nicole. Being sisters was great. It was like having a built-in best friend with you all the time.

The two of them didn't look at all alike. Danielle was 10 years old and the picture of her mother. She was quite tall for her age, with brown eyes and very long dark brown hair. She had a dimple when she smiled and she was always looking for something fun to do. Nicole was only five years old. She was blonde and had blue eyes like her daddy. She was quite tiny and her daddy often called her his little fairy princess. Nicole adored her older sister. She thought Danielle was the smartest, most fun person in the whole world. She could hardly wait to start school, so she could ride with Danielle every day on the big yellow school bus that their daddy drove.

School wouldn't start for a couple of months though and today was too beautiful to spend thinking about being cooped up in a school. They could hear the birds singing like crazy, especially over at the bird bath that mommy had put out in the garden. On a warm summer day the birds loved to keep cool by diving into the water. Their horses were whinnying at them from the fence. They knew their owners and were hoping for a treat-maybe a carrot or an apple. The sisters hadn't brought them anything today, though.

"Sorry, Pancho," Danielle yelled at her chubby gray mare. "No treats for you today. Daddy says your getting too fat!"

Nicole giggled at that and said to her smaller black pony, "Nothing for you either Lady. It wouldn't be fair to Pancho!"

The girls continued on their journey through the field, looking for different flowers. They wanted to get a beautiful big bunch of flowers for their mommy and they knew she liked all different kinds. There were so many different kinds of wildflowers growing on the prairies.

As they were walking along, chattering with each other about all sorts of things, Danielle saw their neighbor, Mr. Smith from across the road, heading out to his herds on his tractor. He would probably be out there all day.



There was a busy highway between their field and Mr. Smith's yard. The girls had one very important rule that they always had to follow, do not ever, for any reason, cross that highway. They understood that it was important and they were always careful to stay faraway from it. The highway wasn't very busy that day.

Everyone was probably already at the beach that was just a few miles down the road. Just then a big farm truck came down the road. The driver tooted the horn and waved at the girls. Danielle saw it was another neighbor, Mr. Jones. She and Nicole both waved at him as he drove along. They continued on their walk, going pretty close to the edge of the field when Nicole heard something.

"Stop!" she said. "I hear something. I think it's crying! What is it, Danielle?"

Danielle put her flowers down and looked all around. Sure enough, just a few yards away, on the other side of the highway was a small red fox. It was trying to get up, but it couldn't. She could also see some blood.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "It's a fox and it's been hurt! I bet Mr. Jones hit it with his truck and didn't even know it!"

"We have to save it!" Nicole cried out. She was already in tears. "We can't leave it there. It will die!"

Danielle stood there for a few seconds, thinking. She knew that they must not disobey their parents and cross the highway. She also knew that every second counts when an animal has been hit by a truck. It was so hard to know what to do. She couldn't just stand there and let her little sister see the little fox die. No matter what, she knew that she had to do something to save that little fox.



"You wait right here, Nicole," she instructed her sister. "I'm going to cross the road and get him. Then we will carry him home and Mommy can take him to the vet. Whatever you do, Nicole, don't move! You have to stay here

"Oh, Danielle," Nicole said, "Are you sure? You know we're not supposed to."

"I have to Nicole. He might die," Danielle said with a determined look on her face. "You just wait here."

Danielle walked down into the ditch and up onto the shoulder of the road. She looked both ways as far as she could see.

"There's nobody coming!" Nicole shouted.
"Hurry, Danielle!"

Danielle ran across the highway and carefully picked up the fox. It only struggled a little bit because it was already quite weak. She could see a big cut on his leg. Again she looked both ways



on the road, saw no cars, and ran across with her little burden. She joined Nicole and the two of them ran across the field, past the horses in the other field, past the birds bathing in the bird bath and to the house, yelling for their mommy as they ran.

Their mommy came outside to see what all the yelling was about. Once she saw the little fox she knew that she had to get it to the vet as soon as possible. "Jump into the van, girls. I'll get the keys!" she shouted.

The girls buckled themselves into the van and their mommy soon joined them. They drove to the vet, which was just a few miles down the road. The vet looked after the fox right away. He came out of the examination room after awhile and told them that the fox was going to be okay. He had stopped the bleeding and the other injuries weren't too serious. "I've called the Game Warden," he said. "Someone will come to pick him up and after he's okay, they will release him into the wild again. Lucky thing for that little fox that you girls came along. Much longer and he wouldn't have made it."

Danielle, Nicole and their mommy turned to go. They were all very happy that the fox was going to be okay. Before they got into the van to go home, their mommy asked the girls to sit outside on the bench with her for a little while. She wanted to know just where the girls found the fox. Danielle and Nicole looked at each other for a second, knowing that they were going to be in trouble. Danielle told her mommy the whole story. Her mommy wasn't very happy with her. "You know you aren't supposed to cross the road! You could have been hurt just like the fox, even worse! You know that! You should have come running home and called me. If anything like that every happens again, you must come home and get me. Promise me that, both of you."

The girls both promised their mommy. They knew she was right. "Okay, let's go home now. All's well that ends well. We're going to pick up some ice cream at the store on the way. Just remember that what you did was wrong and you have to think things through more carefully if something like this ever happens again."

Off they all went, happy that everything had turned out so well. Danielle and Nicole both knew though, that what they had done was wrong, even if things had turned out okay. They knew that they wouldn't cross that road again until they were old enough, no matter what.

The End

GROWING WITH GREGORY

by Janet M. Dickie

Saturday morning was Gregory's favorite morning. All of his friends would gather for a game of baseball. Rain or shine, the game was always on. Promptly each Saturday morning at 8:00 o'clock the children would hurry to the baseball field just beside their school.



The only surrounding area that was out of bounds was Farmer Thigh's field, which was directly across from the baseball diamond. All the children knew him well and were aware that he took great pride in the vegetables he grew. His tomatoes, cucumbers, peas and carrots were the best around town. His very PRIZED vegetable though was his zucchinis. Farmer Thigh grew the largest zucchini in all the local communities around. He had won first prize for the last seven years in the local growing contests.

Greg and his friends enjoyed playing ball in this field. They obeyed all the rules relating to the playing area which included NEVER crossing over into Farmer Thigh's garden.

On this sunny Saturday morning in August all the children had gathered for their regular ballgame. Greg's team was first out in the field, Greg was playing his favorite position, which was second base Greg. Best friend Joel, was up at bat first and hit a ball out past third base. He ran to first base. Garrett came up to bat next and hit it farther than anyone had ever hit it before. Greg kept his eye on the ball and ran backwards as fast as he could go without falling. He could hardly believe it when the ball landed right in his glove. He was so excited until.... he looked down. All around his feet were Farmer Thigh's zucchini. His squashed, trampled zucchini. Greg could hardly believe he had run that far.



The children gasped and decided it would be best if they just left. Greg knew he should go and tell Farmer Thigh what had happened. After all, it was a mistake. Unfortunately, his fear told him to do other than that.

When Greg sat at the dinner table with his family he had very little appetite. His mother could barely believe her eyes when Greg asked to be excused from the table without even touching his dessert. She wondered if something might have been bothering him.

A while later Greg went out to shoot a few marbles, but the uneasy feeling he had inside him kept him from even enjoying that. Greg decided he had to tell somebody what was bothering him. He went to his mom and told her the whole story. After he finished telling his mom what had happened he actually felt a little better inside. His mom reminded him that he would feel a WHOLE lot better once he told Farmer Thigh what had happened.

When Greg got to Farmer Thigh's yard the farmer and his wife were in the field turning the zucchinis over and sadly shaking their heads. It was enough to make Greg want to turn on his heels and head back home as fast as his legs could carry him. Though inside, he knew that wouldn't be the proper thing to do.

Greg walked slowly towards Farmer Thigh, took a big gulp and said, "I'm sorry. I ruined your zucchinis." Farmer Thigh's face was mad when he looked up, but Greg continued with his story anyway. When he was finished he felt a great weight lifted from his shoulders. Not only that, Farmer Thigh's face had even softened up a bit. There was almost a kindly smile on it. He told Greg he was glad he had admitted the truth about what had actually happened.



Farmer Thigh made an agreement with Greg and his mother that Greg could repay the farmer by helping to plant a whole new zucchini crop. The only time Farmer Thigh could do this, however, was Saturday mornings. Greg knew this would mean giving up Saturday morning ball games, but felt it was only fair to repay Farmer Thigh for the damage he had caused.

That summer Greg learned a lot about planting and growing vegetables. He learned why Farmer Thigh took such great pride in all the hard work he put into the growing of his vegetables. The most valuable lesson of all though was the lesson he learned in being honest and truthful.

BOBBY MEADOWLARK

by Carol A. McNiven

Spring had come to the sleepy little village - a spring filled with the happy chirping of birds as they mated and began gathering twigs and leaves to build their nests.

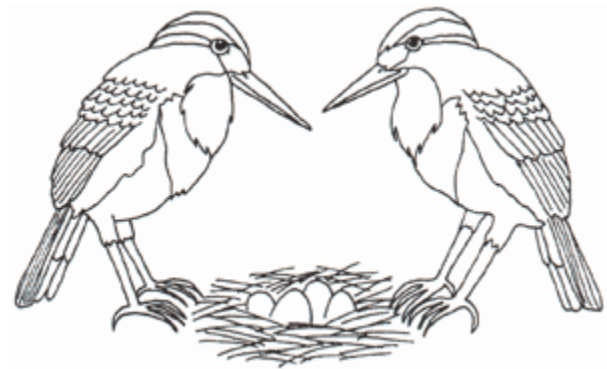
Today I am going to tell you about the Meadowlark family. Bernie and his new wife, Wilma, happily gathered together the necessary twigs, ribbons, and string. Soon they had a warm, comfortable home in which to raise their family.

Wilma laid four eggs and spent her days sitting on them to keep them warm until they hatched. Meanwhile Bernie was kept busy getting food for his wife. Birds are happy and content for the most part and the Meadowlarks were no exception. Every day Bernie took his turn sitting on the eggs, so Wilma could stretch her little legs.

In the evening before the sun went down, Bernie sang to his wife and talked to her about the children they would soon have.

Early one morning Wilma woke up and heard an odd noise. Standing up she looked down at her eggs, and you know what? The eggs were beginning to crack. Soon, very soon, Wilma and Bernie were the proud parents of four babies; three little girl birds and one little boy bird.

Bernie was so excited that he would have popped the buttons on his waistcoat if he had been wearing one.



The Meadowlarks had thought that they were busy before the children arrived. Now however, they were kept so busy finding food for their young ones that by the time evening came, they fell into their nest exhausted. Wilma stayed with the children all night, but Bernie often slept on a branch, so he could keep an eye open for their enemy, the cat.

From the minute the babies were hatched, the little boy bird, Bobby, was different from his sisters. He was much more inquisitive. When it was time for their mom to nudge them out of the nest so they could learn to fly and fend for themselves, she didn't have to help her son. By this time he had fallen out several times but luckily had landed on the soft mossy ground. Wilma would look down at him and say, "If you keep this up, you will turn my feathers grey."

The spring and early summer went by quickly. The parent birds were kept busy teaching the babies how to find food and making them aware of their arch enemy, the cat. Bobby had many scrapes with the cat. Often his Mom had to come to his rescue by pretending that she had a broken wing and hobbling away, so Bobby could fly to safety.

Finally the warm summer days passed and were replaced with cool autumn nights. The Meadowlark family knew it was time to fly south for the winter. Wilma and Bernie and the three little girl birds said good-bye to their friends and prepared to fly away. But where was Bobby?

Bernie scoured the neighborhood and finally found him. When he told him it was time to fly south, Bobby refused to go. He said he wanted to stay and see the snow fly. The parents pleaded and fussed, but Bobby would not change his mind. They talked it over with his three sisters and decided the only thing they could do was to leave him to fend for himself. With one long backward glance at Bobby, they flew away.

Bobby had longed for excitement and knew this adventure would be one he would always remember. He missed his parents and sisters already, but kept busy trying to find a nest that he could live in when the snow came. It was getting cold at night now and Bobby flew from one nest to another, trying to find one that would keep him warm. Finally he flew into an old barn and perched on one of the rafters. At least now he would be out of the wind, he thought. Down on the floor though, sleeping soundly, was the cat. This was no home for him, Bobby thought.



The next morning when he left the barn, he was hit in the face by a cold gust of wind. He looked down and saw that the ground was covered in a white powder. This must be the snow he had heard about. Flying down, he landed softly in it. It was so cold. This was not the adventure he had hoped for when he left his parents. He wondered where they were. Did they miss him as much as he missed them? Poor Bobby started to cry and his tiny tear froze on his beak.

Suddenly he heard a noise overhead. He looked up. There was a whole flock of birds flying south. He thought that if he could only fly up high enough to reach them, they might be able to help him find his parents and sisters. Flying as fast as his little wings could go, and chirping as loudly as he could, he attracted the attention of a big goose. The goose looked down at him kindly and asked him where he was going. Bobby tearfully told him that, although he wanted to stay and see the snow, he had now changed his mind and only wanted his parents.

The goose, who was the leader of the flock, talked in goose language to the other birds and decided to help Bobby find his parents. They told him to fly onto the leader's back and cuddle into the warm down so he would be warm. Bobby did as he was told and soon the flock were on their way.

In due course, the geese arrived at their new home. It was warm and they hoped Bobby would soon be reunited with his family. The goose talked softly to him and told him he would probably see his parents soon. They told him to fly up to the nearest tree where he



could see a long way and sing as loudly as he could. Meadowlarks have a beautiful song and when Bobby puffed out his little chest and sang, all the other birds suddenly became silent as if they knew Bobby was asking for help. Off in the distance, Wilma and Bernie heard the voice they knew so well. They flew up to where Bobby was and what a reunion they had! Bobby said he was sorry for not listening to his parents and promised he would not disobey them ever again.

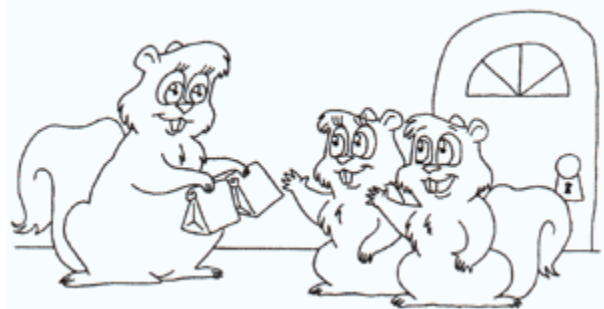
The End

THE GOOD DEED DO-ERS

by Jason B. Northage

Mother Squirrel was busy making lunches for her two children, Sarah and Scooter. They waited in the doorway of their house, their long tails swishing behind them, as Mother quickly wrapped up the lunches and handed them to her children.

"Now don't forget. Go straight to Grandmother's house. She's expecting you," she told them. The two small squirrels said together, "Yes, Mother. We promise." and together they skipped out of the house and down the path. Their village was a small peaceful one, and it was very warm outside. They had a long walk ahead of them, through the village and across the valley to their Grandmother's, who lived on the other side.



They started out walking through the marketplace. The village grocer, a tall raccoon named Mr. White, was carrying a large box full of juicy apples when it broke open, and the apples tumbled to the ground all around him. He saw the two children and called out to them.

"Would you please help me pick up these apples, Sarah and Scooter? There's too many for me to do by myself and it's almost time to open the store!"

They both nodded, set their lunches down and helped Mr. White gather the apples. When they were done, Mr. White was so happy he gave them each a red shiny apple.

"Thank you very much for helping me children!" he called after them as they picked up their lunches and resumed their walk. The apples tasted very good and they were very sweet.

They walked to the outskirts of the village and the start of the forest that led to the valley. They walked down the well-used path. Suddenly they heard the sound of a baby crying. They ran over to it and saw that a baby bird had fallen from its nest.



"Oh, Scooter, look! That baby bird needs our help!" Sarah said, her eyes wide.

Scooter looked up to the sky. "I wonder where its mother is?" he asked.

"We just can't leave that poor bird on the ground like that!" exclaimed Sarah. Scooter nodded and gave his lunch to his sister. He bent down and scooped up the

bird in his paws, and being a squirrel, climbed the tree quickly and put the bird back into its nest. He jumped down and they walked on down the path just as Mother bird arrived at the nest.

"That was close," said Scooter. "Mother bird would have been upset if she found her baby gone." Sarah nodded agreement as they continued down the path.

It was nearing lunch time and both children were getting hungry. They decided to have a picnic in a small clearing when they heard someone crying. They peeked through some bushes and saw a fox sitting on the ground holding his muzzle in his paws. The two children approached him and as they neared, they saw it was their friend from the village, Wesley Fox.

"What's wrong, Wesley?" asked Sarah.

The fox looked up startled to see his two friends. He wiped some tears from his eyes. "Oh, I was out with some friends of mine for a picnic, and I took a wrong turn and lost them! And I'm so hungry. I haven't eaten all day!"

The two squirrels looked at each other, then down to their lunches. Scooter looked up again. "We'll share our lunch with you, Wesley." And they all sat down and shared each others lunches and talked for awhile. When they felt full they stood up to resume their journey.

"I hear there's a very nasty dog around these parts. In payment for sharing your lunch with me, I'll walk with you to the edge of the forest and protect you," said Wesley.

So the three friends walked down the path again and after a while came to the edge of the forest. Luckily there was no trouble so they left Wesley and continued down towards the valley. Wesley waved after them and wished them good luck before disappearing back into the forest.

After walking through a lush meadow, they came upon the tree home of an old lady chipmunk. She was standing outside of her home looking up into the tree.

She looked down the path as the children approached.

"I say there, children!" cried the old lady, waving her cane around. The two children stopped before her. "Yes, Mrs. O'Brady?" said Scooter. Mrs. O'Brady had baby-sat for them a few times and they liked her a lot.

Mrs. O'Brady looked down at the two squirrel children. "Could you help me, please? My son won't be home for awhile and I need to get those nuts down. I can't get them myself for it's too high. Could you help me, please?"

"Of course," said Sarah. Scooter nodded. Mrs. O'Brady was so pleased that she thanked them and gave them each a chocolate chip cookie. They smiled and waved good-bye as they continued on their way, munching on their treat.

It was getting late now, and they finally made it to the valley. It wasn't very wide, so they started to run across. As they got halfway they came to their grandmother's next door neighbor, Mr. Winter, a wise old Raccoon, who was standing beside his motorcycle. The back tire was off. He was standing holding a wrench in one paw and a rag in the other. He turned as he heard the children run up.

"Hello, children. Your grandmother sent me out to look for you as it was getting late, but my motorcycle has broken down. Would you like to help me fix it?" Mr. Winter asked. Scooter loved motorcycles and he gladly offered his help.

"All right, Scooter. All you have to do is hold this wheel steady while I tighten this nut. There," he said, getting up and dusting his paws off. "Now, how would you like a ride back to your grandmother's house?" The children both said yes, so he had them climb onto his motorcycle and they zoomed off. They made it to their grandmother's house in record time. They bounded up the front stair as Grandmother Squirrel opened her door.

"Children! Thank goodness! I was getting worried! When Mrs. O'Brady called I was sure something had happened to you," said Grandmother, hugging them both. Mr. Winter waved and rode away as Grandmother led the two children inside.

"We had quite an adventure, Grandmother," said Sarah.

Scooter nodded. "We helped Mr. White pick up his apples. We found a baby bird and put it back into its nest. We shared our lunch with Wesley Fox; then helped Mrs. O'Brady pick some acorns, and Mr. Winter fix his motorcycle today!" he said excitedly.

Grandmother Squirrel hugged them both. "My little Good Deed Do-ers!" she cried. "You've been very helpful today! I'm sure you made a lot of people happy." Scooter looked up at his grandmother. "Shouldn't you get a reward for doing a good deed?" he asked. Grandmother smiled down at the boy. "Sometimes good deeds are their own rewards. Didn't you feel good doing all of those things for others?" Sarah nodded. "I did. I felt happy that we were able to help that baby bird and Mrs. O'Brady."

"And I was happy helping Mr. White and Mr. Winter," added Scooter. Sarah smiled at her brother. "And we both felt good helping our friend Wesley," they both said together. Grandmother hugged them again. "You see your good deeds made others happy and yourselves happy too. And I think in this case, my little darlings, that a reward for you is in order. After supper you can each have a big bowl of ice cream!"



The End

SNUCKER AND HIS RABBIT HABIT

by Eva Goertzen

Snucker Rabbit grabbed one of the pies from Mrs. Matilda Rabbit's open window. He hurried away. Tipper and Nicker, his friends, were waiting for him behind a favorite bush.

"Oh, goodie, goodie!" they shouted when Snucker arrived with the pie. They clapped their hands and did some somersaults. Oh, did it smell good! For sure no one could bake pies like Matilda Rabbit.

They ate and laughed. Nicker pretended he was Matilda Rabbit. "Whoever took one of my prized pies right off my window ledge?" he complained loudly. Then they all giggled some more.

Soon the pie was gone. The three friends jumped around the bush. It was fun to crunch the leaves under their feet. Tipper and Nicker rolled over and over in the leaves, but Snucker didn't feel like it today. Before long he decided to walk across the field and go home.

"You're going home already?" his friends asked. "It's still an hour till supper time!"

But Snucker walked home slowly by himself. The crunch, crunch of the leaves seemed to say: "Snucker, you are still a young rabbit, but already you have a very bad habit."

He remembered other times when he had taken things that did not belong to him. He thought it had been smart when he didn't get caught, but today he felt ashamed.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," Snucker said out loud. He stamped his feet hard on the yellow leaves. With every step he said, "I'm going to break, break this habit.... break this habit."



Snucker was very quiet that evening. Perhaps Tipper and Nicker wouldn't want to be his friends anymore. Maybe they would make fun of him and call him a sissy. "Even if they do," Snucker said to himself, "I'm going to break this bad habit."

As he crawled into bed, he knew there was something else he had to do. He would have to tell Matilda Rabbit he had stolen the pie and that he was sorry.

"That's going to be really hard, Snucker," he told himself. "But I think it's a BIG RABBIT decision."

He turned over on his side and slowly closed his eyes. Soon he was fast asleep on his cozy rabbit bed.



The End

FLYING ON YOUR OWN

by Bob Kinley

It was a bright spring day in the neighborhood. Mother Robin had been sitting on her nest, waiting for the hatching of her three eggs. Suddenly she felt a rumbling beneath her. Then came a heavy smack and Mother Robin sang out for Father Robin. They watched with smiles on their beaks, waiting for their eggs to hatch.

The first egg opened and out popped a little chick, with its eyes closed and its feathers all ruffled. Mother and Father Robin noticed the little chick's large beak, so he was named Beaker. Soon the other two hatched. Both chicks were very small and were girls. The smallest was named Tiny and the other was called Minnie. Mother and Father Robin chirped loud and long letting everyone know how happy they were.

Little Tiny didn't remember much of her early days in the nest. She did remember the warmth with her brother and sister around and Mother Robin sitting on top of the nest. She remembered when she was hungry, all she had to do was squawk and Father Robin would fly away and return with an earthworm or two. As a young bird, Tiny wondered when her turn to fly would come.

Mother and Father Robin taught their young children well. They were shown the neighborhood cat and told what would happen to them if Mr. Cat caught them. They were shown what to eat and told where to find the food. They were also told of the long trip to the south they would be taking. Their final and most important test, however, was still to come.

They began early one morning. Father Robin told them that they would have to learn to fly today. Tiny looked at her brother and sister and saw the fear in their eyes. She felt the same fear and knew that it showed in her eyes as well. Father Robin then showed them how to spread their wings and how to flap them in order to fly. Then he stood on the edge of the nest and showed them how to take off. The three children watched as Father Robin soared out of the tree and flew around the neighborhood, then returning to the nest. It looked so wonderful and easy, yet Tiny could not help but feel afraid. What would happen if she couldn't fly and she fell to the ground? Would Mr. Cat get her! !! She knew what awaited her then. Maybe she would even get lost, never to see her family again.

Father Robin looked at Beaker and said it was his turn first, as he was the oldest. Beaker tried to look brave for his sisters, but Tiny saw how scared he was by the look in his eyes. Beaker hopped up on the side of the nest beside his father. He did everything his father did and as he spread his wings, before he jumped, he looked back at Mother Robin. She told Beaker not to be afraid and that everything would be alright. With that, Beaker jumped and away he went. Tiny and Minnie scrambled to the edge of the nest and watched as Beaker fell towards the ground with Father Robin right beside him. They both thought Beaker was going to hit the ground, but at the last second he pulled up and flew away out of sight. A short while later Father Robin returned, alone. Minnie asked her father where Beaker was. He told her that Beaker was fine and was in another tree on the other side of the neighborhood. For some reason, Minnie and Tiny were not convinced their brother was okay.



Then Father Robin told Minnie it was her turn. Minnie turned and looked at Tiny. She said good-bye to Mother Robin and Tiny and off she went. She flapped her wings once, then twice, but it didn't seem to matter, she headed straight for the ground. Minnie hit the ground with a thud. Tiny could only watch on in disbelief. What would happen to her sister? She watched as Father Robin landed beside Minnie and coaxed her to get up. Minnie slowly got up and began to flap her wings. She started to jump as did Father Robin and before long both were in the air again and soon disappeared.

It wasn't long before Father Robin returned alone again and said to Tiny it was her turn to fly now. Tiny was so afraid. Where were Beaker and Minnie, and why had they not returned with Father Robin? She did not want to go now. She wanted to stay in the nest in the safety of her mother and father. Tiny told her mother she did not want to go, she didn't care if she learned how to fly or not. Mother Robin told her she had to be able to, so she could take the trip south with the family. Then there was Mr. Cat, she told Tiny, and he could climb trees. If he found out where their nest was, he might pay a visit.



Tiny did not like what she heard, so she swallowed hard and jumped up on the side of the nest beside Father Robin. She did as he did and remembered she had to flap her wings as hard as she could. Tiny held her breath and closed her eyes for a moment. She heard Mother Robin wish her good luck, and with that she opened her eyes and jumped. Tiny flapped her wings as hard as she could as she fell towards the ground. Her heart pounded faster and faster, but she didn't quit. Father Robin yelled his instructions and Tiny flapped harder.



Finally she pulled away from the ground and flew on her own beside Father Robin. He led her to the other end of the neighborhood. to a large tree.

In that tree, Tiny saw Beaker and Minnie, with big smiles on their beaks as they waited for Tiny to land.

It wasn't so hard to fly after all, Tiny thought. Soon Mother Robin joined the family and they all flew off together to eat and get ready for the long trip south. Tiny knew now that with everything Mother and Father Robin had taught her she could truly fly on her own.

ASK FIRST

by Bonnie Reeves

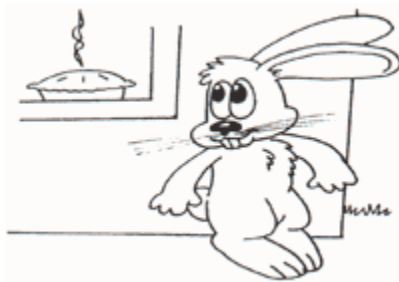
On Tuesday Tommy Rabbit rushed into the kitchen waving a note.

"Mom, guess what? The Spring Fair is Saturday and if we make enough money, we can have a new ballfield.

Can you make something?"

"Why, yes," answered his mother, Betsy. "I'll make some of my bumbleberry pies that everyone is always asking for. The blueberry, strawberry, raspberry and blackberry mixture has a special flavor all of its own."

After school Friday, Tommy brought home his friends Billy and Sarah to play with while his mother finished making pies. They went out in the backyard to play hide and seek. Every time the breeze blew the little rabbits could smell the delicious pies. It made them very hungry. Pausing for a rest under the shade of the old oak tree, the three rabbits started planning. They wanted a piece of pie.

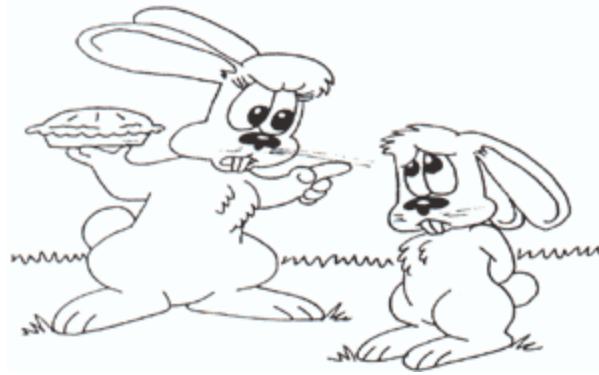


"You go ask for some milk, Sarah, and I'll get a pie off the windowsill," suggested Tommy. "Billy, you help her." Quietly Billy and Sarah walked into the kitchen.

Sarah asked, "Mrs. Rabbit, can we have a drink of milk?" "Yes," answered Mrs. Rabbit. "I'll just get the glasses out of the cupboard for you." Just as she walked by the window, a bird sang. The song was so beautiful Mrs. Rabbit had to look out the window. But instead of seeing the bird, she saw Tommy disappearing behind the lilac bush with one of her pies.

Rushing over to the window, Mrs. Rabbit hollered, "Tommy, bring that pie back right now." Tommy came from behind the bush and, slowly dragging his feet, walked over to the kitchen door.

"What on earth do you think you were doing, Tommy?"



"We're really hungry and didn't think you would miss one pie. You have so many," Tommy answered sheepishly.

"If you had asked first, you would have found out I was making an extra pie just for you. You could have had a piece for a snack instead of waiting for supper. Because you took the pie without asking, you will have to do without."

"We're sorry," said Tommy, Billy and Sarah. "From now on we will ask first!"

The End

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

by Wendy McBey (Inspired by Jordyn McBey, Age 7)

In the morning when it is time to get up, my mom calls, "Wake up sleepy head. Get out of bed." I usually turn over and try to cuddle up for a few more minutes. Not today! Today is the day my auntie Barb and uncle Don get to move home. You see, we had a flood in our city.

It all started last winter. We got a lot of snow. We always get a lot of snow, but last winter we got more snow than ever before. People on the news were saying, "There is going to be a flood from all that snow." When spring came the snow began to melt. It melted and melted. The water from the snow went into the rivers. The rivers became wider and got higher everyday. My mom and dad told me there was a flood on the way. I wondered what was going to happen to us. Were we going to have to move? My mom and dad assured me we were safe, but many other people were not.



The next day my brother, sister and I went to stay at my mama and papa's for the day while my mom and dad went to help sandbag. I wasn't sure what that meant. They told me they had to build dikes, by piling bags filled with sand around people's homes. This was to stop the flood water from damaging their homes. My mama sent a lot of food with my mom and dad to give to the volunteers who might be hungry from all the work.

My mom and dad helped sandbag more that week. There were thousands of people helping. One day my auntie Barb phoned and said the flood water was coming closer to their home. My Mom told them they could stay with us if they had to leave. A few days later they were evacuated. I found out 'evacuated' meant that their whole neighborhood had to leave their homes as soon as possible. I was thrilled my cousins Christopher and Laura would be coming to stay at our house. I was also worried about their home. A whole bunch of people came to help my aunt and uncle move their belongings out of their home. I was so glad my cousin Christopher brought his bike and roller blades to our home.

Many people didn't have a family to stay with. These people had to stay in hotels and dormitories. Most children didn't have toys to play with or books to read. Our school collected toys, books, clothes and blankets to send to some evacuees. A lot of schools did the same thing. It felt good to help the people who needed it.

One day my whole family went to help fill sandbags. They said this was a safe place for the children to volunteer. My mom would fill a bag with sand and I would tie it and my auntie Barb would throw it on the pile. We did this for a long time. Sometimes a big dump



truck would come. People would pick up sandbags and just start throwing them on the back of the truck. The driver would say "thanks" when it was full and drive off to where they needed more sandbags. When we were finished there was a lot of food. People from all over the city brought food for the workers. We had sandwiches and cookies and canned drinks. It was really yummy after all the hard work.

Ten days later my auntie Barb and uncle Don were told they could move home. They were so happy. They were lucky that the flood never did reach their home. Some of their friends and neighbors hadn't been so lucky. These people got water in their basements and some in their living rooms too. I felt sad for the kids who lost special things from the water.

Today is the day we help Auntie Barb and Uncle Don move their things back into their house. I was eager to get up this morning, because I thought when they got to move home that the flood was over. I now know that although the water has gone away the damage it left is still here. Although we helped as much as we could before the water came, we still need to help. Most people can get back to their normal lives, but many people have a lot of work to do to fix up their yards and houses. I know the volunteers will stay and help.

My auntie Barb and uncle Don just made a few phone calls and already many friends have offered to help move their furniture back into their house. My mom says we have really great friends. I say we have a really great city. It might be a little muddy right now but it's the people that count. Besides, everybody has a pair of rubber boots by now.



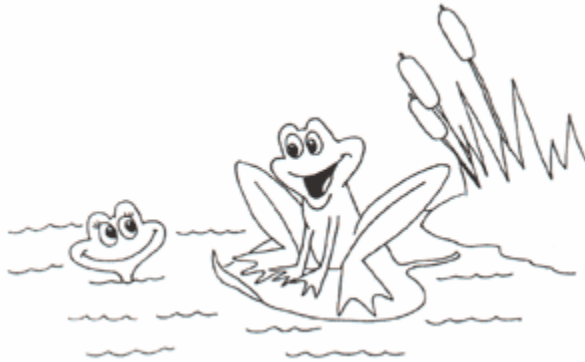
The news people say this will be remembered as the '**flood of the century.**' I say it will be remembered as '**people helping people.**' Wouldn't it be great if we always remembered the good feeling we got from helping others? The world would be a brighter place for all.

GOGI FROG SAVES HIS JUMPS

by Scott Gerbrandt

Every year the animals of Sycamore Swamp would have a contest with many different events. The deer would have an obstacle course around trees and rocks and would finally end up by the swamp. The ants would see who could carry the largest piece of food the farthest distance. This was always exciting because the ants could carry things much larger than they were, so it looked like the food was walking by itself. The frogs would all line up and then with one huge push, jump as far as they could jump. The contest was just for fun, and all the animals would play and chatter all day long.

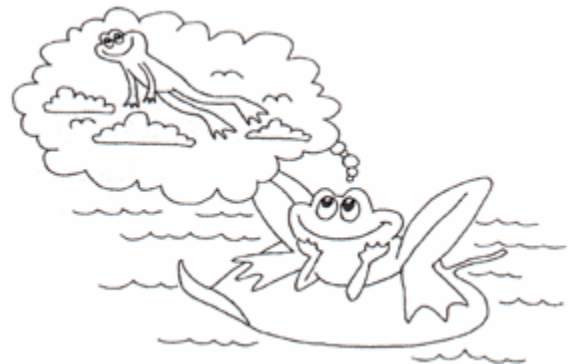
Gogi Frog was getting old enough to jump with the big frogs, along with his best friend, Felicia Frog. Gogi wanted to be the best jumper because he thought this would make him the froggiest frog from Sycamore Swamp. The contest was still a few months away when Gogi thought he had a great idea. When Felicia came over to Gogi's lily pad and asked Gogi to come in the water and play, Gogi said.....



"No, thank you, Felicia. I am saving my jumps for the contest. I am going to save all my strength and when the contest comes I will jump so far that I will look like a bird."

So every day would come and go and the animals would go about their business getting food, building their houses or playing. Every day Felicia Frog would stop at Gogi's lily pad and ask him to play. Every day Gogi would say, "No, thank you, Felicia I am saving my jumps. "

Gogi Frog would sit floating about the swamp, watching the tree leaves and imagining how excited the animals would be when he made his fantastic leap. His mom would say, "Gogi, you have to get your exercise. You should go exercise. You should go outside and play with Felicia, instead of just watching the leaves all day long."



Gogi Frog was getting so excited it seemed the day would never come. He kept imagining the day he would jump and how every body would cheer and holler his name. "GOGI FROG JUST JUMPED AND HE STAYED IN THE AIR ALL DAY LONG!" they would all scream together.

Felicia Frog was also looking forward to the contest, but she was looking forward to all the races and games. She, along with the rest of the animals, didn't care if she won or not. Felicia was just excited about being able to jump with the big frogs this year.

When the big race day came, the animals all gathered with the insects and the birds. Everyone was there. The birds flew from tree to tree for their race. The squirrels darted and jumped for nuts along the ground and in the trees.



Then Gogi and Felicia knew it was their turn. They lined up at the starting line (which was actually one of the longer snakes) and when the starting line snake started to hiss, "sssssstart sssspringing," the frogs leaped as far as they could leap. With his eyes squeezed shut, Gogi grunted a big frog grunt and jumped as hard as he could. When he landed he looked back and could not see any of the other

frogs. "My goodness," said Gogi, "I jumped so far I can't see the other frogs anymore!"

"Um, I'm afraid not, Gogi," said Felicia. "We're over here." Gogi spun around and saw Felicia and all the other frogs in front of him.

Gogi was astonished. "How could this be? This cannot be! It was not supposed to be like this," stammered Gogi.

Felicia disappeared for a moment and returned with Gogi's Mom. Mom explained to Gogi how when children play and even as they do their chores, their muscles grow and their minds also get stronger.

"Well, I know that from now on I won't just sit around on my lily pad and watch the tree leaves all day long," laughed Gogi.

Mom and Felicia thought that this was indeed an excellent idea and went with Gogi to enjoy the rest of the day at Sycamore Swamp.

The End

THE FROG IN THE WELL

by Joy Oliver

There once was a frog named Franky. He lived in a pond in the middle of a meadow full of tall grass and beautiful wild flowers. At the edge of the meadow was a great forest. Franky lived there with his frog family and all his froggy friends. He and his friends love to jump. They would play leap frog and other games all day long. Franky loved to jump so much that when he jumped he would get so excited he would croak. That made Franky the loudest croaker in the whole pond.

One day while everyone was resting after breakfast, Franky went out to practice his high jumps. He was concentrating so hard he didn't realize where he had wandered off to. Finally Franky was tired enough to stop and look around. That was when he found he had wandered to the edge of the great forest. Franky was sitting next to a high stone wall. Franky thought, "maybe I should jump up onto the wall so I can see to find my way home". He hopped back a little, then readied himself for the big jump.



"One, two, three!" Franky called out. Then he jumped. Up he went. Higher and higher he flew. He jumped so high, he went over the wall and landed with a splash. "Oh, no!" Franky cried. "I'm at the bottom of a well. How am I going to get out?" He swam around and around. "I can't jump out," he thought, "the wall is too high. I can't climb out. the wall is too smooth." Franky was so worried he started to croak.

"That's it!" Franky shouted. "If I croak real loud maybe someone will hear me and stop to help." Franky swam and he croaked. It was cold and dark, but help was not long in coming. It was a large deer with very large antlers.

"Helloooo down there!" the deer called. "What's all the noise about? I could hear you half way through the forest."

"Oh, sorry! My name is Franky Frog and I fell into this well and can't get out. Do you think you can help me?" Franky called up to the deer.



"Buster Buck at your service. I'll just lower my antlers into the well and you can jump on. Then I will lift you out," the deer called back.

"Okay, lower away!" Franky yelled. Buster Buck lowered his antlers into the well.

"Can you come a little lower?" Franky asked

"That's as low as I can go" said Buster.

"But that won't do. It's still much too high for me. Thank you for trying anyway, Mr. Buck," Franky replied.

"Sorry I couldn't do more. Good luck getting out," Buster yelled. Then off he went back into the forest.

Franky was feeling scared, and he was missing his family and friends. He began to croak again. He croaked and swam, swam and croaked. Then he heard a voice call out. "Who's down there?"

"It's me, Franky Frog. Can you help me out?" Franky called back.

"Hello, my name is Chester Chipmunk. How did you get down there?"

"It's a long story. If you can get me out I'll tell it to you." Franky replied.

"Okay. How about I fill the well with nuts and then you can just climb right out?" Chester asked.

"Sounds like a good idea, but won't that take an awful long time?" Franky asked.

"I guess so, but that's all I can do," Chester said.

Chester Chipmunk started collecting acorns and throwing them down the well. It was all Franky could do to avoid being hit on the head. He swam here, there and everywhere, dodging acorns. "Chester!" Franky called. "I don't think this is going to work."

"You're right, Franky. I'm tired already and you can't even see the results of all my hard work." Chester replied.

"I'll just have to wait for someone else to come along. Thanks anyway." Franky called out.

"You're welcome. Good luck," Chester replied, and off he went back into the forest. Franky sighed. "Will I ever get out," he thought. Croak, croak, croak, that's all he could do. And that's exactly what he did. Swim and croak, croak and swim. It wasn't long and he heard another voice call to him. "Is there anyone there?"

"Yes! It's me, Franky Frog! Can you help me out?" Franky cried back with excitement.

"Hello, Franky. My name is Prissy Porcupine. I can certainly try," Prissy said.

"Why don't I try shooting my quills into the side of the wall and you can use them to climb out?"

"That sounds great! But I thought porcupines don't shoot their quills," Franky replied.

"They don't," Prissy stated. "But this is only a story, so we can pretend they do."

"Okay. Give it your best shot," Franky called up as he swam to the other side of the well.

"Out of the way!" Prissy yelled to Franky. "Fire one," she said after the first quill sailed into the wall. "Fire two," she said as the second one went in. "Fire three. Fire four. Fire five"

"Prissy!" Franky screamed. "It's not working anymore, and they're still too high for me to reach."

"Sorry, Franky. I did my best," Prissy called back.

"You did great. Thanks anyway," Franky said.

"Anytime. Good bye and good luck," Prissy said as she turned to go back to the forest.

By this time Franky was really feeling scared. He was getting stiff from swimming around in the cold water and his throat was beginning to get sore from all the shouting and croaking. But he couldn't stop now. It was starting to get dark and his family would be wondering where he was. So he went on croaking as best as he could. He was rewarded with a flapping sound.



"Quack, quack. who's down there?" a voice shouted.

"It is I! Franky Frog. Is that you Dolly Duck?" Franky shouted back to the voice.

"It sure is, Franky. What are you doing down there? Your family is worried about you. They sent me to try to find you," Dolly stated.

"Oh, I am so glad. It's a long story and I promise to tell you after you get me out. I'm cold and tired, so could you please hurry," Franky replied.

"Okay. I'll be right down," Dolly said. So she flapped her way to the bottom of the well. When she reached the bottom she told Franky to climb on her back so she could lift him out. So up Franky hopped. They flew out of the well and all the way back to the pond.

Everyone was so happy to see Franky, they hugged and cheered. They all thanked Dolly Duck for bringing Franky back safe. That night Franky thought about his experience in the well and promised himself he would never wander from the pond by himself again. He also thought about the animals he met at the well. Can you remember their names and how they tried to save Franky?

The End