

The Bestselling Series that Changed Millions of Lives

Chicken Soup for the

Child's Soul.®

More than
500 Million
Chicken Soup
for the Soul
books sold

Character-Building Stories to Read with Kids Ages 5–8

**JACK CANFIELD, MARK VICTOR HANSEN,
PATTY HANSEN & IRENE DUNLAP**



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What Kids Are Saying About *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul*

"I like this book because it shows kids how to forgive, tell the truth, and be good to others. I think it's amazing."

Isaac High,

"I really liked *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* because lots of emotions ran through me while reading it. It teaches you how to cope with the hard times."

Rachel Brown,

"Two thumbs way up!"

Dawson Hughes,

"The stories in *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* were so great that I could read them every day. I'll read them to my kids when I get to be a mom."

Sierra Hynes,

"I think people should read *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* because the stories are about caring, accepting others, and being nice."

John Hughes,

"I think every kid should read this book because it helps you learn things about growing up."

Christian Nunez,

"I especially liked the animal stories."

Alexis Bounopane,

"The stories in *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* were very good, and they made me think about my life."

Belma Omanouic,

"I liked the stories in *Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* because I could picture them in my head. It was such a fun book to read."

Robyn Bajraktari,

"*Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* really helps out in tight situations like with a friend or family member. I think people of all ages should read it."

Isabelle Evans,

"*Chicken Soup for the Child's Soul* is a great way for kids to learn that there are some people just like them in this world."

Zoë Hall,

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE CHILD'S SOUL

Character-Building Stories to Read with Kids Ages 5–8

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Hansen & Irene Dunlap



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Good character and integrity are contributing factors to a successful and fulfilling life—something we all want for our kids. Yet children today live in a world where they are often confused by what they hear in the news and by how they see people treat each other.

While most of us strive to develop positive character traits in our kids, we find there are few true role models left for our children to look up to. And we recognize that good character is not always inherently given to us, but is taught by example and through individual choices we make each day.

John Luther regarded it this way: “Good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are to some extent a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it piece by piece—by thought, choice, courage, and determination.”

Since *Chicken Soup for the Kid’s Soul* was released in 1998, we have found a resounding theme in the constant stream of letters we receive from the kids who read our books. They have assured us that the true stories of universal experiences and life lessons from kids (and adults who haven’t forgotten what it’s like to be a kid) give them perspective, shape the way they approach life situations, and give them hope for their futures.

The book you’re holding is part of our ongoing response to those letters, and the continuous need to assist kids in building their own good moral base and strength of character that will serve them throughout their lives. Chosen specifically for children five to eight years old, these stories offer young readers a chance to discover how children just like themselves react and behave when confronted with difficult situations that test their character.

Through each chapter, without moralizing or preaching, stories about how kids have learned to adjust to and even accept tough changes, find forgiveness, take responsibility, or share with those in need will inspire readers and help them understand that life is a journey, made up of the decisions and lessons we learn from each and every day. It is our hope that because of the actions and strength of character exemplified by kids in these stories, the children in your realm of influence will discover a pathway for making good life decisions and, in turn, help make the world a better place.

So we encourage you to take a few minutes each day to sit down and read these stories with children or have them read these stories to you. The time spent reading together will be undoubtedly special and priceless, while each positive lesson they learn from this book will last their lifetimes.

THINKING OF OTHERS

*I was miserable at school on the first day.
No kind words had come my way.
It seemed that everyone was in groups or pairs.
I was the only one sitting among empty chairs.
But what happened next changed my point of view.
I heard a voice saying, "Hi, can I sit with you?"
Joy went through me as I saw kindness in her eyes.
The impact of that single word came as a surprise.
Now I have tons of friends 'cause of something I do.
I greet everyone with "Hi," and maybe you should too.*

Jessica Bolandina, 13

My Lady

“Grrrrrrr.”

The soft growl made me stop in my tracks as I was walking across my neighbor’s backyard. Was it a bear? Maybe a wolverine had gotten into the yard in search of food.

My eyes came to rest on the shadows under the small fishing boat that was up on blocks. As they became adjusted to the dark, I realized that the growl was coming from a large dog.

“It’s okay,” I said. “I’m just passing through.”

The dog stared at me, its short black coat dull and matted, then it groaned and laid its large head on its paws. I paused for a moment, taking in how skinny it was, and then realized that my neighbors didn’t have a dog. I knew what I needed to do. I whispered to the dog, “I’ll be right back . . . don’t go anywhere.”

I ran to my house, my heart pounding as I raced through the door, grabbed a paper bag, and filled it with some food. I raced back out into the early spring evening. The air made my breath fog as I panted, and the chill froze my fingers as I clutched the little bag of food.

When I got to the boat, I slowed down. The dog was too tired and hungry to even lift its head. I came closer carefully and noticed that it was a girl. I placed the food on the grass in front of her and moved back, ready to bolt if she was mean.

“It’s okay, girl. I brought you some food,” I said.

She lifted up her large head and cocked it to the side as though she was deciding whether to believe me or not. Then, with a loud groan, she stood up and walked to the food. It disappeared in no time. When she finished, she sat down and stared at me. I knew without a doubt that she wanted more.

“I can get you more, but you need to stay right here,” I explained as I started to back up. “Stay here, okay?”

I ran back through the yard to my house, my thoughts on nothing except the dog. When I stepped through the doors, I realized that I was late getting home. My dad was waiting for me.

“Where have you been, Sirena?” he asked.

My breath came out in gasps as I explained, “There is a sick dog in the neighbor’s yard, and I was giving her some food.”

My dad looked at me, sighed, and then started out the door with me following close behind. To our surprise, we found the skinny dog sitting in our driveway, ears forward, waiting for me. My dad went to reach for her only to have her skitter away. She looked at him, eyes big with fear, and then she looked at me and ran behind me to hide. Laughing, my dad said, “Looks like you have a patient.”

I was overjoyed and got busy taking care of her. I set up a bed for her in the laundry room and put out some food and water. As I comforted her, I realized that we had already become friends. I couldn’t bear to send her off to the dog shelter, so I walked into the kitchen to plead my case. I explained to my parents how I would walk her and care for her. I told them that I wasn’t too young to have a pet, and I could prove it to them. In the end, it was decided that I could care for her while we looked for her owner.

As the days went by, no one came to claim her, and finally my parents let me keep her. I named her Lady, and she quickly became my best friend.

Months later, as I was walking down the road with Lady, a dark car pulled up alongside us. Lady

glanced over, and then started jumping and barking. A large smile spread across her face. I knew before the car door even opened that Lady had found her original owner.

He was tall and thin, with large brown hands that hugged and patted Lady. She wriggled in his arm licking his long face, and I could see the happiness in his brown eyes as he looked up at me. "I've been looking for Rocky," he said to me. "It looks like you have been taking good care of her."

So Lady's real name was Rocky. I blinked the tears from my eyes as I looked at him. "Is she your dog?" I asked, already knowing the answer.

"Yes, she is. She ran away a few months ago, and I couldn't find her. I'm glad she found someone to take care of her."

My hands loosened on the leash as I looked at her. She was so happy and excited, dancing in circles with her tongue hanging out the side of her mouth as she looked between us. My words came in bursts. "So . . . I guess . . . you want her . . . back, huh? She's yours . . . and she's a really good dog. She should go with you."

The man looked at my outstretched hand for a few minutes, his brown eyes thoughtful. Then he stood up, smiled, and said, "It looks like she's happy right where she is. I wouldn't feel right taking her from someone she needs. So I think you should keep her, if you still want her."

A smile lit up my face as I nodded, too happy to say anything. I watched him climb back into his car and slowly drive away, waving to us as he did. My steps were light as I continued walking, Lady in step beside me, right where she belonged.

Sirena Van Scha

The Right Thing to Do

Although I was trying to concentrate on cursive writing and the fours times tables at school, I couldn't stop thinking about my beautiful Halloween costume waiting for me at home. I was going to be an angel with wings! My mother had made the wings out of cardboard and leftover Christmas tinsel, and I thought she had made magic.

It was certainly better than last year's costume when I had been a female Frankenstein. That costume was a hand-me-down from my brother Kevin. We were only about a year apart in age, and we had to share everything—including germs.

The morning of Halloween, I was surprised to find that I could hardly swallow. As my brother hung his head down from the top bunk, he did not have to say a word. I knew that he was sick, too. I couldn't think of anything more terrible, especially on Halloween.

It turned out to be a rainy Halloween night. As the rain fell, so did my tears whenever I looked at my beautiful costume. My mother tried to make the best of it by telling us how much fun it would be to stay home and give out candy. I admit it was exciting to see what television character or creature our neighborhood friends would be, but it still was not quite as thrilling as going trick-or-treating.

When it was time for bed, just as Kevin and I were climbing into our bunkbeds, we heard a knock on the front door. Before long, our mother came to our bedroom and told us we needed to come out.

On the front porch stood the four Montgomery children. Before we could say a word, they handed my brother and me each a pillowcase full of candy! My mother told them to thank their mom for her thoughtful idea, but Bonnie, one of the older kids, replied, "Mom didn't tell us to do this—we just wanted to."

Still surprised, we thanked the Montgomery children and watched them walk away. That's when we noticed that they only had two pillowcases, even though there were four of them. They had actually given away their own pillowcases full of candy. I couldn't believe that anybody would do that, especially when their mother hadn't even made them!

As we poured the bags of candy out on the bedroom floor, we were in for another surprise. Mom told us that we did not have to go back to bed and that we could actually stay up and sort our candy. I think my mother had also missed going trick-or-treating as much we had, and so we offered some of the candy to her. After a few trades with my brother, my mother said firmly that it was time for lights out.

Saying my good-night prayers, I remembered a special word of thanks for the Montgomery children and their gifts of the pillowcases full of candy. I even finally forgave Jimmy Montgomery for destroying my cardboard doll bed the time he had tried to crawl into it.

That seemed like the right thing to do to trade for the pillowcases full of candy generously given to a couple of sick neighborhood friends.

Stephanie Ray Brown

Friends of the Heart

Kind words and good deeds are eternal. You never know where their influence will end.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Ariana caught another whiff and tried to hold her breath. She moved away slightly, but Ashley only moved closer and continued talking.

Ariana thought to herself, *Why does she always have to sit next to me?* She inched away some more until she touched elbows with the girl next to her. Ashley didn't seem to notice that Ariana was trying to move away, and she leaned in closer. Ariana felt trapped. She wanted badly to tell Ashley that she didn't smell very good. But how could she without hurting her feelings? Instead, she gathered the remains of her lunch to throw in the trash, thankful for the excuse to get some fresh air.

She looked back to see Ashley eating quietly. Ashley's hair was stringy and tangled, like it needed good washing, and her clothes were wrinkled and stained. All the other kids talked and laughed with each other. No one talked and laughed with Ashley.

Ariana forced herself to go back to the table and take her seat. She was stuck with Ashley today, but vowed that she would not get stuck with her tomorrow.

When Ariana got home from school, she complained to her mother. "There's this girl named Ashley who likes to sit next to me in school, but she smells bad."

"She's probably having a tough day," said her mother.

"No, it's not just one day. She smells bad a lot," Ariana explained. "Nobody else likes to sit next to her, either."

"Well, try to be nice to her," said her mother. "Maybe she's having a hard time at home. You never know what a person's home life is like."

For the rest of the week, Ariana tried to be a good friend to Ashley. There were times when they had fun talking and playing together, especially on the days that Ashley bathed. But the days when she smelled bad, which was most of the time, Ariana still found it very hard to be her friend.

One morning, while getting her hair combed for school, Ariana brought the subject up again with her mother.

"I don't want to be friends with Ashley anymore," she told her.

"Why? Is she mean to you?" asked her mother, twisting Ariana's hair into a ponytail.

"No. She stinks!" Ariana scrunched up her nose. "And her clothes are dirty. She wore the same shirt two days in a row. That's disgusting."

Her mother's hands froze in midair. Ariana turned to see what the matter was. Her mother looked upset. Ariana wondered what she had said to make her mother react this way.

"I don't think you understand Ashley's situation, so let me ask you this. . . ." Her mother's tone was serious. "Who makes sure that your hair is combed every morning so you'll look nice when you go to school?"

"You do," answered Ariana.

"Who makes sure you're bathed and cleaned every day? And your clothes are washed and neatly ironed?"

"You and Daddy," Ariana said again.

“Do you live in a nice home? Do you have enough to eat?”

Ariana nodded, beginning to feel guilty. She was starting to understand now. Ashley couldn't help her situation because she was only seven years old—the same age as Ariana. Grown-ups are supposed to take care of kids.

“Why doesn't her family take better care of her?” Ariana asked.

“Not all children live in the best situation,” her mother said. “The best thing you can do for Ashley is to treat her with kindness and compassion.”

Ariana bit her bottom lip. Sadness for Ashley filled her heart. She vowed that from now on she would be the best friend that she could be to Ashley.

At school, Ariana kept her vow. She let Ashley sit next to her. Other times, she voluntarily sat next to Ashley. She partnered with Ashley to help with her schoolwork. On the days that Ashley smelled bad, she moved away a little or politely asked Ashley for a little room. She was always careful not to hurt Ashley's feelings.

As the months passed, Ariana discovered that she enjoyed talking and hanging out with Ashley. She no longer saw her as the girl who smelled bad, but as a friend with a kind and warm heart.

At the end of the school year, the second grade prepared to go on a field trip to the zoo. The day before the field trip, the teacher announced that the class needed to bring in a lunch from home. Ashley was absent, and Ariana worried that her friend would not have a lunch because Ashley always ate the school lunches.

Ariana couldn't call Ashley because she didn't know her telephone number. So, the next day, Ariana asked her mom to make an extra lunch and some snacks for Ashley—just in case.

“You have a good spirit, Ariana,” said her mother. “I'm very proud of you!”

When Ariana got to school, she discovered that she had been right. Ashley had not brought a lunch for the field trip.

When Ariana gave the lunch to Ashley, she saw tears well up in Ashley's eyes. Ariana was surprised at Ashley's reaction because after all, she was only doing what true friends do for each other. Ashley was her friend—and they were friends of the heart.

Ariana Morgan Bridges as told to Robin Smith Bridges

The Key to Bethany's Heart

The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.

Helen Keller

“Come on in! The water’s great,” I assured Bethany. I wanted to reach out to my new foster sister, to let her know that she could trust us. We’d never let her down the way her mother had done.

Bethany shook her head, not budging from her seat on the shore. She scowled at the waves that rushed in from the sea. She seemed angry to be here with a strange family and a girl who was trying too hard to be her sister. She hadn’t asked for her mother to suddenly walk out of her life, leaving her in foster care. And she hadn’t asked to join my family on vacation.

My parents walked up to Bethany. She stiffened when Mom knelt and put her arm around her shoulders.

“I know it’s hard for you, Bethany. Please try to understand that we only want to love and help you.”

Tears filled Bethany’s eyes. She didn’t want our help. She wanted to go back to her own life. Yet, part of her knew that it wasn’t our fault that she had to be with us. She nodded and murmured “I know,” but I could tell she was hurting inside.

Bethany sat with her head down as Mom and Dad walked away. She picked up a small clamshell that had washed onto the shore and rubbed the smooth surface with her fingers. Once, a living creature had claimed it as home, but now it was as cold and empty as Bethany’s heart.

I stood up and watched a small wave come crashing in.

“What good does it do to sit here and miss all the fun?” I asked Bethany.

“I don’t exactly feel like having *fun*. My life isn’t perfect like yours, Sarah.”

“I’ve always thought that my life would be perfect if I only had a sister. I just want to be your best friend.”

When Bethany didn’t reply, I felt like walking away and having my own fun. It was taking a lot of patience to deal with her.

Instead, I sighed and said, “I know you’ve had a hard time. In hard times, you need a friend. I want to be that friend.”

Bethany looked at me. Something seemed to crack in her hard outer shell.

“Okay. I’ll give it a try,” she said. “Let’s go out for a swim.”

We waded into the clear blue water of the Mexican coast. It splashed around our waists. Suddenly, I felt a jab.

“Ouch! That little blue jellyfish just stung me!”

We glanced around the water and saw the tiny blue bubbles of jellyfish to our right.

“I’m getting out, and I’m not *ever* coming back in,” I said angrily.

Bethany took my arm. “Wait. You don’t get to come to the beach very often. I can help you watch for them. They float on top of the water, so they’re not that hard to see.”

I smiled at Bethany. “You’ve got a deal.”

We all want to be needed. Maybe what Bethany needed was someone to need her, to trust her.

Maybe no one had ever done that before.

I was happy to be that someone. I was even happier that I had finally found the key to Bethany's heart!

Karen Cog

Bossy Lara

“Bossy Lara, bossy Lara!” the class roared in chant. They kept on, getting louder and louder in the song.

My teacher, Ms. Dixon, sent me to sit in the corner for a while to quiet the class. I didn’t understand at all. *I* knew how to operate the record player. *I* knew to be very careful when putting the needle down to not scratch the records. My father had taught me exactly what to do. And besides, not everyone had steady hands or the know-how to play a record without damaging it.

So why was it, I wondered, that the class got upset when I tried to take over and show Marcia how to handle the record player the right way? I was only trying to help, as I had done many times before. I also couldn’t understand why the teacher had sent me to the corner. I was taught to always help my classmates if they didn’t understand or know how to do something. If anything, I thought the class was wrong in their judgment of me. I thought the teacher was certainly wrong in siding with them.

When everyone was excused for recess, Ms. Dixon kept me in. I figured that I was in serious trouble, but I still didn’t understand how my actions could have caused the teacher to react like this. I had never been in trouble this bad before.

“Why am I here and not at recess?” I asked Ms. Dixon.

The teacher didn’t say a word. Instead, she placed a word puzzle in front of me. I guessed Ms. Dixon wanted me to do it, so I got out my pencil and attempted to solve it. This was like no other puzzle I had done before. It was difficult, with words I didn’t understand. I raised my hand for help, but Ms. Dixon ignored me. Maybe Ms. Dixon was just keeping me in to protect me from the other students’ mean words.

I struggled with the word puzzle until I was about to give up and throw it away. But I was not a quitter, and so I stayed with the challenge. Once I got one word, I was able to get another, and soon I had solved the problem by myself. I was so proud I did the puzzle on my own that I raised my hand high to get Ms. Dixon’s attention.

Ms. Dixon walked over to me, picked up the finished puzzle, and smiled.

“I’m glad that you learned this important lesson from me.”

I was confused. She hadn’t done anything, hadn’t given me help in any way. Now she was taking the credit for my hard work!

Ms. Dixon wrote an “A” on my paper.

“Now perhaps you have learned to let other students make discoveries on their *own*. After all, *that* is the fun of learning.”

Of course, she was right. And I finally understood how the others felt when I tried to take over and do things for them. I had taken away their chance to find out how good it feels when you figure things out by yourself.

In that moment, I decided that I would never do anything that would cause them to call me “Bossy Lara” ever again.

Lara Anderson

A Special Lunch

The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer someone else up.

Mark Twain

I could just barely climb up onto the kitchen counter, but that is where I was sitting, hungry and hopeful that our babysitter would make me something to eat. When she didn't answer my call, I dropped down and went to look for her. I found her asleep on the couch.

So I decided that I'd go find my sister, Ashley. She was coloring in her room. When she saw me, the first thing out of her mouth was, "I'm hungry. Let's make some sandwiches."

"I'll get the peanut butter 'cause you're too short!" I teased her.

"Yeah, but I'm stronger," she bragged.

We went into the kitchen, and I climbed back onto the counter and found the peanut butter in a cabinet up high. Ashley found the jelly in one of the lower cabinets.

"Give it to me," I demanded. I was hungry, so that made me kind of grumpy.

"You don't have to be so mean!" Ashley answered.

A second later, she said, "Hey, look!" Ashley had noticed that a bag of flour had broken and spilled on the floor of the cabinet.

"Mom's going to be mad, Ashley!" I said, accusing her of doing it.

Ashley threw a handful of flour at me for saying that.

"Hey!" I yelled, grabbing a handful of flour and throwing it at her.

We ran around the kitchen throwing flour at each other until we were white as ghosts. Flour floated in the air around us as we took off into the living room.

Suddenly, the grandfather clock on the wall started to ding.

"Oh, no! Mom's going to be home any minute!" I panicked. *What are we going to do about the mess?* I wondered nervously. It looked like it had snowed inside the house.

Ashley quickly ran and grabbed a vacuum, but she didn't know how to turn it on. Suddenly, the sound of keys jingled at the front door.

"Oh, no! Mom's home!" Ashley screamed. "We're going to get put in time-out for a whole hour!"

Mom walked in the door, tired from a long day at college. She took three steps into the house and shook her head.

Ashley and I ran to her with angel smiles on our faces. Mom didn't get mad at us, but she seemed kind of upset at the babysitter when she woke her up and showed her the mess we had made. Once the babysitter had gone, Mom went into her room.

"We're not in trouble!" I shouted with joy.

"Mom didn't look so good, Chris," Ashley said to me with a sad voice.

"What? She was smiling. Of *course* she looked good!" I assured her.

"Well, let's go see!" Ashley said, with a big-girl voice.

So we went to Mom's bedroom door and peeked in. Mom was sitting on her bed leaning over her homework. We noticed tears in her eyes.

"She's crying because we made such a mess!" Ashley whispered. "Come on. Let's go clean the

house.”

“Fine, but then she has to make us a sandwich!” I said.

“You’re spoiled!” Ashley shot back. “Mom has to go to school on Saturdays after she has worked all week. And she has to go back to work tonight. She never gets a break.”

So Ashley and I ran to the vacuum and finally found the button. I vacuumed, because I was stronger no matter what Ashley said, and Ashley got a feather duster from the closet. Ashley dusted everything even the VCR. Pretty soon, the flour was gone, and the floors were clean.

“I have an idea. Let’s make a special lunch for Mom!” Ashley suggested.

“But *we’re* the ones who are hungry!” I pouted.

“Stop being so selfish!” Ashley said. “Come on, I’m too short to get the peanut butter!”

“Fine,” I said and walked into the kitchen with a frown.

I climbed up on the counter, and before long the two of us had made two sandwiches. Ashley got out some orange juice and poured a glass for Mom.

“I want to give the sandwiches to Mom!” I said.

“But then she’ll think that you did everything!” Ashley said in a sad voice.

“Okay, you can give it to her. I’ll give her the orange juice!” I agreed.

We took the meal to Mom, and she smiled.

“You made it for me? My kids made me lunch?” She was so happy she started to cry again.

“We cleaned the whole house, too!” Ashley bragged.

“I did all the vacuuming ’cause Ashley’s not strong enough,” I bragged.

Ashley stuck her tongue out at me for that.

“Well, thanks for all of your effort, but I’m only hungry enough for one sandwich. Who wants the other one?” Mom asked.

“Ashley, you can have it,” I offered. But Ashley cut the sandwich in half, and we shared it.

“You two are the best kids I could ever ask for,” Mom said as she got ready to go to work.

“No, you’re the best mom!” we both said with a smile.

Seeing Mom happy made the peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches taste even better.

Christopher Ger...



Throwing his coat over the mud puddle for the girls seemed like a good idea at the time.

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The Twenty-Dollar Bill

Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.

Edmund Burke

When my mom and dad said that we could adopt a couple of kittens, I jumped at the chance to have some soft, cuddly animals around the house. So off we went to the Humane Society where there were a lot of animals up for adoption.

The first thing I noticed was that there was not a lot of room for the animals and not a lot of supplies to care for them. Even though they didn't have much, the people who worked there cared about the animals more than anything, and they did their best for them. Still, it seemed they had just barely enough food and medicine to keep the animals healthy.

When we started looking around, I saw a lot of animals and fell in love with each of them. But my family and I finally settled on adopting two kittens we named Sox and Sierra. We went up to the front desk to sign the papers for them, and that's when I noticed a box on the counter. The Humane Society was hoping to get enough donations to buy more supplies for the animals and also build a new building to help even more abandoned animals.

We finished up and took our new kittens home, where they were sure to get a lot of love. Later that day, my mom and I went shopping, and as we were walking through the parking lot at the store, I noticed a green piece of paper three spaces away from our car. It was kind of wet, but it looked like it could be a dollar bill, so I walked over and picked it up. It wasn't a dollar bill—it was a twenty-dollar bill!

When I got home, I dried it off and thought about what to do with it. I considered spending it on a toy and a lot of other things. Right then, Sox climbed up into my lap, and I knew what I was going to do with the money.

I asked my mom to take me back to the Humane Society so that I could put the money in the donation box. The lady at the counter smiled and thanked me, and I felt really good about what I did.

If the Humane Society does raise enough money to build a new building, I will know that I helped many more animals that will come to live there one day— hopefully, only until someone comes along and lovingly adopts them like we did with Sox and Sierra.

Mallory McGinty, 1

Sometimes, Babies Get in the Way

When you carry out acts of kindness, you get a wonderful feeling inside. It is as though something inside your body responds and says, yes, this is how I ought to feel.

Harold Kushner

“A swing set! We have a swing set!” Six-year-old Sarah sprang out of bed. From her bedroom window, she could see the new addition in the back yard.

“Can I play on it right now?” she asked her mother.

“Sure,” her mom said, and in an instant, Sarah was outside. She didn’t even change out of her pajamas!

In the yard, Sarah checked out the new equipment; two swings, a slide, and a clubhouse. She was so busy she didn’t notice that her mother had followed her outside.

“Dad and I know you’ll be a wonderful big sister,” her mother said, “so we wanted to get you something special. Besides, after the baby is born, we may not be able to go to the park as often as you’d like. Now you can play out here as much as you want.”

Sarah’s mother was going to have a baby any day now, and the doctor had told her to stay off her feet as much as possible. Sarah’s father was spending more time at his office than usual, finishing up a big project so he could take time off when the baby came. That meant Sarah had to hang around the house a lot. She tried to keep herself busy by making decorations for the new baby’s room. She’d spent hours making signs and drawings to welcome the new baby home. But now that she had a swing set, hanging around the house would be a lot more fun.

Later that week, the baby was born. Sarah had a new sister, and her name was Charlotte.

When Mom and Charlotte came home from the hospital, Sarah held her new sister in her lap, and Dad took pictures. Sarah showed Charlotte all the decorations she’d made for her room.

“I think it’s time for Mom and Charlotte to rest now,” said Dad. “Let’s go out in the yard to give them some quiet.”

Sarah was deciding whether to swing or slide first when she noticed something moving. At the base of the ladder, she saw a clump of dried grass. It was covering a small hole, and something in the hole was moving. She gently pushed the grass aside with her foot and was surprised to discover three baby rabbits!

Sarah replaced the grass that had been covering them and ran to tell her Dad.

“Dad! Dad! There are baby rabbits in the back yard! A mother rabbit had babies, just like Mom!”

Tugging him by the arm, she led him over to the ladder where the bunnies were hiding. It was then that Sarah realized she wouldn’t be able to use the swing set without stepping in the hole.

“Great,” she said. “Because of Charlotte, I can’t play inside. And because of the bunnies, I can’t play outside, either.” It seemed like nothing was going right, and so Sarah began to cry.

“Hold on, hold on,” said Dad. “There has to be a solution. I’m going to make a few calls.”

Sarah waited outside until her dad came back.

“I called the nature center,” he said. “They told me that I could use a big snow shovel to scoop up the bunnies and move them to a different spot.”

“Then let’s do it,” said Sarah. “Let’s move them someplace else.”

“But,” said Dad, “They also said that if I move the bunnies, there’s a chance the mother rabbit won’t want to take care of them anymore.”

He headed to the garage to get the snow shovel. Sarah saw the bunnies moving around in the hole. What would they do without a mother to take care of them?

“Wait!” Sarah shouted. “Leave the bunnies where they are!”

“If I leave them there, you won’t be able to play on the swing set. It may take a few weeks until they’re ready to leave,” Dad replied.

Sarah thought for a minute. She really wanted to play on her swing set, but . . .

“Dad, what if you and Mom came home from the hospital with our new baby, and our home wasn’t here anymore? Where would we go? Where would we live? It would be terrible if it happened to us, so why should we do that to the rabbit family?”

As soon as Sarah said it, she knew she had made a good decision.

“You’re absolutely right, honey,” Dad said. “If it’s okay with you, I’ll leave them alone. How about if we take a walk to the park?”

“Maybe later, Dad,” Sarah said. “I need to do something first!”

Sarah returned with a stack of paper and her crayons.

“What are you making?” Dad asked.

“I’m making a ‘Welcome Home’ sign,” she said, “for the bunnies!”

Ruth B. Spi

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