

Gavin's Jump

► It was the first day of summer vacation. Gavin was excited. He had decided to jump off the diving board at the community pool!

Last summer, many of Gavin's friends jumped off the diving board. Gavin watched them, but he knew he was not ready to jump. Instead, he practiced his swimming strokes while they took turns jumping off the diving board. Then they all swam and played together.

When Gavin woke up this morning, he knew he was ready to jump off the diving board. He was looking forward to it. He hopped out of bed and went to the kitchen to eat some oatmeal.

Just then, Gavin's uncle came into the kitchen for his coffee. He told Gavin they could go to the pool that afternoon. When Gavin told his uncle that he planned to jump off the diving board, his uncle patted him on the shoulder. "I know you can do it," he said encouragingly.

Finally it was time to go to the pool. When Gavin arrived, his friends were already there. He surprised them by saying he was going to the diving board. Gavin waited in line. His friends stood behind him. When it was his turn, he walked out to the edge of the diving board. He saw his uncle smile at him. He heard his friends saying, "You can do it!" Gavin counted to three and jumped into the water. He shot up to the surface with a huge smile on his face. He could not wait to jump again!

The New Year

► The first day of the year is a special day. People around the world celebrate the New Year in different ways. In some places, people watch fireworks. In other places, there are parades with people in colorful costumes. In our country, people often celebrate by having a party. People count down the seconds until midnight when the New Year starts. Then they blow horns and make a lot of noise.

In some places, people make special New Year's bread. When the bread is being made, the baker puts a gold coin in the dough. The coin gets mixed up in the bread dough and is baked inside the bread. No one knows where the coin is. After the bread is baked, it is cut into pieces. It is lucky to get the piece of bread with the coin. All of the people chew carefully. They wonder who the lucky person will be.

In the country of Denmark, people save their broken dishes all year. On New Year's Eve, they throw the broken dishes at friends' doors. If you wake up on the first day of the New Year and find a lot of broken dishes, you are happy. Finding a lot of dishes means you have many friends.

How do you celebrate the New Year? Maybe you would like to try one of these customs with your family.

Roller Skating Fun

► Every Saturday Dad and Craig did something together. This morning Dad had a surprise. They were going to go roller skating. Craig was excited. He had never been roller skating. Dad said it was a lot of fun, so Craig got dressed and put on his coat. They walked to the bus and rode to the skating rink.

As soon as they walked in, Dad started smiling and telling stories about his childhood. He told how he had skated at this same rink. He told of birthday parties and skating contests. Dad was very happy. Craig liked to hear about the things his dad did when he was a boy. They were both excited to start skating.

Dad and Craig went to the counter to rent skates. Then they sat on a bench and laced up their skates. Loud music played, and Craig sang along with the song. Red and blue lights flashed, calling the skaters to the wooden floor.

Together, Dad and Craig stood up. Craig was a bit shaky on four wheels. Dad had an easier time skating, remembering the skating he did as a boy. They both moved closer to the rink and entered through a gate. Dad led the way. Craig had a hard time at first. He clung to the wall, inching slowly around the rink. Dad did one lap and skated up to Craig. He took Craig's hand and led him away from the wall. Soon, Craig found it easier to skate. He let go of Dad's hand and was skating on his own. Craig smiled. Skating with Dad was a lot of fun.
