

The Cherry Park Crew

Today, no alarm clock went off to force Rick out of bed. When he woke up, he saw it was already bright and sunny. After getting out of bed, he remembered it was the first day of summer break. It had finally arrived, and all the neighborhood kids were out of school too. It was time for the Cherry Park Crew to meet again. Rick and his younger brother Peter held the meetings in their backyard tree house. Everyone met there each Wednesday afternoon.

Rick got on the phone and called Beth, James, Lucia, and Andre. The first summer meeting was scheduled. The entire crew was thrilled. The Cherry Park Crew's mission was to support each other and their neighborhood. Their motto: help others like you would want others to help you.

On Wednesday, Rick opened up the meeting by saying, "It's another summer to have fun and help each other. Does anyone have suggestions for our club's activities?"

Lucia quickly raised her hand. "Why don't we cheer up Mr. Morse? My mom told me his wife died five years ago, and he is very lonely."

Rick and Peter both reported that Mr. Morse didn't leave his house much. In fact, they rarely noticed any activity or visitors. Mr. Morse lived just across the street from them.

"Well, I don't know about that idea," said James. "He yelled at me when I accidentally broke his rosebush with my basketball. He seems mean."

"Well, he never did have any kids," said Beth.

"Maybe he doesn't even like kids," said Lucia.

The members of the Cherry Park Crew could not agree about helping Mr. Morse. They began discussing other ideas. Andre mentioned that the crew might work together and earn money. When a need in the neighborhood came up, they would have money to help.

They brainstormed some ideas like pulling weeds, taking in mail, and walking pets. Each crew member was asked to make up a brochure and bring it to the next meeting. Beth and Andre volunteered to make one for pulling weeds. Peter offered to make one for taking in mail. James and Lucia decided to make one for walking dogs. Rick was in charge of copying and handing out the final brochures. At their next meeting, they would finish the final fliers to pass out around the neighborhood.

That same night after dinner, Rick asked his mom about Mr. Morse. She explained that Mr. Morse's wife died from a brain tumor. Mr. Morse had never been the same since. They were a loving, active couple. Mrs. Morse enjoyed taking care of Cherry Park, a forest

area located behind the neighborhood. She spent hours maintaining the park with Mr. Morse's help. It was a passion of hers. Rick's mom said that after she died, the park became overgrown. Mr. Morse didn't enjoy working in the park anymore. He stayed indoors most of the time.

Then Rick asked, "Do you know anything about the rose bush in his front yard?"

Rick's mom replied, "Why, yes! The neighborhood gave Mr. Morse a rare red rosebush in memory of his wife."

"Now it makes sense," said Rick.

"What are you talking about?" asked his mom.

Rick replied, "Oh nothing, Mom."

Rick lay awake in bed that night. He began thinking about Mr. Morse. What might the crew do to cheer him up? Maybe they were wrong about him. Maybe he wasn't a mean man after all.

Before long, Wednesday had arrived. Each crew member climbed up the tree with a brochure in hand. They were excited. First, the Cherry Park Crew said their motto together. Then Rick asked for the crew members to present their brochures.

Beth and Andre drew pictures of kids pulling foot-high weeds out of flower beds. They had sweat dripping down their faces. The brochure read: "We'll pull, yank, and rid you of your weeds. Give us a chance, and you'll really be pleased!" Everyone laughed out loud at the rhyme.

Next, Peter showed his brochure on taking in mail. He made the brochure in the shape of a letter. James and Lucia also enjoyed making their brochure. It had a picture of two kids running with some dogs. The dogs were chasing a cat. It read: "Don't worry about exercise; we can take care of that. Let us walk your dogs on our summer break. We would surely like to do that!"

Rick said, "They look great! I can't wait to hand these out."

Before leaving, Rick said, "One more thing guys."

"And girls," inserted Beth. All the girls giggled in unison.

"Thanks, Beth," said Rick with a smile. He explained what his mom told him about Mr. and Mrs. Morse. The crew listened carefully to his story.

"I guess that explains the rosebush," said James. He looked really sad as he thought about what happened with his basketball.

"Don't feel bad, Andre. I just wanted to tell you all what I learned," said Rick.

After a silent minute, Lucia shouted, "I've got an idea!"

"What is it?" chimed the Cherry Park Crew.

"We can use our money to make a plaque in memory of Mrs. Morse. That might cheer

Mr. Morse up," said Lucia.

Andre replied, "Wait. Where will we put the plaque?"

Lucia said, "On a park bench dedicated to her." The group was excited about their new idea. Lucia was in charge of finding out the cost of the bench and plaque.

Because Rick was so excited, he began dropping off the brochures that afternoon. Peter wanted to go with him. Rick rode his bike while pulling Peter behind in a wagon. Peter would jump out of the wagon and place the brochures in the mailboxes. They passed out brochures to over thirty-five houses! Now it was time to wait for the phone calls. Rick was sure it wouldn't be long before the neighbors started calling.

But a week went by, and there wasn't one phone call. Rick, Peter, Beth, James, Lucia, and Andre began to worry. Why weren't the neighbors calling? They all tried to think of what went wrong. Suddenly, Peter piped up, "Oh, I know."

"Tell us!" the crew cried out.

"We forgot to put our phone numbers on the brochures," said Peter. The group was relieved to discover the problem. But now what? All the brochures were already delivered. The crew decided to go door to door. They would talk to their neighbors face to face. They would explain that the money earned would be used to dedicate a park bench in memory of Mrs. Morse.

Over the next two months, the Cherry Park Crew worked hard. They pulled weeds, brought in mail, and walked dogs. The neighborhood supported their idea. Before school started, the crew got together and counted the money. Rick reported, "We have three-hundred and fifty dollars!"

Lucia began to cry. It was the exact amount needed to buy the bench and engrave the plaque. They knew what to do.

With the help of the whole neighborhood, they cleaned up the park. The Cherry Park Crew set the surprise dedication date. When the day came, the crew invited Mr. Morse themselves. "Oh, I'd rather not go out. I am really missing my wife today," said Mr. Morse.

"Please," pleaded the crew.

"Okay," he replied. As they walked to Cherry Park together, many neighbors were waiting by the bench. When Mr. Morse noticed the clean park, bench, and plaque, he began to cry. "This is incredible!" he said. The crew hugged Mr. Morse as he thanked each one. It was time for another idea...

1. Where did the Crew hold their meetings?

- A. A tree house in Rick's backyard.
- B. Under a tree in Rick's backyard.
- C. The back room at Rick's house.

2. What was the second idea a member of the Crew came up with at the first meeting?

- A. Do work to earn money to spend on fun things.
- B. Do work to earn money to help neighbors in need.
- C. Work hard to make money to buy Mr. Morse new rose bushes.

3. What was this story mostly about?

- A. Older people who need help and get it.
- B. How children can spend their summer break.
- C. A group of children who did good things for others.

4. What was the most special thing for Rick about the first day of summer break?

- A. All the kids were out of school and could play.
- B. He didn't have to set his alarm to get up in the morning.
- C. It was time for the Cherry Park Crew to start meeting.

5. What was Lucia's suggestion for something the club could do?

- A. Help cheer up a neighbor whose wife died.
- B. Help a neighbor take care of his rose bushes.
- C. Help a neighbor get out of his house more often.

6. Why couldn't the members of the Crew agree at first about helping Mr. Morse?

- A. They didn't think he really needed their help.
- B. They weren't sure if Mr. Morse even liked kids.
- C. They had too many other good ideas for helping others.

7. Why did the children think Mr. Morse was mean?

- A. He didn't come out of his house very often.
- B. He yelled at one of the children in anger.
- C. He hardly ever had any visitors at his house.

8. What kind of work did the Crew decide to do to earn money?

- A. Go door to door and ask their neighbors for money.
- B. Clean up the park and the neighborhood.
- C. Pull weeds, bring in mail, and walk dogs.

9. What were the Crew members supposed to do for their second meeting?

- A. Bring brochures about how to make money.
- B. Think of ways to fix up the neighborhood.
- C. Think of ways to help Mr. Morse.

10. How did the neighborhood feel about what the Cherry Park Crew was doing for Mr. Morse?

- A. They gave the Crew jobs, but didn't want to do anything special for Mr. Morse.
- B. They thought it was a good idea, but thought the Crew should do all the work.
- C. They believed in what the Crew was doing and helped where they could.

11. What were Mr. and Mrs. Morse like before Mrs. Morse died?

- A. They spent many hours taking care of Cherry Park.
- B. They liked living close to Cherry Park and looking at it.
- C. They enjoyed walking together in the forest near the house.

12. What caused Rick to change his mind about Mr. Morse?

- A. He decided the Crew should help out everyone, even mean people.
- B. His mom told him how Mr. Morse acted before his wife died.
- C. He needed an idea to take to the next Crew meeting.

- 13. What did Rick figure out about why Mr. Morse got mad when his rose bush was damaged?**
- A. The rose bush was a gift from his neighbors to remember his wife.
 - B. He didn't like children playing in his yard because they break things.
 - C. The rose bush was very expensive and hard to keep alive.
- 14. What was a problem with the brochures that told their neighbors what work the Crew could do?**
- A. They were too hard to read.
 - B. The neighbors put them aside.
 - C. They didn't have phone numbers.
- 15. Why did the park need to be cleaned and fixed?**
- A. The park hadn't been cleaned since last year.
 - B. No one took care of the park after Mrs. Morse died.
 - C. The neighborhood did a bad job when they cleaned it.
- 16. What was Mr. Morse like after his wife died?**
- A. He didn't seem to care about anything except growing roses.
 - B. He walked around the park but would never go in anymore.
 - C. He didn't seem to care about Cherry Park anymore.
- 17. What did the Crew do when they didn't get any phone calls?**
- A. They made more advertising brochures that were correct.
 - B. They decided to wait for a week to go by to see if anyone called.
 - C. They went door to door and told why they wanted to earn money.
- 18. Why did the Crew decide that a bench with a plaque with words on it about remembering Mrs. Morse was a good idea?**
- A. It was something the entire neighborhood could enjoy when they went to the park.
 - B. It was the best way to help Mr. Morse know that the neighborhood cared about him.
 - C. It cost exactly the amount of money that the Crew had earned over the summer.

19. What best tells the ending of the story?

- A. The job got done, and the Crew was ready to talk about choosing another job.
- B. Mr. Morse's heart was moved, and the Crew was ready for another job.
- C. The neighborhood was made better, and the Cherry Park Crew was famous.

20. How did James feel when he found out about Mr. Morse's rose bush?

- A. He felt very sad about hurting the rose bush.
- B. He didn't think it was fair that Mr. Morse got mad.
- C. He wanted to plant another rose bush for Mr. Morse.