

By: Leeba Schmukler, Las Cruces, NM, Age 9

It was a bright, sunny day. Skipper the Swinglt Squirrel was feeling his usual self: a lil' hyper and nutty. He decided to run outside to play on his playset. Imagine his surprise when he arrived to find the Nutville Working Crew unloading a brand-new, huge playset in his backyard. He was curious, surprised and excited at the same time.

*"When did you get this for me?"* He asked his parents in a squeal.

*"We got this for your birthday,"* his mother answered. *"But it came a little early."*

*"Yay!!"* Skipper shouted.

Suddenly, his mood changed. *"Who am I going to play in it with?"* Skipper asked his parents distraughtly.

*"Why not your siblings?"* his father suggested.

*"No,"* said Skipper. *"They're older and always out with their friends."*

*"Well, what about your friends?"* his mother put in.

*"They're all on trips with their family,"* Skipper was starting to get sad.

One of the workers was listening in and suddenly piped up, *"We have kids at home who'd love to play with you, Skipper."*

Skipper the Swinglt Squirrel was so happy he started jumping up and down and all around the yard.

*"Now come in, Skipper,"* his mother called. *"I have peanut butter cookies an almond milk for a delicious treat."*

The next day Skipper sat with his nose pressed against the window. Finally he saw a van with three kid squirrels waving at him. He grinned and waved back. He called to his mother, *"Mommy, Mommy! They are here!!!"*

He raced down the steps to greet them. They introduced themselves as Nutsy, Simsim, and Swirly.

After a quick snack of peanut butter cookies and almond milk they were ready to play.

*"I'm going on the monkey bars!"* Simsim cried.

Nutsy preferred the slide, and Skipper and Swirly liked the swings. They switched again and again until it was time for them to go home.

Time climbs fast when you're having fun!

The End