



SUMMER IS HERE!

I love all the seasons, but if I had to pick a favorite, I think it would be summer. The main reason is that I love being able to spend lots of time outdoors. Where I live, the summer has perfect weather for swimming, biking, camping and even getting to play my all-time number one favorite summertime sport- BASEBALL.

As soon as the weather gets nice, I spend time working on my baseball skills. My mom and my dad and I play catch in the yard after dinner, and they help me with my pitching and my hitting. My mom even took me to the store last week to buy me a new baseball glove, because I outgrew my old one. Every year, I can throw a little farther and hit a little harder. My grandpa always says "practice makes perfect" and when it comes to baseball, I know he's right!



It's "Panda-monium" in China when a rare giant panda mysteriously disappears! Riley and family desperately search for clues, and when disaster strikes, Riley must act fast to save the day, and the missing panda.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD



Down the street from my house is an empty lot. There used to be a house on it, but it was damaged in a fire and had to be torn down. The lot stayed empty for a long time, then our town bought it and planned to use it as a neighborhood park. The plans got put off and the lot stayed empty, which became a problem because people started dumping trash on the lot. It didn't take long for the lot to get really piled up with all kinds of stuff. There were empty food containers and plastic bags and broken glass and even an old sofa. What we all thought would be a great park looked instead like it was going to turn into a trash heap.

That's when people in the neighborhood, including

my parents, decided to organize a community clean-up. They set a date, and last Saturday, thirty people (including me!) showed up with garbage bags and rakes and even lawn mowers and we all got busy. We started at nine in the morning, and by five in the afternoon, we had a clean space that was just the right size for a baseball field!

The next day, in the afternoon, we all got together at our new neighborhood spot and had a picnic and baseball game. People brought grills and cooked out. We even brought our wading pool from home so the little kids could swim. Then we had a baseball game that ended in a tie. It was pretty great to see the changes made by hard work and lots of people pulling together. And it's pretty great to have a baseball field right in my neighborhood!

SUMMER CRAFT

My mom came up with this very easy craft idea so my baby sister Sophie could “play ball” while my parents help me work on my baseball skills. She says it’s also a great way to give new life to all those unmatched socks in our house!

You will need:
1 unmatched sock
1 cup dried beans

Take the sock and fill it with the cup of dried beans.

Tie the end in a knot and pull to tighten (*you might want to ask an adult to help get the knot super tight so no beans will leak out*).

Now you have a squishy sock ball! It’s perfect for throwing to your friends,

and even little kids will be able to hold it easily.

You can play squishy sock basketball by getting a wastebasket or other container and trying to sink baskets.

If you use a tube sock, sometimes it’s fun to leave the tail on and use it to throw your squishy sock super high into the air.

(It’s not a good idea to throw the squishy sock for your dog...they can chew through the sock and get to the beans too easily.)



SUMMER RECIPE

Banana Fun Wrap

At our neighborhood party, when people’s charcoal grills started to burn down to embers, we made one of the most fun desserts! It was healthy and easy to make – and the “container” for the snack can be composted!

Ingredients:

1 banana
Aluminum foil
1/4 cup granola and/or chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Take the banana and slit it down the middle – but leave it in the peel
2. Take the granola or chocolate and put it inside the sliced banana
3. Wrap in foil and put over the coals – they should be cooling coals, not super hot
4. Ask an adult to help you rotate the banana.

In five minutes, you should have a soft, tasty treat. Give it a minute to cool down before you eat it

Riley’s Fun Fact:

At the exact North Pole and the exact South pole the sun only rises and sets once a year. That means that it is daylight for six months – and nighttime for the other six months!



Ask the Authors

Riley: Do you have a favorite season?

LAURA: I’m like you – I love summer! One of my favorite things to do is swim in the ocean, and where I live, summer is the only time I have a chance to do that.

AMANDA: Spring is my favorite season. I love to watch the flowers bloom and see all the birds and animals come out of hiding to enjoy the warmer weather!



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