

# **The Club That Changed Charles**

By: Casiphia D., Shalom D.

## **Chapter 1**

### A New Home

Have you ever sat alone at lunch? Well, my name is Charles, and I don't have any friends. I recently moved here from Wisconsin and started school at Oak River Middle School in Illinois. It's really quiet here, and there is a river right next to the school where there are a bunch of ducks, birds, squirrels, and trees. I always feed the ducks after school with my leftover lunch, sit on the bench and do my homework for the day.

Honestly, I miss my friends back home and sometimes wonder what they are doing. Even though my parents did not want to move from the farm, we found a better place to live. I miss my grandparents a lot, and my only friends were the animals in the barn. My best friend was one of the pigs and his name was Billy. He was with me when I was little and would always run around with me. Billy was white and had pink spots all over his skin.

Today was my first day of school here, and I did not know anyone. I was excited and nervous at the same time. I was looking for my classroom, and when I found it, I walked in. And I met my teacher Mrs. Wilkins. She was young and very nice. Her room was comfy and calm. And it felt like I was back home. I had trouble making friends because I did not like talking to people as I was shy and anti-social. I sat alone at lunch and was thinking about how to make friends. When school ended and I was walking home, I found a poster about a club to make friends in and it was called "The Social Club". And I thought it was a perfect opportunity! It said to sign your name on the assigned area to join the club. So, I reached into my backpack and got out my pencil, and signed my name.

## **Chapter 2**

### An Effort to Make Friends

So, it's been a few days since I signed the poster. And no news yet. I went home and my mom realized that I'd been quiet recently, and she asked me why? I replied, "I joined a club called "The Social Club" and for the entire day I was overthinking if I should join the club or not." My mom was shocked, and she comforted me. Later she gave me some tips on how to be a good friend and how to communicate.

The next day when school was finally over. Someone came up to me and asked me if I joined "The Social Club". I hesitated and said, "...yes". His name was Devon, and he said "Great! We have a meeting tomorrow at 5:00 pm. Then, I ended up dragging myself like spaghetti back home because it was a very tiring day.

The next morning, I did not feel like going to the club anymore. But I had two options. To be alone for the rest of my life or make new friends. So, my decision was... to make new friends, because I didn't want to feel the pain inside me anymore. Later at 5:00, I finally got to meet the other 5 members of the club. Their names were Ben, Abigail, Eddie, Devon, and Hope.

After we got to know each other a bit more, I finally got a little more comfortable making new friends. Eddie asked us where we had lived before to start the conversation. Ben said he lived in California, Abigail said she lived in France, Hope said she lived in Germany, Eddie said he lived in Florida, Devon said he lived in Virginia. And I said I lived in Wisconsin.

We talked about how it feels to be anti-social and shy. I said that I had been struggling and it was hard to talk to people. Everyone was surprised and said it's okay to be shy. That finally boosted my confidence. And now I think that I can meet a lot of new people.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **A New Me**

After the club, I felt relieved and brave. When I arrived home, my mom had a smile on her face after seeing me happy in a long time. And she knew I had a fun time at the club because all moms know everything. I had a moment of realization where I thought I should not be afraid anymore. I went to my desk and wrote down ways to become friends on a piece of paper. And after that all of that, I finally went to bed.

When I woke up in the morning, I felt energetic to finally get out there and make friends. I went up to some people and handed them the paper, and one person said "Cool! Let's become best friends!" and another person said, "Let's be buddies forever!". So that made me the happiest I could ever be! And they are still best friends of mine today.

At lunch, I saw someone sitting with nobody to talk to. So, I sat right next to him. And said it's okay to be shy and anti-social because I was like that once. He told me that I was the only one who finally talked to him about being shy. I said, "Let's be pals for the rest of eternity!" I decided to invite him to my house to create a book about how much he and I struggled to make best friends.

He told me it was a great idea to do it. So, he and I started to write the book. After 11 months, we finally finished it. I asked my library teacher to approve it so she could give away a bunch of copies of our book. Then, he and I made a lot of friends. And I am so grateful to finally be free, confident, and brave.