



Sandy's Trip in the City



Sandy's first stop on her trip around the city is Coffee Connection. Sandy's mom says she's too young to have coffee, but she was there to meet a new friend named Joy, who greeted her with a cup of hot cocoa and a warm "Hello!".

Joy says, "This is a safe place for people to work and be around friends who encourage them. A lot of people really like working here"

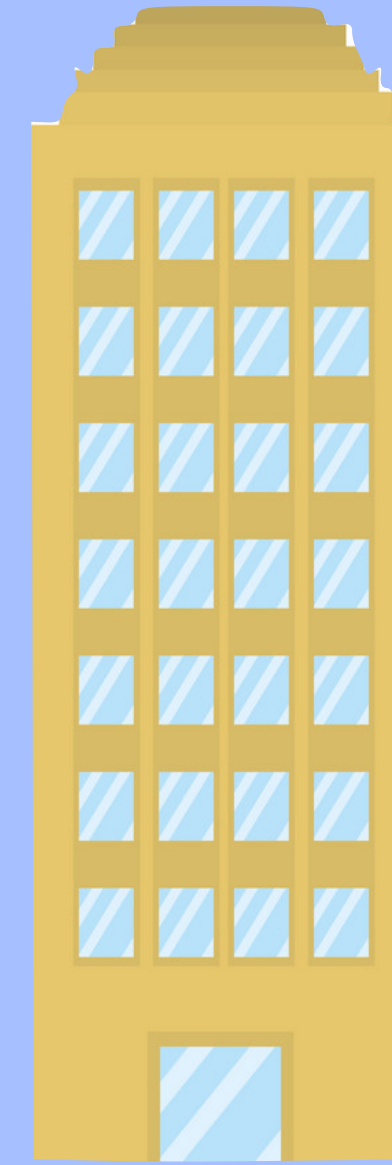
Sandy says, "Could I get a job here when I grow up?"

Joy replies, "Well, Sandy, most of the people who work here can't get jobs in other places"

"Why not?" Sandy asked.

"Sometimes people go through hard times where they don't make good choices because they are still learning how. Sometimes, other places don't understand and won't let people who have made bad choices work there. Here, we understand and want to support people and encourage them to keep making good choices." Joy explained.

"That's really awesome!" Sandy said.



Sandy's next stop is dropping her Aunt Marna off at work.

"Aunt Marna, where do you work again?" Sandy asked in the car.

"I work at the Department of Human Services," Aunt Marna said. "We help families and children who need help with clothing, food, and having a house to get those things. Sometimes, we can even give them money to help them buy these things!"

"There are people that can't pay for their clothes and food? That sounds so sad, Aunt Marna." Sally sighed.

"Yes, Sally, not everyone has a job or enough money to pay for everything their family needs, and that can be hard. My job is to help people pay for the things they need and help them to get jobs." Aunt Marna explained.

"Do you like your job?" Sally asked

"I love my job, but sometimes it is hard. There are many people who need our help. Sometimes, the steps they must take to get to our office, fill out the papers, and finally get some help can be really hard and stressful. We do the best we can in helping people with the resources we have, though." Aunt Marna said.



Once Sandy dropped her Aunt Marna off at work, her mom and she had to take her brother Jordan to school.

“Mom, why can’t Jordan go to my school?” Sandy asked, sad that her brother had to go back to school before her school restarted in 2 weeks.

“Jordan goes to a school called Mary Cariola, which has special tools in place to help Jordan learn in a way that works best for him.” Her mom tried to explain.

“But I want special tools too, Mom!” Sandy protested

“Sandy, when you go to school, do you feel comfortable in your classroom and like you can learn what the teacher is teaching?”

“Yes, I do,” Sandy said

“Not everyone feels that way, Sandy. Some kids need extra one-on-one help because of how their brains work, and some kids need extra help because of how their bodies work. Mary Cariola gives kids with brains and bodies different from yours the help they need so they can learn school too.” Mom explained

“I think today I’ll walk Jordan in with the rest of his friends so I can meet them. Just because they’re at a different school doesn’t mean we can’t be friends!” Sandy said.



“Okay, Mom, we’ve dropped everyone off now. What’s next?” Sandy asked.

“We’re going to help serve some lunch to some friends! We’re going to St Peter’s Kitchen, where we’ll help make some sandwiches and hand them out to people,” Mom replied.

“Where will we find the people? And do they have to pay for the sandwiches?” Sandy asked

“The food is for free, and they will come to us! St. Peter’s is a place that provides meals for people who don’t have enough money to buy food. People like us help make and serve the food to give away to the people who need it.” Mom explained.

“Will I get to make new friends while I make sandwiches?” Sandy asked excitedly.

“Of course! You can meet the other people who help and become their friends. Then, we’ll pass out the sandwiches, and everyone will be excited to see you handing them out.” Mom smiled.



“Wow, Mom, I can’t believe we gave away all those sandwiches!” Sandy said. “I’m glad everyone liked them so much! I worked hard on them.”

“I know you did, Sandy. You did a good job! You ready to go to the library?”

“YES, I AM!” Sandy shouted, so excited to go hang out at her favorite place.

Sandy and her mom walked into the library with books in hand, ready to return.

Sandy and her mom picked out a few books and went up to the checkout desk. Sandy looked proudly at the librarian and said, “I’d like to check out these 3 books on my library card, please!”

“Sure thing, dear.” The librarian said.

“Did you know I’ve had my library card since I was born?!” Sandy boasted.

“That’s amazing!” The librarian said. “Did you know that you happened to come to an extra special library today? Not only do we have books you can check out, we also have TOYS you can check out!”

“WHAT?!” Sandy said in disbelief

“Yeah! All you have to do is go to the back room, and you can pick out a toy or two to check out and take home and then bring it back with your library books the next time so other kids can check it out and play with that toy!” The librarian explained.

“This is the BEST DAY EVER,” Sandy cried as she looked over to her mom, who smiled and followed her over to the toy library section.



“Okay Sandy, we’re just going to stop by where my friend Luis works because I have to drop off a book to him” Mom said

“Okay, where does he work?” Sandy asked.

“He works for 911.” Mom said, “do you know what 911 is?”

“It is 3 numbers that add up to 12!” Sandy said proudly.

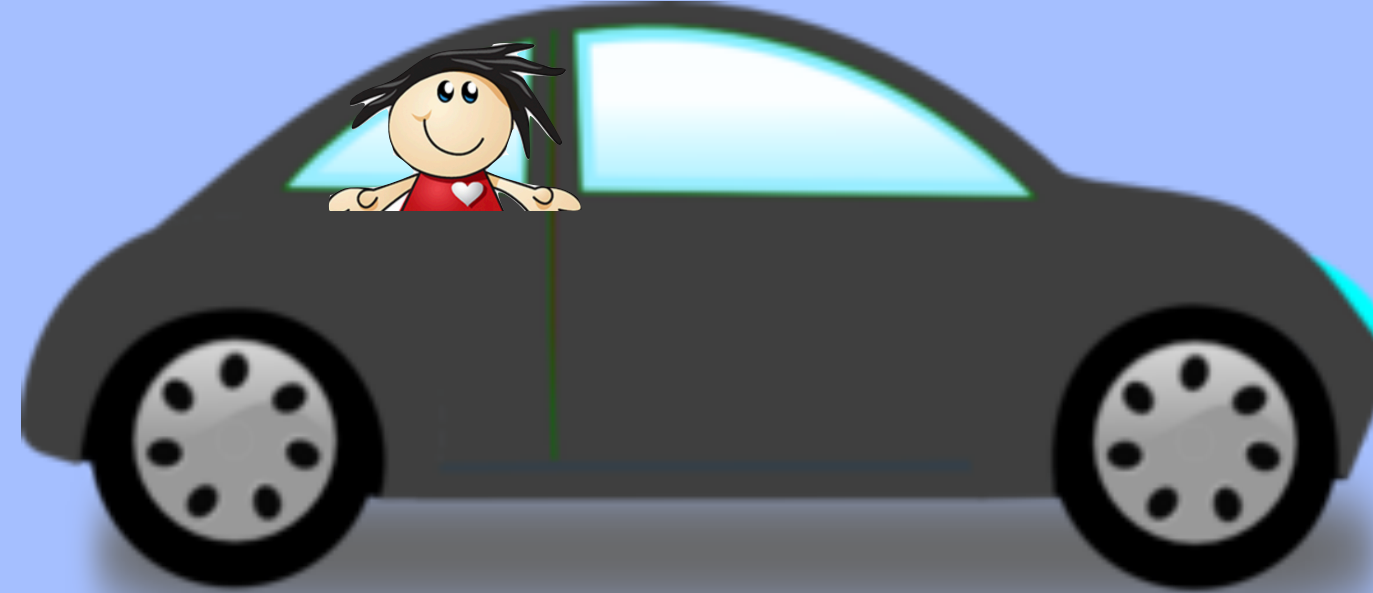
“That is true,” Mom said, “but it is also the number you call if you are having an emergency!”

“Oh okay!” Said Sandy.

“If you or someone else is in danger, you should know that you can call 9-1-1 and they will help you” Mom said.

“What about 2-1-1? I saw that on a sign once.” Sandy said.

“2-1-1 is a number people can use if they need help with getting food, clothing, or a place to sleep. I don’t think you’ll have to use it, but it is good to know about!” Mom said.



“Mom, I’m getting kind of tired,” Sandy admitted

“That’s okay, just one more stop.” Mom said, “Then we can go home and nap.”

“Okay, where next?” Sandy said.

“We’re going to somewhere that’s pretty special to me. The building is named ‘House of Mercy’.” Mom said

“Why is it so special to you?” Sandy asked

“The people who are at this place are what people call homeless, Sandy. Do you know what that means?” Mom asked.

“It means they don’t have a bed or a house, right? So I think they’re more house-less.” Sandy said

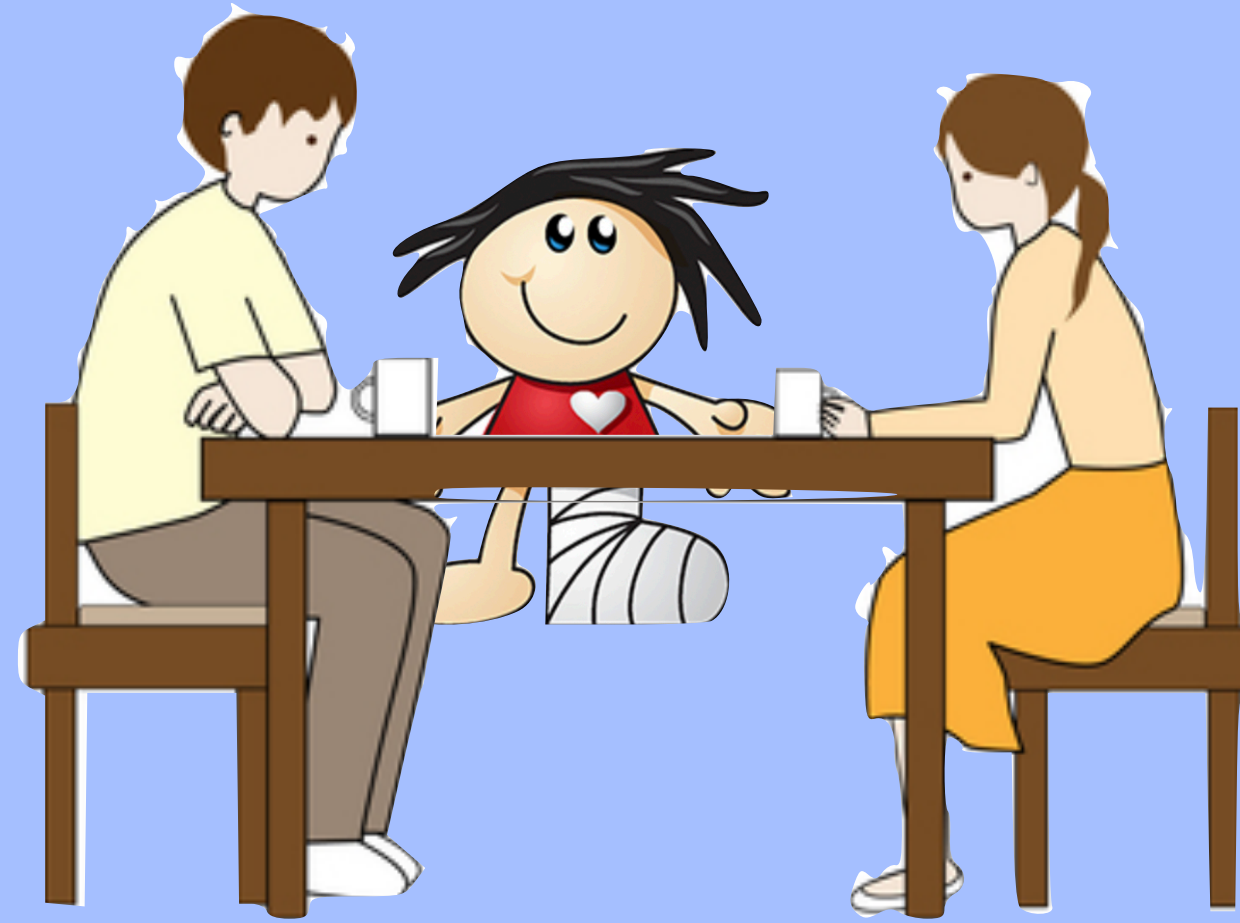
“Yes, exactly right. When I was growing up, there was a period when my dad lost his job, and my family didn’t have a place to sleep at night. We got into a shelter like this, and they gave us a bed, food, and water while my dad got a new job, and we got a new place to live.” Mom shared.

“Mom, that sounds scary. I don’t want to lose our house and my bed,” Sandy worried.

“You won’t. Everything is okay now; you will still have our house and bed. Places like this helped my family when we needed it, so I just came back to visit to help out.” Mom explained

“Oh, okay. So what are we going to do?” Sandy asked.

“Well sometimes I help clean or cook, but today they said they didn’t need our help doing that, so we’ll just sit and talk with the people who are there.”



Sandy and her mom sat down at a table, and someone approached them.

“Hi there”, he said to Sandy. “My name is Lenny; I like to play guitar, sing, and read books. What do you like to do?” Sandy was amazed; she didn’t think she would have anything to talk to these grown-ups about, but she was wrong!

“I’ve always wanted to learn how to play guitar,” she said, “and I also love to sing and read books!”

Sandy and Lenny talked for the rest of their time at House of Mercy, sharing their songs and laughing together. All too soon, it was time to go and Sandy got back in the car with her mom, only after promising Lenny that she would come back to see him again.

“So, Sandy, what did you learn today?” Mom asked

“I learned a lot,” Sandy said. “I learned that sometimes people need help, and that’s okay. I learned that asking for help is brave. I learned that even though people are different than me, we’re all still people, and we have more in common than we think.”

“It sounds like you learned a lot of really important things today, Sandy.” Mom said.

“I think so. I also think I learned that it’s time for a nap.” Sandy said, dozing off in the car seat.

Mom chuckled, and smiled, knowing that even though Sandy was tired, she learned some of the most important lessons she could teach her daughter that day.



The End