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1st Place
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Going to Serra Park with My Friend, Jessie, and My Dog, Rocky

One of my favorite memories, especially after such a long period of isolation and closures due to COVID-19, was going to Serra Park, a small park in my neighborhood, with my friend Jessie and my dog Rocky.

Arriving at Serra Park made my heart jump with excitement and anticipation. Crossing the bridge over the creek felt like entering a different world, a world of happiness. When I was diving into the tunnel-shaped slide, it exhilarated me, like I was leaping into a pool. When I swayed on the swing it made me feel like I was a soaring eagle, predatory hawk, or stunning owl. Jumping on the rocks and cooling my feet in the creek energized me. The scent of freshwater tickling my nostrils, the deafening sound of children shouting with glee, the pine needles pricking my fingers, and the cool water soothing them, thrilled and calmed me simultaneously. Sitting next to the creek, listening to the birds, the wind in the trees, sensing tranquility and serendipity, relaxed me. When we played fetch with Ricky, I felt carefree and forgot about the negativity surrounding us. Instead of focusing on the negative, I focused on the positive like the emerald trees; the cerulean pond; the neon sun; the green creek coursing through the root of the park; the lavender, aqua, coral, and scarlet sunset; the glorious moon with craters, showing that not everything is perfect. I focused on the silvery-cream stars that shine with beauty; the happy laughter of kids; the lull of water lapping against the rocks; the quiet chatter, until I am so peaceful, it was all silence. No crickets chirping, no little kids shouting with joy, just ... blissful silence shared with my best friend.

In the technological, lonely century, this memory of happiness shared with my best friend will always keep me content.