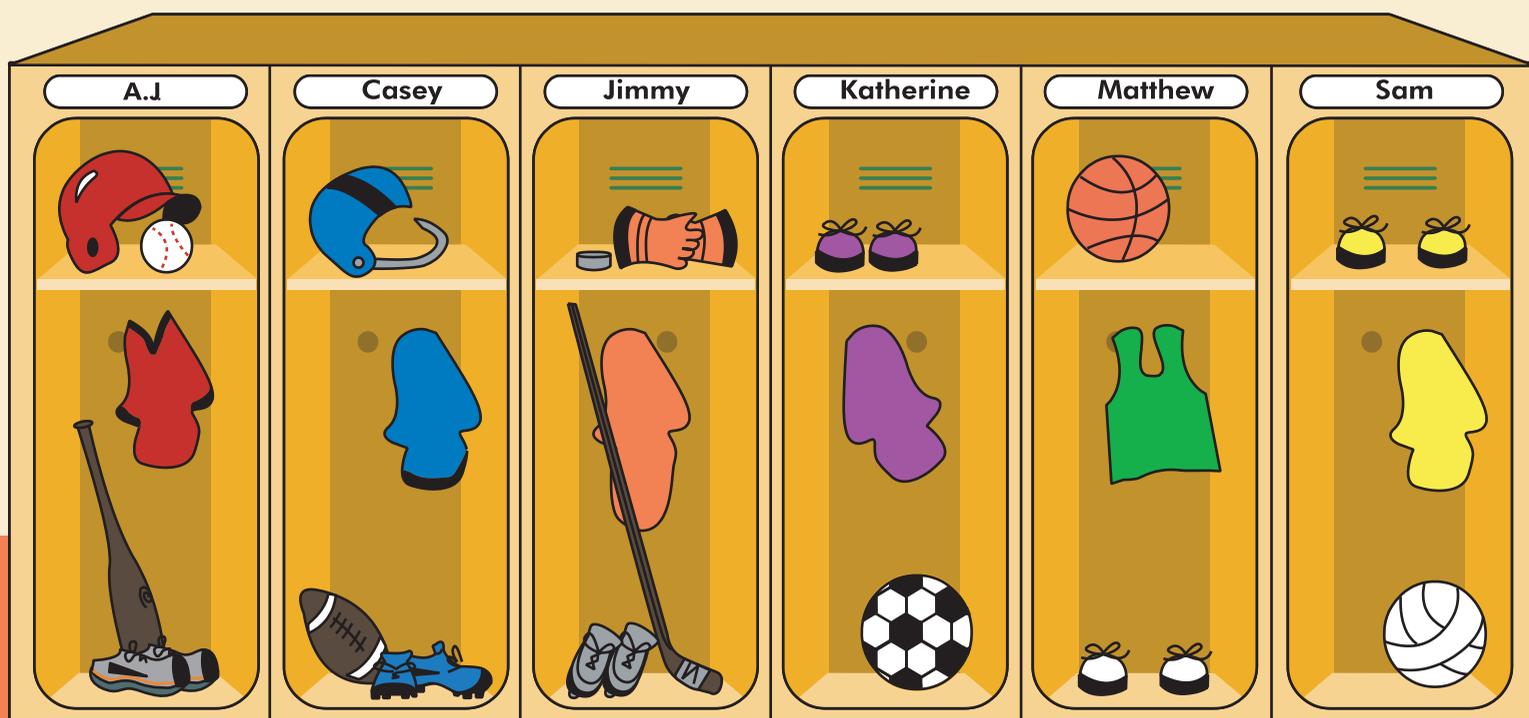


The Adventures of the P.E. GANG



P.E. GANG



Story #4

Hut hut! My name is Casey and my favorite sport is football. In Physical Education class, Mr. Fitter has taught us a lot of footballs skills. He also teaches us how to be trustworthy and do what's right even when it's difficult.

Our next story is about being trustworthy. I love to run and every year at school we have a 1/2 mile fitness run. All my friends are counting on me to run faster then last year's time. However, something happens in the race that keeps me from winning, but that's ok!



The Big Race

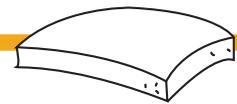
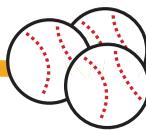
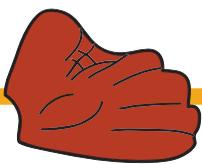
Casey got up early on the day of the school-wide run. Her dad was already up and making breakfast.

"Good morning, honey," said dad. "You're up bright and early."

"Today's the half-mile run," said Casey.

"Yes, I know," Dad said, with a smile. "That's why I am making your favorite breakfast."

Casey smiled and thanked her dad. When she finished breakfast, she grabbed her backpack and ran out the door. Just as she got to the sidewalk, she saw Lucas and his mother waiting for the bus.



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Lucas has lived next door to Casey her whole life. When they were little, they used to play together. Sometimes Lucas would tell people she was his girlfriend, but Casey didn't mind. It was kind of sweet.

"Hi, Lucas! How are you this morning?" she asked.

"Good," he answered. "Casey, are you ready to run today?" Most people found Lucas' words kind of hard to understand. But, because they were old friends, Casey knew what he was saying.

"Yes, Lucas. I'm ready. How about you? Are you ready?"



"I really don't like to run," said Lucas, scrunching up his face. Lucas was small for his age and kind of clumsy. Running was hard for him because he always came in last. Casey knew it made him feel even more different than the other kids.

"You do your best, Lucas. I'll be there with you."

Waving goodbye to Lucas and his mother, Casey ran off to school.



After lunch, she met up with her best friend, Samantha. "Do you think you'll beat your record again?" Samantha asked excitedly.

"I don't know. Maybe," answered Casey.

Casey runs the fastest half-mile in the whole school. She'd beaten her own record every year. Most of the kids looked forward to watching her run.



"Are your shoes broken in?" called Matthew, as they walk down the hall.

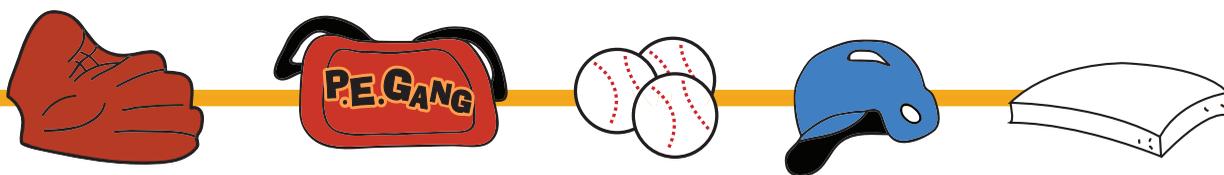
"Did you practice all week?" asked A.J.

Casey could feel the pressure building. She knew that she, and everyone else, expected her to be even faster than last year. It made Casey nervous to have everyone watching and waiting for her to win.

All of the students walked outside and gathered around. When it was time for the fourth graders to run, Casey and her classmates headed to the track. As she reached the starting line, Casey felt a familiar tap on her shoulder.

She looked over to see Lucas beside her. He looked nervous.

"Don't worry, Lucas. You're going to do great. I can feel it" she said, encouragingly.



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Lucas smiled and got ready to start.

"On your mark, get set, go!" shouted Mr. Fitter.

The kids took off. Casey was in the lead right away. She was going to have to stay in the lead for two whole laps in order to win.

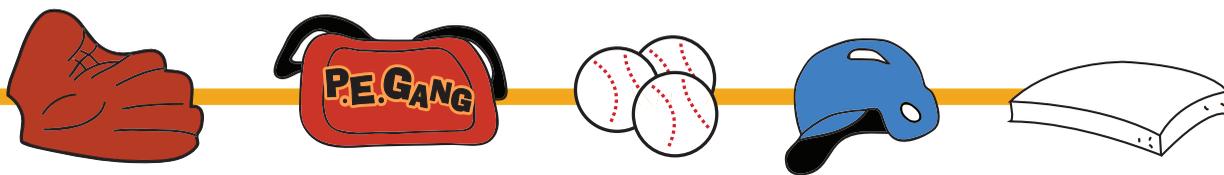
As she reached the far side of the track, Casey looked behind her. Several of the kids were still right on her tail. She sped up.



At the end of the first lap, Beth Ann was still right behind her. Beth Ann had come in second place every year since second grade. Casey knew Beth Ann really wanted to win, so she put on the speed and got her legs moving even faster.

Halfway around her second lap, Casey was making good time and was far enough ahead of Beth Ann to assure her victory. It would be the perfect race. Some of the other kids were now almost a whole lap behind her. Just in front of her was Lucas, still on his first lap.

He was huffing and puffing. As Casey came up beside him, she could see his face was really red. He looked exhausted.



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"Are you okay, Lucas?" she asked, slowing her pace for just a moment.

"I am so... tired..." he said, barely able to breathe.

"You can do it!" said Casey.

"No," he said. He was barely moving now.

"Come on, Lucas! Don't give up! Let's go!"



Casey grabbed him by the arm and tugged him along with her. He sped up a bit, but not much. She turned to see that Beth Ann was right behind them.

"Casey, thanks for helping" said Lucas. He looked like he was about to cry. Casey remembered how Lucas used to help her build sand castles when they were little and how he pushed her on the swing in his backyard. She knew she couldn't leave him behind. He had been there for her so many times before.



Casey took Lucas by the hand and pulled him along with her, encouraging him all the way.

Beth Ann sped past them with a big smile on her face. Casey just ignored her and concentrated on Lucas.

"Come on, let's go, lets go!" she yelled, cheering Lucas all the way around the last lap. Each runner passed them until they were the last two on the track.



All of the fourth graders stood at the finish line and cheered for Lucas. As they crossed the finish line, Lucas turned and threw his arms around Casey.

"Lucas and Casey number one!" he yelled. "We are number one!" The look on his face was priceless. Casey smiled at Beth Ann, who had taken first place. Then she looked back at Lucas and saw the joy in his eyes.

Happily, she realized that she had just run her best race ever!

