

# Spreading Joy at Christmas

"Do I have to go to Nana's Christmas Bingo tomorrow?" Erica asked as she worked on packing Christmas goodie bags with her mother. "My friend Mindy asked if she could come over to play."

"Sweetheart, you know how much your grandma looks forward to seeing you," her mother replied. "Christmas Bingo is her favorite holiday event, and we've spent so much time preparing for it."

"But, Mom, I haven't seen Mindy all week," Erica said. "And soon she'll be leaving to visit her uncle and aunt. I'll miss her."

"Well, why don't you invite Mindy to come join us for Christmas Bingo?" her mother suggested. "If she is interested, I can work out the details with her mom."

"Okay, I'll ask her," Erica replied.



The following day, Mindy showed up at their front door. "My mom said to thank you, Mrs. Callister, for taking me with you. I'm looking forward to Christmas Bingo."

"We're happy to have you along, Mindy," Mrs. Callister said.

Arriving at the retirement home where Erica's grandma lived, the trio headed into the community room, where a beautifully decorated Christmas tree stood in the center of the room. Tables and chairs were set up throughout the room, and decorations added a vibrant Christmassy feel to the room.

"Amy and Erica, my dears!" her grandma called out. "I'm so happy you have come. Darla and Noah have been helping me prepare the room, but I'm glad you are here now—we could use the extra help."

"Hello, Mindy. I hear you are joining us for Christmas Bingo!"



"Yes, Mrs. Waverly," Mindy said. "Erica told me all about your Christmas Bingo night. I'm looking forward to helping."

"Well, we mustn't waste any time," Mrs. Waverly said. "My friends will be arriving in an hour, and everything must be ready."

Together they worked to finish setting up and preparing for the event. When the first guests arrived, Erica and Mindy guided them to find their places, offered them a Christmas goodie bag, and helped to serve snacks and drinks. When everyone had arrived, Mrs. Waverly played several Christmas carols on the piano and the guests sang along.

"Erica, dear, won't you come and sing the '12 Days of Christmas' for everyone?" her grandmother asked.



"Can Mindy sing it with me?" Erica asked. "We've been practicing it together for our school's Christmas performance."

"Absolutely!" her grandmother exclaimed.

The two girls stood by the piano and began the carol; by the end, all the guests were clapping and singing along.

When the bingo game began, Mrs. Waverly asked the girls to sit with a couple of her friends to lend a hand. Mindy sat next to Miss Harriet Plummer and Erica joined Mr. George Dooley.

"I appreciate your help, Miss Erica," Mr. Dooley told her. "Sometimes I don't hear the number that is called out clearly. I'd like your help with that."



"I'd be happy to," Erica said.

The game began, and Mindy and Erica helped their new friends as best they could. They were enjoying themselves so much, that before they knew it, the game was coming to a close.

"Oh, will you look at that!" Miss Harriet said. "I only need the number 4 to be called, and then I'll have won!"

"And the next number," Erica's mom called out, "is ... a 4!"

"Hurray!" shouted Mindy. "You won! You won!"

Miss Harriet smiled broadly as she was presented with an overflowing basket of Christmas knick-knacks and treats. "Oh my!" she exclaimed. "What a lovely surprise! And look, those are my favorite cookies. Please, Mindy, pick something that you'd like from the basket. I couldn't have done it without your help."





Mindy selected a chocolate bar.  
“Thank you, Miss Harriet! I had so much fun playing with you! I’m glad I could join you.”

“You must join us again,” Mrs. Waverly said, joining her friend. “We enjoyed having you here!”

As they dropped Mindy off at her house, she reached in and gave her friend a hug. “Thank you, Erica, for asking me to join you. I liked that I could do something this Christmas to spread joy and cheer. It makes me feel happy inside.”

“Yes, it does,” Erica agreed. “I’m glad we could spread Christmas cheer together!”

