

Sparky the Reindeer

COMES TO GREENVILLE



“So you want to be one of the elite reindeer?” Santa asked, looking skeptically at the young Sparky. “You know, it’s been a long time since I’ve added a new member to my sleigh team. I’m not sure you have what it takes, but I’m willing to give you a shot. Call up Texas Travel Pros and schedule a trip to Greenville right away.”



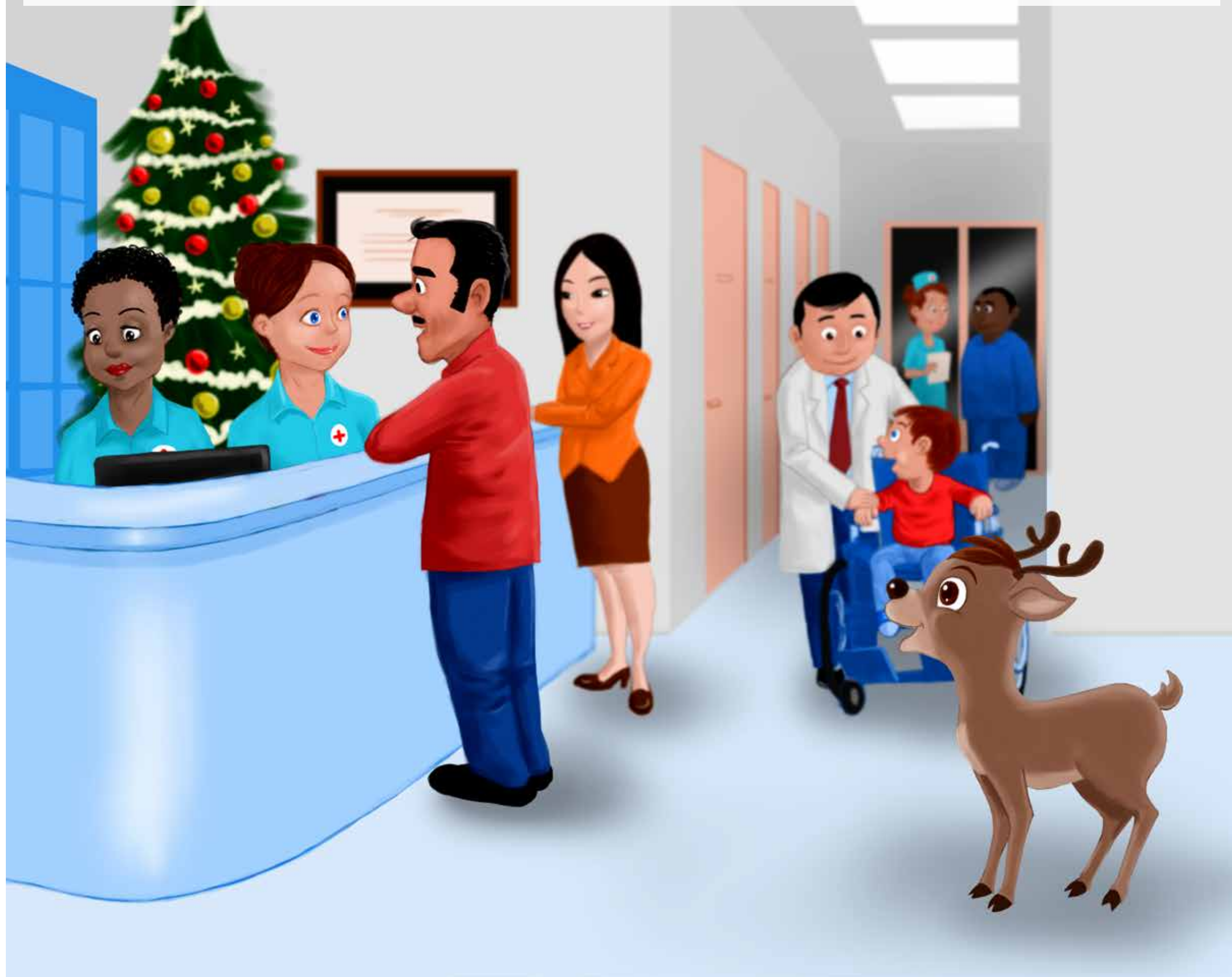
Sparky arrived in Greenville with a list of places to visit and a notebook to write down everything he learned. Santa assured him the good people of this city would help him learn what he needed to know before he could join the sleigh team: the true meaning of Christmas.



Sparky's first stop was at The Calico Cat where he found a shop full of people looking for meaningful presents for their loved ones. He was greeted by the shop's owner with a welcoming smile and a friendly hoof-shake. "It's great to have you in town," the owner said warmly. Sparky took notes about the friendly atmosphere and spirit of giving that was so evident in the store, along with the thought and care that each shopper put into choosing just the right item.



Next, Sparky stopped at Hunt Regional Medical Center, where the halls were buzzing with activity. “Do you mean to tell me you care for the people of Greenville every single day, even on Christmas?” he asked the nurses. “Yes, even on Christmas Day. We know people need good health care all year long, and we’re glad to help our neighbors whenever they need it.” Sparky made a quick visit to cheer up each of the sick children before taking notes and leaving for his next stop.



Walking through the doors of City Hall, Sparky was impressed with how many people had dedicated their lives to public service. He was greeted by Mayor Steve Reid and was introduced to Police Chief Daniel Busken and Fire Chief Doug Caison, along with all the many employees who help keep the people of Greenville safe, happy and secure. "A great team takes great service and dedication," Sparky noted in his book.



Next up on Sparky's list was a visit to Adkisson Florist, which was filled from floor to ceiling with beautiful Christmas decorations. "This is one of our busiest times of year," said the store owner, "and it makes us so happy to be able to share the beauty of Christmas in homes and businesses all over town." Sparky took notes about the symbols of Christmas, especially enjoying the pretty poinsettias everywhere. He sure was learning a lot about Christmas in Greenville!



“What could Santa want me to learn about Christmas here?” Sparky thought to himself as he walked into Discount Tire. He introduced himself to a family in the waiting room who were on their way to Grandma’s house for Christmas when they got a flat tire. “We’re so glad there are people willing to help us when we need it,” they said. “The garage was about to close, but the manager said he would stick around a few minutes extra to make sure we could get back on the road.” Sparky smiled and noted how even small acts of service can make a big difference.



Sparky walked into the front doors of Lamar Elementary School expecting to see classrooms filled with learners, but instead he heard the familiar sound of Christmas songs wafting through the air. He followed the sounds to the auditorium and joined the audience in clapping for the special holiday musical program. He was also impressed with how the students were collecting food for needy families. “Lamar Elementary School isn’t just about classroom lessons,” Sparky jotted down. “It’s also about life lessons, and the students in Greenville are getting a wonderful education in caring.”



For his last stop, Sparky visited Wesley United Methodist Church to see how Christmas was celebrated in Greenville. “For people of faith, Christmas is ultimately about one thing: honoring the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ,” the pastor said. “Every year, Christians come together to remember the birth of Jesus and all the wonderful lessons He teaches us.” Sparky learns that the best traditions of Christmas have their roots in deep, meaningful faith.



On his trip back to the North Pole, Sparky had a lot of time to think about what he had learned in Greenville. There were a lot of lessons — about service, family, hard work, kindness, beauty and faith — and he couldn't wait to share what he had learned with Santa. He anxiously walked into the workshop and told Santa all about his adventures.



“Well, Sparky, I’ve got to admit I’m impressed,” Santa said. “The people of Greenville obviously know what Christmas means, which is why I sent you there to learn. And it looks like I can comfortably present you with the highest honor we bestow at the North Pole. You’re officially the newest member of my sleigh team, ready for duty on Christmas Eve.”

