**The New Friend**

By Maria Puncel

Martin, Luis, and I lived in the city.

Next door was an old house. No one had lived there for a long time.

One day a work crew came with pails and brushes.

They started to wash and paint the empty house.

After they were done, and the paint had dried, the house looked pretty and new.

The next day a big truck pulled up.

It was full of crates and boxes.

A crew unloaded the boxes off the truck.

A new family would soon live there.

Today Luis went over to the house next door.

He met a boy called Makoto.

Then we all met Makoto.

Then we all met Makoto. Makoto was seven years old – just like us.

Before long, we found out that Makoto played soccer.

He could keep running and running.

He was good at learning things, too.

He learned all of our names by the end of the game.

Soon Makoto’s family was all moved in.

We met his mother and father.

They were glad that Makoto had made some new friends.

While Makoto’s mother and fathers went to buy food, Makoto stayed and played with us.

When Makoto’s mother and father rejoined us, Martin, Makoto, and I helped them carry the bags into the house.

Makoto said he would show us around his house.

Then we went up to look at Makoto’s room.

Makoto still had a lot of boxes to unpack.

He had some nice toys and kites.

He said that on the next windy day, we could bring his kites outside and fly them. He said I could fly a kite by myself.

Then we went outside to look at Makoto’s pictures from Japan.

He had them in a green book.

On the first page, we saw Makoto’s old house in Japan.

On the next page, we saw Makoto’s family in Japan.

The last page had pictures of Makoto’s friends.

They showed Makoto’s seventh birthday party.

Makoto said he wishes we could meet his old friends.

At the end of the day, Makoto’s mother and father repaid us for helping—with cookies!

We said “please” and “thank you” and ate up.

Makoto’s father said he had a new job in the city. Makoto would be going to our school.

We are all glad about that!

We said good-bye to Makoto and his mother and father. Then we went home to our families. We are glad to have a new friend next door.