

# Christmas at Daisy Hill

Traditions pull people together and form closer bonds among families. Today, I will share my favorite, our annual Christmas tradition. Maybe my story will spark your imagination to start your own new tradition for your family.

In the Adirondacks, in a town called Lake Placid, my family owns a little lodge we call Daisy Hill. We enjoy it in all seasons, and treasure the memories we make there, especially during the holidays. I will give you a little taste of an Acworth family Christmas.

It starts out with a very long drive through the countryside. In the back of our car, our luggage is in a big heap, along with Christmas presents my parents have hidden away for no child's eyes to see. My bag is filled with my clothes (Christmas pajamas, yay!), my current book, all my skiing gear, and various things I would need to have a great Christmas. The drive is always beautiful, weaving in and out around the whitewashed mountains and freezing brooks. The endless forest stretches out for what seems like forever. We usually arrive in blackness, but the light from an always white Christmas is bright.

The next day rolls around and it's Christmas decorating day, that means time to go get the tree. In the Adirondacks people don't go buy their tree. They go out into the forest and cut it down. It's very exciting. My Dad, brother, and I hop on our snowmobile and buzz down the snow-covered trails into the forest. My brother and I are the spotters, looking carefully for the perfect tree. When we see the one we want, out comes the saw. Now that I'm older, my Dad let's me help with the cutting. We strap it to the snowmobile, then putter back to the lodge.

While my Dad is fetching the big brown box of ornaments and decorations from the garage, and unpacking it with my little sister, my mom and I put the beautiful tree into the holder. We work hard all morning, then have a quick lunch break, so we can get right back to the decorating. Lunch is usually toasted peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with chocolate milk. By the time the tree is all prepared, twilight has fallen and the sun settles into the mountains.

With a fire in the fireplace, we hang the final ornaments, wearing our special Santa hats with our names on them. We have a bag of special ornaments we call throw-bows, and they always go on last. We all stand back and throw them at the marvelous tree adding a magical touch, and they easily stick to the needles. This is a fun tradition for the whole family, especially my little sister and brother. Putting on the shining, stylish star is always the highlight of Christmas tree day.

Skiing is a big part of an Acworth family Christmas. We often ski on Christmas Eve day, and then quickly get ready for evening mass. It has a children's pageant that actually makes

church fun. It's a tradition that my brother and I complain about getting dressed up. After mass, we go out to a delicious dinner at a German inn. They always have live music that casts a cheery vibe for all the diners. After dinner, we go home to bed, but struggle to fall asleep because of the excitement that Christmas beholds.

On every beautiful Christmas morning, we jump in my parents' bed to unpack our stockings stuffed with Christmas goodies and read stories. In my mom's nightstand are some classic books that we all know by heart. Books like "The Night it Rained Toys" and "Go Dogs Go" have been passed down from family who enjoyed them a million joyful times.

Finally, it's present time! Like most other families celebrating Christmas, our day is made bright and merry with gifts given by family, friends, and good old Saint Nick.

After present opening always comes my mom's famous egg dish and waffles. My grandparents always join us, bearing gifts of course (alas, often clothing). The scrumdiddlyumptious food always fills our bellies with warmth and happiness. For the rest of the day, we play with our spectacular toys. As evening falls on Christmas day, we head to a dessert party at my aunt and uncle's house. If it's not too bitter cold, my Dad and I go by snowmobile.

A fun night with family, then we head off to rest. Each Christmas here, we think is the best. We enjoy our stay with lots of play, and even deep cold can't get in our way. Each and every year, traditions grow stronger. Everyone hopes that we could stay longer. As we sit together by the warm fire, we know our love of Christmas in Lake Placid will never tire.