

# Signal Community





artwork by Julie Garwood Heide

## Chapter 1

Have you ever had a dream that started  
somewhere else...

That someone else dreamed first

But because it touched something inside you,  
You dreamed that dream too?

That's what happened to Sara one day.

She heard beautiful words—

Of a signal community,

A city on a hill,

A light to the world.

And she wanted to be part of a place like that!

"Let's build it," she told her friend Julio and her  
little sister Kimmie.

"We can't build a whole city!" Julio exclaimed.

"We're only children."

"We're too little," said Kimmie. She was very  
practical.

But Sara had heard the dream. And now it was  
hers, too. "We can do it."

So they went to the park and spread out their  
blanket. They spread out their markers and  
crayons, and they drew their plan for a community  
on the biggest paper they could find. They  
gathered wood and bricks and steel girders. They  
gathered glass for windows and wood shakes for  
roofs. They installed plumbing and electricity,  
and they built roads and put up road signs. And  
they built everything you can think of that a  
community needs. And soon, they had built a  
city. They built it on a hill. They put a bright light  
in the tallest tower. And they added a sign on the

highway “Welcome to Signal Community.” It had a big red bell on it.

“Wow, I can’t believe we did it!” exclaimed Julio.

“It’s really WOW,” said Kimmie. They walked up and down the road and looked up at all the buildings, at the big hill, at the light and the sign.

“It’s exactly the dream I had,” Sara said. “It’s the dream I heard about from others.”

“What is the name of this place?” Kimmie asked. She couldn’t read yet.

“It’s called ‘Signal Community.’ That’s what the dream is. It means it stands out. Like an example for others,” Sara explained.

“And it’s on a hill and has a lighthouse so everyone can see it from all around,” Julio said, catching the dream.

They marveled at the wonderful city they had built.

“Who lives here?” asked Julio after he realized how quiet it was and saw how empty it was.

“We do!” Kimmie joyfully exclaimed.

“I guess it’s our city,” Sara said. “It’s a perfect, real little city. It’s all ours!”

So they rode on the train, and they played in the park, and they went into the candy store, filling their pockets. After a while, they laid on their backs in the green park, surrounded by flowers and tall pine trees, looking up at the sky.

“Hmmm,” said Sara. “Something isn’t right.”

“But it’s your perfect community,” Julio said, “Your peaceful city on a hill. Signal Community.”

“It’s your dream,” said Kimmie. She was very wise for her young age.

They laid and listened to the quiet a while longer. Sara just kept sighing.

“There’s another part to it that I can’t remember. There’s something we’re supposed to do with it.” Sara jumped to her feet. “We need to follow the dream. Let’s get to work!”

So they pulled out the biggest paper they could find to make plans for the rest of the dream. And Julio cleaned some sand from between his toes.



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## Chapter 2

“Signal Community is perfect,” said Julio, looking at the drawings on their large paper. “I don’t know why you want to change anything. It has everything anyone ever needed.” He was kneeling on a blanket in the park next to his friends.

Sara was staring up at the clouds. She and her friend Julio and little sister Kimmie had built Signal Community, a city on a hill, a city to give light to the world. It was Sara’s dream. But it was also a dream she heard from others.

“It’s just not right yet,” Sara said, frowning, trying to understand the clouds forming new ideas on a blue sky background. “There’s a part of the dream I can’t remember.”

“Maybe we need to dream some more,” Julio suggested.

Just then a large red ball rolled across their blanket and the sounds of children’s squeals interrupted their concentration. Their friends Micah and little Carlos came running up.

“Oh!” Micah exclaimed as he saw the beautiful city for the first time. “What are you doing?”

Sara smiled. “We just built our dream! A city on a hill! Signal Community!”

Micah and little Carlos looked. The city was awesome! High on a hill, with every beautiful building and park, with a river running through, and flowers everywhere.

“We’ll show you!” Sara said, and the children ran along the long road into the city. They went along the streets, looking up at the tall streetlights. They heard the train in the distance; they stopped at the candy store, and Julio gave everyone red licorice.

“It even has homes, a school, a hospital, and places to worship God—everything you need for a city,” Micah noticed.

“It shows what a city is supposed to be like,” Julio admired, spinning around, pointing at everything. “And ‘signal’ means that it shows others what the dream is, too.”

But as they returned to the park, Julio was getting frustrated with Sara, the dreamer. “But Sara says it’s not right yet; something’s missing.”

“It’s that dream—there’s something I can’t remember. It’s not right yet,” Sara said.

“Oh yeah!” Micah said. “I remember hearing those words. A city that is a signal...signal community.” He frowned a little. “There is something else to that—” He turned to Kimmie and Carlos who were drawing pictures in the sand. “Do you kids remember?”

Carlos shrugged.

So Micah crawled onto the blanket with Sara, Julio, and Kimmie and laid back to watch the clouds and listen to the whisper of the wind through the trees. They heard the sounds of the birds and could smell sweet flowers and cut grass.

Sara tried to remember hearing the dream—the first time, before it was her dream.

The other children tried to hear the dream too. They watched the clouds bump into each other. The clouds moved with purpose and the wind and bird songs seemed to make one beautiful melody...

“... share the good news and create signal communities...”

They all heard it, but Sara was the first to jump up.

“That’s it! It’s to share the good news! That’s what Signal Community is for! Sharing the good news with others.”

“How did you know that?” Julio asked, still squinting at the clouds.

“It’s the dream; it’s part of the dream.”

Kimmie and Carlos were already off the blanket, chasing each other through the grass.

“Who are we going to share the good news with?” Micah asked.

Sara smiled and said, “That’s why our community is still changing and growing; it’s not the dream yet—we need to invite others. Let’s make a plan of who to invite!” She unrolled her large paper again, the paper with the plan for Signal Community.

“We don’t need that paper,” Micah said. “Let’s just get going and invite everyone we see. There are a lot of people in the park! They will love this place!”

Julio was still a little reluctant. Still lying on the blanket, he squinted his eyes at the white clouds. And then he saw it. He saw what Sara and Micah had seen. Even little Kimmie and Carlos saw it. The clouds were forming into people—people holding hands with grinning faces and wide arms. Julio realized that they weren’t just looking at clouds—they were praying and imagining what to do. They needed to remember that: *Pray to God*. Discover answers together.

He jumped up and raced to join the other children. They were going to share the good news with others!



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## Chapter 3

Sara, Julio, and Micah were drawing on their planning paper in the park. Little Kimmie and Carlos were playing in the sandbox. In the distance, they could hear the sounds of people in Signal Community. It was a wonderful sound. The children had all heard about the city that followed a dream, a signal city that shared the good news.

“Good news, good news, good news...” Kimmie repeated over and over as she played. She liked that sound.

“What is the good news?” Julio finally asked.

“Well, we invited everyone to come live in Signal Community...” Sara said, then realized it wasn’t an answer. Then little Carlos said,

“It’s the good news that Jesus shared!”

“Wow Carlos, you’re right! It’s the good news that Jesus taught that God loves and accepts us all! We need to share the good news of how much God loves everyone, watches over them, and wants them to live together peacefully with each other.”

Julio grinned and jumped up. “That’s it! So let’s go tell them!”

Sara and Micah jumped up and grabbed hands with Kimmie and Carlos, and they all ran up the hill into Signal Community to share the good news with others.

People were everywhere in the city! Families were riding the train. Teachers were helping children

learn and explore, chefs were cooking delicious meals in restaurants, and workers were building a pet store and a toy store.

Children were taking turns on the swings. They made sure everyone had a chance to be pushed. They watched so no one fell off the jungle gyms or the teeter-totters.

In the schools, older children were helping teachers by teaching the younger ones how to print their names. They were very patient and loving with the little kids.

At the baseball park, one girl who was an especially good pitcher made sure she threw the ball right to the batter so they could practice hitting it every time.

But Sara and the other kids began noticing that not all people in Signal Community were making good choices.

In the candy store several children with sticky, gummy fingers and sugary ooze running down their faces had eaten almost ALL the red licorice! "Hey!" said Julio. "The licorice is almost gone! That was for *everybody!*" The kids just ran away laughing.

They noticed a family dumping their picnic garbage into the river, polluting not only their water but also the water of communities downriver.

And finally, they noticed the same group of kids playing video games who had been playing them all day yesterday. They weren't going outside, getting any exercise, or doing their chores.

Sara thought quietly about what she was seeing. "We need to learn how to live like Jesus," she said. "We need to learn about making good choices."

So they rang the big red bell on the welcome sign

to Signal Community. They called all the people back to the park, to sit in a big circle to have a talk. "Signal Community is a wonderful place. It's a city on a hill, a light to all the world," Sara said. She told the people about the dream, the dream that started somewhere else but had become hers. "Is this your dream too?" she asked.

"Yes, yes!" they all exclaimed.

"And part of the dream is sharing the good news. The good news of God's love for everyone. That means we live like Jesus. We share, love, and help one another."

"Yes," they agreed. They all had heard the stories of Jesus.

Then Micah said, "That means we have to make good choices. We can all have what we need if we share and take care of one another and the Earth."

"Yes," said the children who promised to share the licorice next time. And "yes" said the family as they cleaned their garbage out of the river. And "yes," said the kids who put away their video games.

Julio remembered the clouds from yesterday, how he had found an answer while looking at them. He told everyone about praying to God, and how the clouds had formed into the shapes of people. Those clouds helped him know that God wanted them to invite other people to Signal Community.

"So when you don't know what to do," explained Julio, "or if you're having a problem, say a prayer. Listen and watch for an answer. Because God will help you find the answer and help you make good choices."

Everyone clapped. They loved that idea. Many already knew it. But for some, it was the first time. They agreed to try it. It was a good day in Signal Community.



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## Chapter 4

Sara was happy today. After she and Julio and Micah gathered everyone and helped them learn about making good choices, she knew that the good news of God's love would be shared in Signal Community.

But that was not happening everywhere in Signal Community.

On their morning walk, they saw several people having trouble living in this peaceful community.

"Oh, oh," said little Kimmie and Carlos. They pointed...

...to the stable, where the children had been riding the ponies all day long. The ponies were getting very tired and tried to run away from the

children. Micah and Julio rounded up the ponies and calmed them down. They fed them, gave them water, and put them in the barn to rest.

"Oh, oh," Kimmie and Carlos said. They pointed...

...to a group of kids who, because there was no one around to stop them, were making fun of a young, overweight girl. Together, Sara, Julio, and Micah put their arms around the little girl, assured her that making fun of someone was not okay, and invited her to join them on their walk.

"Oh, oh," Carlos said, as he pointed...

...to a flowering bush where the flowers had all been trampled and the branches were broken on the ground.

And when Kimmie started to cry over the flowers, a tall girl laughed at her and called her a big baby. "OK, this is not good," Sara said. "There is more to sharing the good news than we thought. Sharing the good news is more than inviting, and more than making good choices. It is teaching how to live like Jesus."

So Julio rang the big red bell on the city sign, "Welcome to Signal Community." He sent out the signal for all the people to meet in the park. They gathered in a big circle in the grass by the sandbox, this time to hear the stories of Jesus.

They explored their Bibles, and they read about how Jesus shared meals with others, how he helped others to heal, how he made friends and invited them to travel with him. They learned how kind Jesus was, how he made friends with people from other countries and cultures. They learned how Jesus taught his followers, and how he caused a miracle to occur so thousands of people could be fed.

As they shamefully looked at each other, the group of kids who made fun of others said, "So, Jesus showed us how we should live. He showed us how everyone should be treated with respect!"

"That's right," Julio said.

"And don't eat all the licorice so there's plenty for others," said one of the licorice-eaters. "Yep," said Micah.

And then they read from the Bible about the

sacredness of creation, about how God had created the Earth and everything in it. They began to understand how God was willing to help them create new things like music, gardens, and stories. They were to be partners with God in helping all of creation to thrive.

"You mean to care for the ponies by brushing them and giving them water?" little Carlos said. "And not riding them so long that they are too tired to move?"

"Yes," nodded Julio. He was glad they were beginning to understand.

"And helping to plant flowers and not trample them?" little Kimmie asked. She looked around slyly. She knew she was giving the answer.

"Absolutely!" Sara smiled.

"I think we're getting the good news!" several people said to each other.

"Share the good news!" others shouted.

And soon, they were back on their feet and running up the hill to Signal Community, to try again to live like Jesus.

"That was," Sara thought, "for today. Who knows what tomorrow might bring?" She sat down on the blanket and looked over her plans on the big paper again. Was there anything she was leaving out? Maybe it was time to talk to God again and try to understand more of the dream.



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## Chapter 5

The next day as Sara and Julio and little Kimmie went to Signal Community to meet all their friends, they heard the sound of whimpering outside the park. It was a little puppy. But more than that, it was a little boy in a wheelchair. Both the boy and the puppy were whimpering.

“Hi,” Sara called out to him. “What’s the matter?”

“Oh, my puppy. He’s sad because he can’t go to the park and play,” the boy said.

Sara reached to pat the sad puppy on the head. “But why can’t he? This is a pet-friendly park!”

The little boy looked up at Sara from his wheelchair. “Because I can’t go in the park.”

Sara looked at Julio and Kimmie and looked at the wheelchair.

“Those little wheels get stuck in the sand,” little Kimmie pointed out. And sure enough, the front wheels were tiny, and they WOULD get stuck in the sand.

“Well, Signal Community is for everyone! EVERYONE!” said Julio, and he and Sara each picked up a side of the wheelchair and carried it and the little boy into the park. Kimmie took the dog leash and ran with the little puppy to the sandbox.

“Welcome to Signal Community,” Sara said as she pointed up the hill, to the city on the hill, the light

of the world. The little boy looked with his mouth falling open. It was awesome.

“Can I go there too?” he asked.

“Absolutely!” and they all ran up the road to Signal Community, racing to keep up with the little boy and the wheelchair and the puppy.

At the top of the hill, they sat on the curb to get their breath.

“I’m bushed!” Julio said. The little puppy lay down. “What are your names?”

“I’m Ahmil and this is Happy,” the boy said, pointing to his dog. “And this,” he said, pointing to his wheelchair, “...is named *Dreamer*.”

“Oooo,” Sara said with admiration. “Dreamer!”

“That’s because it takes me up to the sky, where I dream of flying. It’s where I like to pretend to be.”

Sara and Julio thought about the dreams that were a part of creating Signal Community.

“You know,” Julio said. “There might be more kids like Ahmil and dogs like Happy. We should be sure to invite them.”

“We should have EVERYONE help us invite them,” Sara said. So they rang the big red bell and they gathered the people in a circle.

“Have you heard the stories of Jesus reaching out to those who were hurt or sad or weren’t loved by others?” Sara asked, opening her Bible to read those stories. Everyone was all ears. They had

heard some of them. They all knew people who were sad or sick or had disabilities, like Ahmil. So they read those stories again. And they all thought of someone they could invite to Signal Community.

“May I bring my grandmother?” one girl asked. “She can’t go to church anymore, but she might be able to come here. Can I?”

“Absolutely!” Sara said. “Bring everyone! Signal Community is not a city on a hill, a light to the world, if everyone is not welcome.”

“Dogs too?” asked Ahmil. Happy reached up with his front paws to beg.

“Doggies too,” Kimmie shouted, giving Happy a big hug. “It’s for all animals, isn’t it Sara?”

“It’s the good news for all creation, for everything God created. We can’t have a Signal Community without healthy and happy plants and animals, too,” Sara said.

So the children took off in different directions. Some went to invite their friends or family as well as those who might be hurting or sad. Others worked with Sara who began planting fragrant flowers all around the outskirts of the city. And others helped Julio add a sign to the “Welcome to Signal Community” sign. It said, “...for all of God’s creation.”

Sara smiled. How much more wonderful could Signal Community be? She was so glad she had followed her dream, the dream that began somewhere else.



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## Chapter 6

The beautiful white clouds had bumped together across the blue sky all day. But overnight, the white clouds turned gray, and the rain began. In a very short time, a thunderstorm had blown in with lightning and wind and heavy rain.

Sara and Julio and little Kimmie had always loved storms. They knew the rain watered God's beautiful creation and brought fresh water to the ponds and rivers. But they were glad when the storm ended and they could run outside to meet one another in the park.

All the people were there, standing in a big circle around Signal Community. They weren't talking. They seemed sad. And they were all looking down.

"Hi everyone!" Sara welcomed them, but saw their sad faces. She stopped. And Julio stopped. And Micah and Ahmil. And even little Kimmie and Carlos and Happy stopped.

They all stopped.

They all looked. The sign "Welcome to Signal Community," was on the ground. The buildings were washed away. The train was off its tracks. The licorice in the candy store was soggy wet. The streets were flooded. Everything was under water.

"Oh no, Signal Community..." Sara said, and Julio dropped to his knees.

They all looked down into the sandbox, the sandbox where they had built Signal Community,

where their dream had come true, where they had played and learned to be caring like Jesus, learned to care for animals and the Earth, and learned to share peace and the good news of God's love with everyone. Signal Community, their city of dreams, had been washed away in the storm.

"It was only a sand city," Julio said, angrily. "I'm tired of sand between my toes anyway."

He kicked away the bag of red licorice he had brought every day, now full of water.

"This is where we learned how to get along," Micah said.

"This is where I felt accepted," Ahmil said.

"This was our play place!" little Kimmie and Carlos cried. Everyone was feeling sad.

They all wandered off through the wet grass, their city washed away.

Later that day, Sara, Julio, and little Kimmie went to church. They sat on the front pew so they could listen and see well. Then Micah, and little Carlos, and Ahmil, and many other children from the park came in to sit beside them. They were still sad, but they felt better because they were together.

But Sara was quiet. She was the saddest of all. She was thinking of the dream. The dream that she had heard somewhere else. The dream that someone else dreamed first. The dream that she had loved and turned into her dream. The dream of a signal community—

A city on a hill,  
A light to the world.

The sounds of church were around the children: people singing hymns, collecting the offering, telling stories of Jesus. The sounds swirled around, making melodies together. And all the children

became very quiet. Then they heard the words,

*"...when your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation overcomes your fear..."*

They became even quieter and the message became clearer...

*"...you will become who you are called to be."*  
—Doctrine and Covenants 163:9 adapted for children

Sara looked up, and the children looked up, and they heard their pastor sharing God's message from scripture. And they realized they were listening to God's words, God who had revealed a vision through scripture that their pastor had read to them. Now they understood...

*"...the rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Jesus, is waiting for you..."* the pastor read.

*"...establish signal communities of justice and peace that reflect the vision of Jesus."*  
—Doctrine and Covenants 164:5 adapted for children

Sara jumped up. That was it! That's where she heard the dream! The dream that started somewhere else, that became her own.

The dream of a city on a hill.  
A light to all the world.

All the children were quiet. Then Julio said, "We can create Signal Community right here. In our church."

"And in our schools," Micah said.

"In our neighborhoods and our homes and our city," Ahmil said.

"In our families," little Kimmie and Carlos said.

"We've learned how to do it, and we can do it ANYWHERE!" Sara said. And the children let

out a shout and a jump for joy. For their Signal Community wasn't just a sand city, to be washed away in the rain. It was everywhere they shared the good news of God's love and lived like Jesus, caring for one another and all creation.

Sara and Julio looked out the window at the sky. The white clouds were now bumping into each other. They were forming shapes of many different Signal Communities all over the sky. Not just one

or two, but a dozen, a hundred, and more! They were made from bricks, and thatch, and bamboo, and adobe. They had people of all cultures, all ages, and all abilities, speaking all languages. Signal communities were everywhere in the world. And they were beautiful.

"It's not just a dream anymore," Sara sighed. "It's a real place. And we know what it takes to make it happen!"