

## Safe in Your Hands

*By Donna Bishop*

What small toddler doesn't know the security of holding hands with mom or dad as she lifts her foot to take that first bold step forward? Over and over she reaches up for that reassuring grip as she proudly "walks" about the room. Long after she is walking steadily on her own she reaches for the comfort and security on her parents' hands while crossing the street, shopping or encountering new situations or people. This young child learned that holding hands is a way of helping another person and keeping them safe. For her it was a lesson that saved the life of a childhood playmate.

A group of young couples and their children were picnicking one summer day at a camp ground in the mountains. Each family spread their blankets on the ground. While the food was being laid out the children scampered off to explore their new playground. Warnings from the mothers to stay close by were lost in the wind as the youngsters raced towards the woods. To their delight they discovered a fast rushing mountain stream. Five-year-old playmates Anna and Betty joined the other children as they tested their skills at rock throwing. Somehow Anna slipped down the wet bank into the cold water and screamed for help. All the children started screaming and some started crying. Betty calmly reached for her friends hands and holding on with all her strength shouted to the other children to go for help. They all ran towards the camp ground screaming for help.

Anna was pulled safely from the water but she insisted on holding hands with her friend, Betty, until it was time to go home for the evening. The two girls were too young to understand the possible consequences of the day's event but the parents were so thankful for Betty's holding hands.