

TEACHER’S GUIDE

This Teacher’s Guide will give you many ideas, familiarize you with successful kindness projects in other schools, and provide resources to help you incorporate kindness into your school.

Practice Random Acts of Kindness™

The Random Acts of Kindness™ Foundation

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PRACTICE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS™

Why practice kindness and organize kindness events?

★ **KINDNESS INCLUDES EVERYONE.** Kindness crosses all those distinctions that we sometimes place among ourselves — distinctions of race, religion, culture, gender, age. Students learn that kindness is a language that everyone understands. Through kindness, we celebrate diversity.

★ **KINDNESS IMPROVES STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND THE SCHOOL CLIMATE.** Whether academically proficient or not, students are given a way to excel through kindness, and excel they do. One teacher said that a few students who appeared to be headed down destructive paths were turned around due to the increased self-esteem and positive involvement that the school's kindness program offered them. Other teachers have said that students are more willing to participate in class when they know that ridicule of their answers will not be tolerated. Thus, the learning environment is enhanced.

★ **KINDNESS IS EMPOWERING.** Kindness is one of the most powerful interpersonal tools that we, as human beings, use to connect with one another. When we sense someone's need, we either choose to help in some way... or we choose not to. If we act from empathy, we will offer kindness, and in that moment a surprising, gracious, humanitarian connection is made. This is the positive power that each of us — including children — possesses.

During difficult times, kindness propels students into action and gives them power when they feel powerless. They can do something to improve the world. You will find examples of students' responses to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in this guide under "Response to Tragedy."

★ **KINDNESS HELPS STUDENTS CONNECT ACTIONS WITH CONSEQUENCES.** Students are almost always positively reinforced when they are kind to others. They see the gratitude of the recipient; they hear the "thank you." They know that they made a difference.

★ **KINDNESS IS A VITAL, LIFELONG, INTERPERSONAL SKILL.** Students will use kindness daily in their relationships at home, at work, and in the community.

Kindness is an awareness that each of us develops *with practice* and *over time*. Through the kindness we give and receive, we begin to understand that we are intrinsically connected to those around us. We realize that we are part of a human community, in which giving and receiving kindness are vital to our health, harmony, and hope.

Our children deserve to learn and experience this life skill of kindness... and so do we all. Let kindness flow!

— Your friends at The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

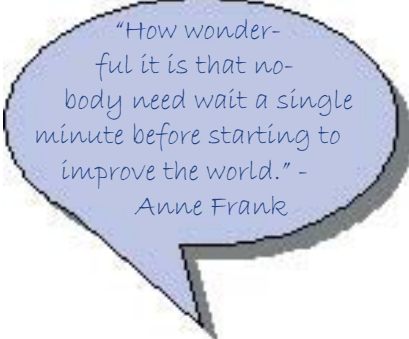
ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Random Acts of Kindness™ Foundation was formed to inspire and help people organize events and conduct activities that encourage others to do kind acts through the use of its Practice Random Acts of Kindness™ services. By disseminating ideas and developing materials and programs, we have helped our kindness coordinators incorporate kindness into thousands of schools and communities. As people tap into their own generous human spirit and share kindness with one another, they discover for themselves the power of kindness to effect positive change. When kindness is expressed, healthy relationships are created, community connections are nourished, and people are inspired to pass kindness on.

Established in 1995 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation is a resource for people committed to spreading kindness. We provide a wide variety of materials on our website, including activity ideas, lesson plans, project plans, teacher's guide, project planning guide, publicity guide, and workplace resources — all free of charge.

The Foundation is privately held and funded. We accept no donations, grants, or membership dues. We do not provide financial assistance to individuals or organizations. The Foundation has no religious or organizational affiliations; we encourage the practice of kindness in all sectors of society.

The emphasis of the Foundation is to create and strengthen communities by inspiring local coordinators, individuals, educators, schools, faith groups, service clubs, and other groups to share kindness with others and/or to participate in kindness activities. Our project ideas, website materials, and phone support are provided free of charge. Our website is: www.actsofkindness.org.



"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single minute before starting to improve the world." -
Anne Frank

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS CELEBRATION DATES

Each year, you can take part in the celebration of kindness by participating in Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Week in February and/or World Kindness Week (an international kindness celebration and alternate RAK Week) in November. Upcoming RAK dates are:

2006

Random Acts of Kindness Week	Feb. 13-19
World Kindness Week	Nov. 13-19
World Kindness Day	Nov. 13

2007

Random Acts of Kindness Week	Feb. 12-18
World Kindness Week	Nov. 12-18
World Kindness Day	Nov. 13



Feel free to choose the RAK Week dates that best meet the needs of your own community. Of course, you are welcome to celebrate RAK Week at any time of year — or all year long! The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation is here to support you with ideas and materials on our comprehensive website and telephone consultation any time of the year.

GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR STUDENTS

This Teacher's Guide is not a rigid program that you have to add to your already full school day. Rather, this guide invites you to incorporate kindness naturally into your current classroom or school environment.

Keep it simple

Keep your first project short, simple, and manageable. Later, when and if you are ready to expand, various planning tools are available in the Project Planning Guide on our website.

Define the words

Discuss and define the meaning of the words random, acts, and kindness with your students. What are Random Acts of Kindness? (See pages 5 and 6.)

Check out what other schools are doing

In this guide, you'll find all sorts of activities and projects that other educators have done successfully. You are welcome to use any of these ideas, remembering to adapt them to fit your own educational environment.

Also, browse through the webpages of our Kindness Coordinators to find out what they're doing! Their webpages are on our website under "What People Are Doing." After you've finished your school project, get some students together to create a webpage of your own using our simple templates in the same section.

Brainstorm ideas

Present a few ideas that you think would be achievable and would interest your students. Allow your students to make suggestions, modifications, and determine the final choice. If they take ownership of the project, their enthusiasm will carry them through the implementation, and they will experience that sense of satisfaction in completing what they created.

How and when will we do it?

Agree on a clear set of ground rules for your RAK activity, including kindness to one another and respect for each classmate's ideas and suggestions.

Define areas in your curriculum which will be enhanced by the RAK activities you have chosen. The activities are meant to supplement your curriculum while allowing your students to practice kindness, a lifelong interpersonal skill.

Who will do what?

Decide which students, or groups of students, will be responsible for certain tasks. If you are undertaking a longer project, introduce your students to the planning tools in the [Project Planning Guide](#) on our website.

And afterward....what did it mean to us?

Encourage students to reflect on their experiences and on the meaning on their activities through journaling, classroom or small group discussion, essay, art, poetry, collage, etc.

Reflection...

- ...is important in helping us understand the wider meaning of our actions and commitments.
- ...will enhance the sense of cohesion in your class group, helping to create a sense of community in the classroom.
- ...is a vital tool in helping students link their kindness activities in meaningful ways to the world around them.
- ...helps to tie RAK activities to other parts of the curriculum, such as language arts and social studies.
- ...should be a regular activity throughout any RAK program.

Share the experience!

Take pictures and preserve some samples of your activities. Use the webpage templates on our website to share your project and photos with others.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

Internalizing Kindness

Children must learn kindness experientially. Unless students experience both giving kindness and receiving kindness, they won't internalize this value. Allow time for discussion, reflection, journaling, and other methods of thoughtful follow-up.

Although we celebrate Random Acts of Kindness Week, kindness isn't just a weeklong activity. It is a lifelong journey, beginning in infancy as a baby responds to the gentle kindness of a caregiver. Through the practice of kindness, students understand the power they have to improve the emotional climate around them, simply through the choices they make every day to be kind.

Developing Community

Kindness activities and projects develop a sense of community among your students. They will assemble themselves around this common theme that allows their creative ideas to find expression.

Students who may not shine academically may come forward with previously unknown talents and skills. A computer whiz can track the project or create a kindness website. A pianist can accompany other students singing in a retirement center. A writer can produce a kindness newsletter. An artist can create posters or collages.

A student with a good sense of humor can ease students through tense moments. A dramatic student can funnel his/her passion into creating a play or puppet show about kindness. A talkative student can interview local kindness heroes or gather volunteers from neighboring classrooms.

Let your students shine, gently facilitating their discussions, and they will learn to appreciate one another's diverse abilities and perspectives.

DEFINITIONS

What is a Random Act of Kindness?

When we go beyond duties that are expected of us and reach out to help another person or group of people, we are performing a Random Act of Kindness. Kindness and empathy are very closely related: kindness is the observable expression of empathy. We sense another person's need, we understand how it feels to be in need (due to our own past experience), and we decide to offer our help. This profound process can happen almost instantaneously, even if the person in need is a complete stranger. When we are kind, we express the best of our humanity.

An Explanation of "Random"

The word "random" can be interpreted in various ways. It originally was adopted simply as a response to the often-heard phrase "random acts of violence." In this sense, a Random Act of Kindness does not mean an unplanned act any more than a random act of violence is unplanned.

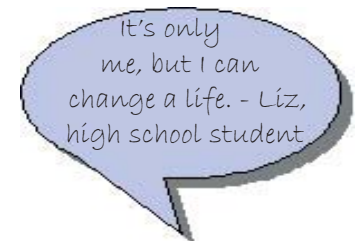
Almost all acts of kindness are planned to some extent. Sometimes the planning takes a couple of seconds. Other times, the planning can take weeks. **All acts of kindness — planned and unplanned — are valuable and beneficial.** When people are kind, they are improving their world by selflessly giving to another.

Definitions for Student Discussions:

- ★ **Practice:** We practice to become proficient at kindness, until kindness becomes part of who we are.
- ★ **Random:** A kind act is "random" when it is unexpected, done for no reason and without expecting anything in return.
- ★ **Kindness:** Helping someone who needs assistance or encouragement
- ★ **Random Act of Kindness:** When we do a RAK, we give for the sake of giving; we act simply out of the goodness within us.
- ★ **Passing kindness on:** When we do kind things for people, they feel so good about what we did that they often do kind acts for others.

As kindness is passed on from one person to another, an outward ripple effect is created, like a droplet that falls into water.

In this way, one kind act connects people and can be passed on and on, bringing happiness to many others.



ACTIVITY IDEAS BY ACADEMIC SUBJECT

READING and WRITING

- ★ Have each student write a positive comment about every student in their class on 3x5 cards or paper. Pass the notes to the children they describe, and have them make a collage of the answers. Option: sort the comments by student on the computer, print out a list for each student of others' comments about them, and give it to them to take home and save.
- ★ Ask students to perform a Random Act of Kindness for a stranger and then write an essay describing the experience — how it made them feel and the reaction of the person who received their kindness.
- ★ Provide time for students to start a kindness journal in which they can keep their own kindness stories, pictures, ideas or feelings about Random Acts of Kindness.
- ★ Choose a book at the library or a story in your reading book that describes someone doing something nice for someone else. Read the story aloud in the classroom. Lead a discussion or have the students write about how the characters felt when they did something nice (or had something nice done for them).
- ★ Ask the students to think about a time when they hurt someone's feelings by being unkind and then to rewrite the situation with a different outcome.
- ★ Ask the students to pick two people who have done something nice for them. Have them write letters of appreciation, explaining how those people have made a difference in their life.
- ★ Locate various quotes about kindness. Put them up around the room and discuss what they mean. Students can memorize or illustrate their favorite quote.
- ★ Conduct a newspaper kindness search. Have the students look through the newspaper for stories about acts of kindness and summarize the stories for the rest of class.



- ★ Expand your students' reading skills as well as their social skills by having them read to the younger students in the school.
- ★ After your students have finished a novel you have assigned, ask them to write a poem or interior monologue from the point of view of one of the characters. Give them time (and perhaps show them how) to get "under the skin" of the character and imagine his or her emotions. Share an example of what you want to receive from them. Then collect their works and share them. A teacher assigned this work for the novel *Souder* (by William Howard Armstrong), whose characters' lives were very different from her own students'. The poignant writing from this assignment not only brought the novel alive for the students but helped them develop empathy, a vital component of kindness.

MATH

- ★ Make a quilt out of paper or fabric as part of a unit on measurement, with each patch containing a drawing of an act of kindness. After it is completed, the class can hang the quilt in the hallway or donate it to a local charity.
- ★ Calculate the amount of aluminum, paper, and other recyclable items currently being thrown away and how much income could come from recycling them.
- ★ Have your students tutor younger students in math.
- ★ Create RAK "script" (pretend money) that can be given to a student by another student, a teacher, the principal, the janitor, etc., to tell the student that they have done something kind and have made a difference that day. Script could be left anonymously in the student's mailbox. At the end of the month, there could be an auction where students could buy privileges with their script, like a ride in the principal's car or lunch with a teacher.

SCIENCE

- ★ Learn about how pollution and trash affect the environment, including animals and plants. Discuss how kindness towards our environment can help humans, animals, and plants.
- ★ Plant a tree or small flower garden on the school grounds. Discuss each type of plant or flower and how best to care for it.
- ★ Adopt a nearby park and learn about the ecosystems within that park. Work together to keep it clean and beautiful.
- ★ Learn how to make homes more energy efficient. Share the information with local residents. Discuss how energy efficiency helps the environment and, in turn, humans and animals.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- ★ Identify community helpers such as crossing guards, firefighters, police officers, etc. Visit their workplaces and learn about their jobs. Discuss how their jobs help the community.
- ★ Meet with senior citizens and record their memories of the community when they were growing up. Compare their likes and dislikes with those of young people today. Compare prices from then to now.

- ★ Choose a problem that needs to be solved in your area, and contact local officials to try to get it solved. Learn about the political process by attending city council meetings, visiting local officials, and writing letters.
- ★ Arrange for students to attend a meeting of your local or state government and talk about the importance of Random Acts of Kindness in the community. A good way to get the legislators involved is by sharing RAK stories with them and asking them to share in return. The students might want to bring RAK gift bags filled with little goodies and decorated with kindness pictures or sayings for the government officials.

HISTORY


- ★ Study kind people in history. Then have kids illustrate their kind works and discuss how their chosen path affected the world.
- ★ Create a crossword puzzle with the names of kind people from history. When the puzzle is complete, discuss how each historical figure was kind.
- ★ Discuss the following quote: “Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough.” —Franklin D. Roosevelt. Your students will not agree, but you will have an interesting discussion! Note the merits of interpersonal kindness and respect, and their power to forge alliances among world leaders. Mention the merits of cross-cultural kindness and its power to create connections among people who might never meet otherwise (e.g., the Peace Corps, pen pals, schools connecting through the Internet, various charities that focus on creating cross-cultural interaction).

ACTIVITY IDEAS BY SCHOOL LEVEL

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- ★ Wave hello to a crossing guard or a police officer.
- ★ Share your smile (generously). Smile at your mom, dad, brother, sister, teacher, classmate.
- ★ Make a thank-you card for a mail carrier, firefighter, school staff person. Example: Write thank-you notes to firefighters for conducting fire drills for everyone’s safety.
- ★ Make a birthday card for a classmate or teacher.
- ★ During class meeting, have children share about a time they did an act of kindness for someone and how it felt. Younger children can draw a picture and tell about it. Assemble drawings into a paper quilt on a bulletin board.
- ★ Have students start a kindness journal. They can keep track of their own kindness stories, pictures, ideas, and feelings about Random Acts of Kindness.
- ★ Choose a book from the bibliography on our website and read it to the students. Do an enrichment activity with the class. Example: Read *Sister Anne’s Hands* (by Marybeth Lorbiecki). Have students trace their hand and decorate it. Put the hands on the bulletin board with a caption. Make a whole school bulletin board by asking other teachers to do the same.
- ★ Use excerpts from *Kids’ Random Acts of Kindness*. Photocopy, laminate. Read and discuss. Children can write responses in journals.
- ★ Study kind people in history. Then have students illustrate the kind works of these people and discuss them in class.
- ★ Start a conversation with a new student or with a classmate who seems lonely.
- ★ Write a nice note to someone in your class who is having a bad day.
- ★ Put photos of kinds acts in hearts on the classroom or hallway walls. Afterward, donate the display to a local hospital, nursing home, or senior center.
- ★ Kindness Zone: Put up a sign designating a classroom where students practice Random Acts of Kindness.
- ★ Kindness Banner: Make a large banner and invite children to draw pictures about kindness on it. The banner can be displayed in the school’s lobby, cafeteria, gym, or in a classroom.
- ★ Bookmark: Create a kindness bookmark. Laminate. To extend this activity, put lines on the back before laminating, and students can write their own ideas.
- ★ Kindness Rainbow: Have children trace hands in rainbow colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) and post with kind acts written on them.
- ★ Kindness Acrostic: Use the letters of KINDNESS to create acrostic poems. Use these poems to create a bulletin board, or use them as the written inserts of kindness cards.
- ★ Kindness Week Slogan: Create a slogan and make bumper stickers. Use slogans as writing/illustrating. Examples: “Kindness begins like a ripple of water.” “Kindness makes your heart glow!”
- ★ Kindness Quotes: Locate various quotes about kindness. Put them up around the room and discuss what they mean. Students can memorize their favorite quote. They could also illustrate their favorite one.
- ★ 100’s day: Collect 100 hugs. Keep track on chart.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- ✦ Ask students to perform a Random Act of Kindness for someone (cafeteria worker, aide, crossing guard, postal worker, secretary) and then write an essay describing the experience. They should include how it made them feel and the reaction of the person who received the kindness.
 - ✦ Conduct a newspaper kindness search. Have students look through the newspaper for stories about acts of kindness and summarize the story for the rest of the class.
 - ✦ Choose a story with a kindness theme. Read aloud or have children read in classroom. Discuss or write about how the characters felt when they did something nice or had something nice done for them.
 - ✦ Have children start a kindness journal in which they keep their own kindness stories, pictures, ideas, or feelings about Random Acts of Kindness.
 - ✦ Ask student to pick someone who has done something nice for them and write a thank you note. Example: a tutor for helping them learn math facts, a nurse for bandaging a hurt, etc.
 - ✦ Buddies: Take students to younger classes to teach little ones to tie their shoes (count to 10, learn colors, etc.).
 - ✦ Pennies for _____. Ideas can be generated by children. A class came up with idea "Pennies for Pets" after visitor from SPCA came to the classroom and discussed the needs of the local SPCA. They collected \$100. The SPCA responded by bringing a detailed account of how the money was spent.
 - ✦ Historical figures of kindness: Study kind people in history. Have students write a report, illustrate their work, and discuss in them in class. A book could be made and shared with younger students.
- 
- ✦ Set up a "_____ Appreciation Day": This could be for aides, custodians, librarians, teachers, nurses, crossing guards, community helpers, etc. Make a banner or cards that tell them how much they are appreciated. (A kindness basket could also be given.)
 - ✦ Kindness Zone: Put up a kindness banner or sign at entrance to school or your room to remind people to practice Random Acts of Kindness.
 - ✦ Smile File: Create a "smile file" with cartoons that make people smile. Students can pick out a cartoon to cheer up a friend in need.
 - ✦ Collect used usable games or toys for children in foster homes, child protective services, family shelters, hospitals, etc.

HIGH SCHOOL

- ✦ Create a special publication of RAK featuring local kindness stories. These can be broadcast over local TV stations or school intercom.
- ✦ Create a kindness mascot. It can circulate in high foot-traffic areas distributing bookmarks and/or suggestions for acts of kindness. The mascot can visit elementary schools to talk about kindness.
- ✦ Get local police involved in RAK! They can hand out "Kindness Citations" as they witness kind acts, give out "Good Driving" tickets, visit classrooms with stories of kindness, etc.
- ✦ Ask the mayor's office to declare RAK Week in the town. Make a banner to go across downtown streets. Ask local merchants to put posters in windows.
- ✦ Go to town library and ask them to forgive late fees during RAK Week.
- ✦ Hold a poster contest for all ages. Display posters at city hall or the mayor's office and have the local paper and TV station announce winners.
- ✦ Plan a school or classroom recycling effort. Contact local agencies to see if they would be willing to remove recyclables. Find out how they must be sorted and stored. Collect and recycle everything you can. Contact local media for publicity for efforts.
- ✦ Tape yourself reading a book. Use the tapes to entertain sick children or adults at local hospital or nursing home.
- ✦ Collect goods for local food bank (pantry).
- ✦ Help serve dinner at local soup kitchen.
- ✦ Write a thank you note to a mentor or someone who has influenced your life in a positive way.
- ✦ Donate time at a senior center.
- ✦ Open the door for another person.
- ✦ Have park clean-up parties at area parks.
- ✦ Be a buddy to a new student.
- ✦ As you go about your day, pick up trash.

IDEAS FOR ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Brainstorm ideas with your students about how they can perform and promote Random Acts of Kindness as individuals, as a class, as a school, and out in the community. Here are some ideas to start them thinking:

As Individuals

- ★ Smile at other students you see in your classes, in the hallway, at lunch, and on the way to the bus.
- ★ Start a conversation with a classmate who seems lonely.
- ★ Eat lunch with a new student or someone whom you don't normally talk to.
- ★ Write an encouraging note to someone in your class who is having a bad day.
- ★ Share your snack at recess.

As a Class

- ★ Ask kids to start practicing Random Acts of Kindness but not to tell anyone until the end of the week, when they can share their experiences with the entire class.
- ★ Take time out of recess or lunch to wash off graffiti or pick up trash on your playground. One day ask another class to join your efforts.
- ★ Surprise another class with cookies, hot chocolate, or treats on a winter day.
- ★ Students can learn or make up a rap, cheer, or song to tunes they know, such as the following, created by students in New Mexico:

Cheer: R-A-K
R-A-K
We will all be kind today!

Chants: • Kindness is contagious,
Spread it around!

• Make up your mind
To be very kind!

Songs: *(to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?")*:
Kindness matters, kindness matters
Every day in every way
Share with one another
Care for one another
Let us all be kind today.

(to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"):
Do, do, do a deed
Be kind every day
That is how to change the world
And make the hurt [*sadness, trouble, violence*] go away!

- ★ Students can also create their own kindness pledge. Here are a couple:

Pledge: We will cheer people up,
Help others when they are hurt,
Share with others,
Use good manners,
Ask others to play,
Greet people with a smile,
Be a good friend, and
Treat others the way we want to be treated.

Pledge: I pledge to myself, on this day,
To try to be kind in every way.
To every person, big and small,
I will help them if they fall.
When I'm kind to myself and others too,
That is the best that I can do!

- ★ Write notes of appreciation to the cafeteria workers, janitors, or other staff members who don't normally receive recognition.
- ★ Ask your principal if each student from your class can read a quote or story about kindness each morning over the intercom for as many days as there are students in the class.
- ★ Form a group of students to help the school staff — in the cafeteria, younger ones can clean lunch trays while older ones can pick up trash, dust classrooms, or patrol the aisles to give the adult monitors a break.
- ★ Locate quotes about kindness on our website at actsofkindness.org. Put them up around the room and discuss what they mean. Students can memorize or illustrate their favorite quote.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS: SCHOOL REPORTS

HOW THIS SECTION IS ORGANIZED

The following activities are separated by topic. Each activity is color-coded by the school level (if known) of the teacher or student who submitted it to us. **However, most of the ideas can be adapted to any grade level.** The two letters following each idea indicate the originating state or province.

E = Elementary school

M = Middle school

H = High school

A = All Grades

TEACHING KINDNESS

In addition to the ideas earlier in this book and in the Activity Idea Guide on our website, here are some methods teachers use to help their students learn kindness.

E: Kind Words — I started the school year with a class of unruly students. I began teaching them polite words, one a day, such as please, thank you, excuse me. I taught them how to give a compliment and how to receive one. I gave them a form on which to note their polite words as they used them. Each morning they all discussed what polite words they'd used the day before and in what situations. After about three weeks, I began teaching them about good deeds and kindness, and they began sharing the kind deeds they had done. I gradually weaned them off the forms, and they were doing these things all on their own. After six weeks, these students were not the same kids. The improvement in their behavior was remarkable. I will be using your materials to continue my kindness work. —MI

E: Cards and Coupons - I visit each class and give two RAK lessons. First, each student is given a card to write a thank-you note to someone who has been kind to them. Second, each student is given a promise coupon to fill out and give to someone of his choice. —MO

E: Validation Chain — At the end of each class day, we do a "validation chain." One of the students begins by sharing a respectful, appreciative remark to another student. This is passed on and on until all students have received and given a compliment. The students always remind me if time is getting close. They leave feeling really good about themselves and others. They are very careful to include everyone. This is a powerful remedy to conflict. —CA

M: Various Activities — Students make folders with their names written vertically and a character trait written horizontally through the name, using one letter of their name to produce the word. For instance,

"Susan" is in one color and the character traits are in another color. Then, students draw pictures or symbols around their names to explain who or what they respect in our lives and what they are responsible for. They cut out newspaper articles, glue them to notebook paper and write essays about why certain people in the news were or were not fair, kind, or respectful. The essays are from the heart and very precious.

Community speakers or parents come into the class and tell the students true stories when character proved all-important. It has great impact. Police officers or firefighters make great speakers. The sixth graders really enjoy this material. It reinforces what they already know is right. —CA

M: RAK and Health — I require my health students to do three acts of kindness during the nine-week health program. They write the kindnesses down and turn them in. During RAK Week I taught kindness, giving my students the chance to perform RAKs in the school & community and see the effect their acts of kindness had on others. Each time they performed a RAK, they were given a star or a heart to put on the bulletin board in the gym. It was a wonderful success! —CO

H: Various Activities — A high school math teacher has her class use geometry to design symmetrical Valentines. Then they deliver the Valentines to nursing home residents.

She also created a kindness door competition. Students in each classroom decorated their door with kindness quotes, stories, pictures, etc. Some teachers did the judging, and several prizes were handed out, in addition to a breakfast for the winners. The school climate improved and there was general enthusiasm. A TV station covered the event. —MS

A: Three RAKs — During winter break, students were asked to do three kind things for three people and ask them to pass the kindness on. After winter break, they discussed the impact their actions had and how they felt. They also kept a kindness journal.

A: Kindness Collage — Students created a large collage of all their names and kind statements about them that classmates provided.

RESPECT
U
KINDNESS
A
RESPONSIBILITY

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS (RAK) WEEK

✦ **E: Secret Kindness Pals** — Students in one classroom drew the names of secret kindness pals. All week long, they did little kind acts for the person and left anonymous notes on his/her desk with kind messages. At the end of the week, they tried to guess who their kindness pal was. They also spent time reflecting and discussing how it felt to give and receive kindness. —NJ

✦ **E: Cookies for Businesses** — Parents baked cookies and sent them to school. Fourth grade students & their teachers dropped off cookies at random establishments (local businesses, etc.), then explained Random Acts of Kindness to the workers there and took pictures.

✦ **E: Kindness Connection** — Students made paper cutouts of the human body silhouette. They wrote an essay, poem, or the name of someone the students saw doing a kind act. They then connected the paper figures: "We are all connected by kindness." Another school used this idea with paw prints (for their mascot) and titled the display "Paws for Kindness."

✦ **E: Kindness Chain** — Students in many schools write each kind act they do on a construction paper chain link and create a chain of kindness, which they hang around the classroom or from the ceiling throughout the school. One teacher took this further, involving all the students in the school. Her elementary school had a kindness assembly, unfurled the 1,080-link kindness chain (with links made of card stock for strength), and "wrapped the gym in kindness." —NJ

✦ **E: Various Activities** — The school's RAK coordinator encouraged students to draw pictures of RAKs they did outside of school. They also collected juice boxes for the homeless. The students' drawings were in the local paper. —WA

✦ **E: School Interaction** — A school provided Thanksgiving baskets for the lunchroom and custodial staff. The project helped create more interaction among teachers and staff, and students and staff. They placed the recipients' names in a hat and had the teachers draw a name. Then the classes brought in things for the basket, such as food, toiletry items, books, cards made by students, and other surprises. On the day before the holiday break, the guidance counselor escorted each cafeteria worker to a classroom, where the basket was presented and pictures were taken. The lunchroom and custodial staff were overwhelmed; one said, "I feel so thankful to be able to work in a school that cares." The students now greet the staff by name, and there is a lot more interaction. —GA

✦ **E: Kindness Rainbow** — One class made kindness cards. Other classes made a rainbow of "helping hands" for a wall display, which they called "Rainbow of Kindness." —TX

Another school celebrated RAK Week with a school-wide hug and by singing songs. They also wrote their Random Acts of Kindness on colored hearts to form a kindness rainbow in the cafeteria. —MN

✦ **E: Various Activities** — Students in most classes exchanged names and anonymously did kind things for one another. Students in several grades made valentines for the veterans' hospital. The fourth grade made kindness posters by listing behaviors beginning with each letter of the word "kindness." After RAK Week, fourth graders reflected and wrote their responses on hearts, which were assembled into a large poster. Grades 6-8 wrote notes of appreciation to adults in the school. The adults participated with kind acts to one another and to their students as well. —VT

✦ **E: Various Activities** — I worked with a group of student leaders from an elementary school to promote Random Acts of Kindness Week in February. The mayor presented the proclamation to the students at a televised city council meeting. The students accepted the proclamation and made a short speech about the importance of kindness.

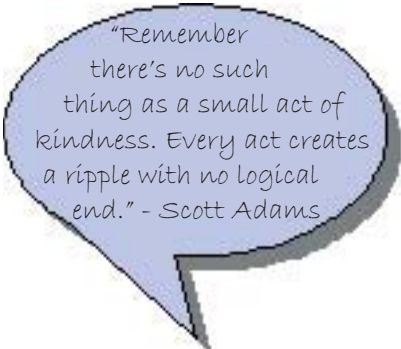
Back at school they gave each of the 538 students a heart in which to write a kind act that they observed someone else doing during that week. These were then posted on a large poster in the front hallway of the school, along with the proclamation. Students were also given stickers to wear after they did a kind act. I also made copies of the teachers' lesson plans to give to each teacher, and every class has been focusing on some aspect of kindness throughout the month. —CO

✦ **E: Various Activities** — Students made bookmarks, door hangers, and other items reminding people to be kind. The items went to libraries, veterans groups, schools, and TV stations. They also saved soda can tabs for one week, and the proceeds went to a local charity. They distributed RAK information packets to 10 elementary schools & 12 elementary after school programs. Ten of the after school programs participated by making Veteran Day cards, bookmarks, and collecting food for the homeless. The cards were given to the local veterans home. Children made a flag from their handprints, signed their names on it, and gave it to the local veterans home. —AL

✦ **E: Various Activities** — Students were asked to perform one Random Act of Kindness a day during RAK Week. There was also a program activity for all students, including collecting pennies, coloring pictures, and writing letters for emergency workers in New York City. Also, the students collected canned goods for Thanksgiving baskets for families of domestic violence, made a kindness chain in the school, and had a campus clean-up day with a banner thanking the custodial staff. —FL

✦ **E: Various Activities** — Members of a club had a canned food drive and donated the food. They also gave teachers, cafeteria workers, and custodians certificates saying "You were MINT to be appreciated" with peppermints attached. —LA

✦ **E: Various Activities** — During RAK Week, grades pre-K, K, 1st: Read a story on kindness. Assigned kindness partners. Each child is responsible for doing kind deeds for his or her partner throughout the week. Grades 2-5: Kindness Bingo: students filled a bingo card with kind acts. When they perform five acts in a row throughout the week, they have a "bingo" and win a prize. Each student was did kind deeds to an assigned kindness partner throughout the week. Students in a school bowling league held a bowl-a-thon and obtained pledges to raise money for a local food pantry. —MI



"Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end." - Scott Adams

✦ **E: Kindness Tree** — RAK Week was facilitated by the PTA President. For each Random Act of Kindness, she put a hand on the Kindness Tree. Kids got Hershey kisses for performing a RAK. Over 600 RAKs were recorded in one week. —NY

✦ **E: Roses for Kindness** — I lead a Brownie Troop of nine girls. Members of the troop made roses from Hershey Kisses and gave them to neighbors with RAK postcards. I also spoke to my two children's classrooms about RAK. I showed them a poster of ideas, and then they came up with their own ideas. —WI

✦ **E: Bird Feeders** — During RAK Week, kindergartners made bird feeders to give away as a part of their animal unit. —NY

✦ **E: Kindness Board** — During RAK Week, our student council will be sponsoring a simple way to involve the whole school in kindness. Here's what we're doing:

1. We are using a large bulletin board in the cafeteria as our Kindness Board. We decorated it with a pink background and white border. We placed a banner in the center that says "Random Act of Kindness Week: Feb.11-17."
2. We have cut out red hearts and ladybugs and distributed them to the homeroom teachers.
3. When teachers catch a student doing a Random Act of Kindness, the student is allowed to put his/her name on a heart or bug with the act of kindness and place it on the board.
4. Student council members will make posters to place around the school about kindness. They will produce short skits to show on our closed circuit, student-produced news television.
5. We will offer a prize for the student with the most Random Acts of Kindness. —AL

✦ **E: Kindness to the Staff** — The student council gave an apple and a poem to all of the staff members. This was an extremely generous task because there are 75 staff members, and we are a low income district. —NY

✦ **E: Kindness to the Staff** — Celebrating RAK Week in February goes along with National School Counselor's week. I always try to do a little something special for the staff at my school during this week. Last year I had popcorn, coke and cookies all day in my office so that teachers and other staff members could come by during their planning period and have a break. This gives us an informal opportunity to get to know each other a little better and it seemed to help improve school morale. [Note: Students can use this idea to provide refreshments or a "tea" for the school staff.] —GA

✦ **E: Kindness to the Staff** — Our school participated in RAK Week by celebrating "Custodian and Teacher Appreciation Day." We served continental breakfast to the staff, cleaned the cafeteria after breakfast and lunch, and cleaned the windows inside of the school. Everything went well. The children now have a better appreciation for the custodians and the school. —MD

✦ **E: Days with a Theme** — During RAK Week, we collect spare change in 'Kindness Catchers.' We donate the change to United Way at the end of the week. Monday is 'Color for Kindness Day.' The students illustrate what kindness means to them by drawing and coloring posters to hang around the school.

Tuesday is 'Get Caught Being Kind Day.' Each student is given two badges to issue to their peers if they catch them being kind. Wednesday is 'Make a Card of Kindness Day.' The students make Valentine's Day cards for residents of a local nursing home. Thursday is 'Reflection Day.' The students take time to reflect on how kindness has affected their lives in the past week by writing about the subject. One student essay is picked from each class to be read on Friday at the Kindness Rally.

Friday is the 'Kindness Rally.' The students gather for an assembly. We announce the amount of money collected in the Kindness Catchers, reminding them that their small acts of kindness led to a significant difference. The students read kindness stories, and I sing and dance. —MO

✦ **E: Hands for Kindness** — Students wrote a RAK they did or received on a cut-out paper hand, and all were hung in the gym. Students participated in pennies for patients, raising \$114.46. Some teachers also incorporated kindness into core subjects. —NE

✦ **E: Various Activities** — I wanted to do something during RAK Week that would not stress teachers or students. (We are preparing for proficiency tests as well as being in the middle of a district-wide construction project.) I encouraged each class to do a RAK project but made it optional. I offered a goodie basket as a prize to the winning class.

I had five takers. One class decided that everyone would say something nice about the person on their left; one wrote to the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives asking that sign language be available in all public schools as well as a moment of silence to begin the day; one made Valentine cards and delivered them to a retirement home; one donated several quilts (made by ironing colored pictures to fabric and having them bound) to a women's shelter and a children's hospital; and one (the winner) chose to clean up the cafeteria every day after lunch, as well as to assist the custodian for the rest of the school year! I awarded the prize to the winner and gave a bag of candy hearts to each class that participated. It was low stress, and acts of kindness still occurred! —OH

✦ **E: Popcorn Surprise** — To celebrate World Kindness Day, third and fourth grade students in the RAK Club at this school held a surprise popcorn party for the school. They filled bags with popcorn, and while the rest of the school was at recess, they slipped into empty classrooms and left a bag of popcorn for each student. They also got the mayor to proclaim RAK Week. —WA

✦ **E: Various Activities** — Our students created greeting cards and placemats for pediatric hospital patients; fed animals from bird feeders; presented a spa basket to the school nurse; gave bouquets to school secretaries; treated custodians to a special lunch; worked on kindness quilt; produced a kindness bulletin board; created Valentines for patients at a nearby hospital and a veterans hospital; and wrote kindness stories. Enthusiasm has been so great that I offered to do free workshops in my area to promote kindness. —NJ



✦ **E: Kindness Tree** — Our school has weekly specials on character education. For caring and citizenship, grades 1-6 made cards for every teacher and staff person in the school. In the after school program, they made salt clay dough, heart-shaped ornaments and put decoupage on them to preserve them. They affixed rainbow, heart, or smiley stickers to some and wrote words of kindness, such as “smile” or “sharing.” They placed a tree in the school lobby with a suggested list of Random Acts of Kindness for people to take home. It was well received. —CT

✦ **E: Kindness Tree** — Teachers watch for kind acts that students do, announce it over the morning news, and then place those students’ names on a tree labeled Acts of Kindness. Students collected 1350 cans of food and donated it to a charity; collected over \$700 and sent it to the New York Relief Fund; second graders raised \$700 for a research hospital; and fifth graders visited nursing homes during the holidays and brought a gift to each resident. —SC

✦ **M: Kindness Cards** — During RAK Week, the teachers were given kindness cards. It was up to the teacher to give a card to a student who had done a RAK and send him or her down to the main office for a prize. The kids had to do something kind for someone in the building. At the end of the week, we drew a couple of names for the grand prize. The grand prize was a T-shirt, water bottle, and a “Superkid” pen. The prizes we gave during the week were pencils, pencil sharpeners in the form of CD players and calculators, key rings with scooters attached, slinkies, etc. The week went well. —CO

✦ **M: Hands for Kindness** — Students posted cut-out paper hands on the school halls with RAK that they had done written on them. The goal was for 350 hands, and 369 were completed. —NV

✦ **M: Children’s Hospital** — The district schools celebrated RAK week by collecting school supplies, games and toys and donated them to the local children’s hospital. —NY

✦ **M: Locker RAK** — Every student’s locker had a heart on it with a RAK suggestion to perform (e.g., sit with a new person at lunch). They also had kindness poster contests. —NJ

✦ **M: Teddy Bear Drive** — They had a teddy bear drive during RAK Week & donated them to the Red Cross. The bears were then given to needy children as well as elderly patients in local nursing homes. The community also celebrated RAK Week in other ways. —WV

✦ **M: RAK Play, School Dance** — We will have special morning announcements and some surprises for teachers, parents, and students. I am interested in starting an RAK club at our middle school, with a focus for each monthly meeting. The club could sponsor a school play with a theme compatible with kindness. They could also sponsor a school dance with RAK sayings as part of the decorations. —TN

✦ **M: Days with a Theme** — Their schools celebrated RAK Week with an official kindness theme for each day. Monday was mutual respect. Tuesday was acts of kindness to the less fortunate. Wednesday was acts of kindness to the environment. Thursday celebrated diversity and included discussions on hate crimes. Friday was community service. A local restaurant donated 25,000 giveaway coupons for district employees; the coupons were included with their paychecks. —TX

✦ **M: Caught in the Act** — We acknowledged kids every time they displayed an act of kindness to someone. We called it “Caught in the Act.” The student received a \$1.00 voucher on the spot that could be use at the school store. At the end of the month, all students received a carnation with a Random Act of Kindness bookmark attached. We heard that many students then turned around and gave the carnations to their parents, friends, bus drivers, secretaries, teachers, and custodians. It was great. —RI

✦ **M: Kindness to the Staff** — Their service club created a Valentine’s Survival Kit for the staff to celebrate the 100th day of school. They gave each staff member a filled bag with the following text:


A Valentine’s Survival Kit just for you!
Chocolate Kisses to remind you that you are loved!
Matches to light your fire when you feel burned out!
Tootsie Rolls to remind you not to bite off more than you can chew!
Smarties to help you on those days you don’t feel so smart!
Starbursts to give you a burst of energy on those days you don’t have any!
Snickers to remind you to take time to laugh!
A bag to help you keep it all together and to give you food for thought!
And most importantly, a candle to remind you that you can brighten someone else’s day! —PA

✦ **M: RAK Man** — Students received a visit from “RAK Man” (a costumed superhero, possibly an energetic parent, teacher, or community member), who reminded them that even the smallest acts of kindness will result in more kindness. RAK Man also gave an apple to each teacher. —IL

✦ **M: Spontaneous RAK Weeks** — A middle school PE teacher says that whenever the climate at her school gets rough, they have a spontaneous RAK Week. The attitudes and the school climate improves, and they go on. They have several RAK Weeks a year, and these weeks lift everyone up. She says, “It’s almost as if the students need permission to be kind, and then they do so enthusiastically.” —CA

✦ **H: Writing** — I am an English teacher, and I used RAK Week to attempt to have my students be more considerate of other people. The first day we discussed the concept of “Random Acts of Kindness” in terms of what would qualify, and things that had been done for them that they really appreciated. Their first assignment was to write several paragraphs about the nicest thing anyone had ever done for them, and to make a list of ten nice things they could do for someone else. They were instructed to keep a log of the nice things that they did for other people over the course of the week, understanding that their acts of kindness would be deliberate rather than random.

I then showed the movie, *Pay It Forward*. It took three days of class time. They did character sketches of all of the main characters, and answered a series of questions about the film. At the conclusion of the film, we discussed all of the social problems that were



“It is difficult to give away kindness. It keeps coming back to you.”
- Cort Flint

discussed in the movie (alcoholism, child abuse, spousal abuse, school bullies, violence in schools, discrimination based on appearances, child neglect, drug abuse, and homelessness). My students loved the movie, despite the fact that it has a very sad ending. Most of my students have never thought about homelessness or the reasons for it. It was an eye-opening experience for many. My students loved this week devoted to kindness. —FL

✦ **H: Various Activities** — Our RAK Committee organized RAK Week: \$245 was raised for polio; food, blankets, and toys were collected for the needy; 86 donors gave blood; lunch music was played; and the leadership class passed out stickers, suckers, and friendship bracelets. —CA

✦ **H: Kindness Chain** — We will have a RAK competition among the grade levels, such as how long the students in each class can make a kindness chain. —NY



✦ **H: Locker Surprise** — Student Council members made Valentine hearts and wrote kind messages on them. They taped one to every locker in the school. —NY

✦ **H: Writing** — This February we will be presenting a special event — a Poetry and Inspirational Reading evening, presented by the youth. We will invite parents, staff, school district leaders, and the press! The writing will focus on tolerance. One of the purposes is to give the students a chance to engage in a cooperative, kind, and respectful activity with the staff. —CA

✦ **H: Peer Counselors** — We distributed “warm fuzzies” to anyone who looked like he/she needed one. My peer counselors wore “fuzzy” necklaces made from strips of yarn. Each “fuzzy” was a small piece of yarn that could be pulled off the necklace. They simply gave one to someone or placed it on someone’s shoulder.

We also did a pass-it-on activity. Each student wore a “Give Someone a Lift” necklace. They had to perform a RAK for someone and say “I just did a RAK for you. I am giving you my balloon necklace. Please do a RAK for someone else and pass it on.” Each balloon had room for four people to do RAKs. The last person was to return the necklace to my room for a treat. We were pleased with the results. —FL

✦ **H: Valentines for Veterans** — Students from two high schools joined together to make Valentines for hospitalized veterans. —NY

✦ **H: Kindness to the Staff** — Students in classes with access to ovens made cookies and passed them out to teachers with a kind note.

✦ **H: RAK Feathers** — Near Thanksgiving, high school teachers made a huge turkey body out of construction paper and affixed it to wall in commons area of high school. Students received multi-colored paper feathers, and they wrote something nice about other students. The paper feathers were collected and placed on the turkey.

✦ **H: Days with a Theme** — For each day of the week, our club will be doing some type of Random Act of Kindness. Monday: we put signs on cars that say, “Have a nice day!!” Tuesday: students will be at every entrance of the school welcoming other students and handing them a business card with a RAK on the back to encourage them to go out and act out of kindness. Wednesday: we’re putting up 1,300 dots in our lunchroom. Every student will have their name on a dot, and the dots will create a rainbow effect. The red dots will say “Give a friend a hug,” blue dots will say “Open a door for somebody,” and so on. Thursday: we’re holding a teddy bear drive. Friday: we’re giving coffee/hot chocolate/doughnuts to the faculty. —Student, SD

✦ **H: RAK Roses** — A retirement community gave away 100 dozen roses to 100 random people with the instructions to keep one rose and give the 11 other away. The goal was that 1,200 acts of kindness would be performed in the giving away of flowers. —SD

✦ **H: Various Activities** — We did the following activities:

1. “Rake and Run” — they raked the yards of the elderly
 2. “Fresh Paint” — they painted rooms in a local teen group home
 3. “Church Service” — they ushered, greeted, participated in the service, and gave the staff a break.
 4. Habitat for Humanity — they helped build a home
 5. “Care Home Visits” — they painted nails and played bingo at a senior home
- ...plus many more activities!! —Student, MB, Canada

✦ **H: College Ideas** — The board members launched the week by making RAK labels and attaching them to 1,000 pieces of candy that were then distributed around our campus. Each label included information about RAK Week and suggested ideas for how a person could participate in the week and spread a kindness message. Later in the week, we delivered coffee and donuts to the night cleaning and public safety staff at midnight. As a final act for the week, we decided to take our efforts into the community. After locating an elementary school, we made arrangements to attend the school and do a guest reading. We read to the classes at the elementary school and talked with them about RAK Week, as well as bringing them stickers to promote kindness. College student, NH

✦ **H: Community Rally** — I put together a community rally: “Be a Super-Hero: Commit Random Acts of Kindness.” We recognized everyday heroes in the community, had motivational presentations, musical performances, and a singer. We also had information tables for kindness to the environment, to animals, in business, etc. I used your Activity Idea Guide categories to name the tables, which were then staffed by volunteers from appropriate organizations. We had two superheroes: “Kind-Man” and “Good Deeds Dude,” who made appearances at local schools.

This year I’ll add another superhero, a woman. I’ll have the tables at the library. I’d also like to get 1,000 little RAK footballs made to be thrown out at the university homecoming parade by the football team. My theme this year is “Practice Kindness in Your Little Corner of the World.” —IN

✦ **A: Poster Contest** — Have a poster contest, with the students drawing kind acts they observe around the school. Posters can be judged by student council.

✦ **A: Pass It On Cards** — When a student does something kind, he/she signs the back and gives the card to the recipient of the kind act. The recipient passes the kindness and the card on to someone else. Signed cards are collected at the end of the day or week and displayed, so students can see where their card went.

✦ **A: Teddy Bear Drive** — Collect teddy bears for patrol officers to keep in the trunk of their cruisers. They give the bears out to traumatized children.

✦ **A: Soup Kitchen** — Help out in a soup kitchen.

✦ **A: Festival of Kindness** — I coordinated a weeklong celebration at our schools, culminating in a Festival of Kindness, which was open to the community and got media coverage. Children made a kindness quilt, a kindness cookbook, and established “Kindness Zones” in their schools and homes. (When two or more people enter a kindness zone, they must say something nice to one another.)

They collected food and clothing for a local charity; collected books for a nursery school that had had a fire; and celebrated kindness at the Festival with music, games, and other activities. They recorded acts of kindness on kindness cards and were rewarded with special prizes at the Festival. They had storytelling, musical performances, face painting, and games. Children’s creative renditions of what kindness means to them covered the building and stage.

Principals read stories on kindness, the children’s chorus sang, and the children’s band played with local musicians chiming in. There were balloons, a jumping house donated by a local camp, and a PTA-sponsored Interactive Scrabble Game focused on kindness vocabulary. I will plan another festival for next year. —NY

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS MONTH

✦ **E: Awards** — During RAK Month, ten students were awarded \$10 each for their enthusiastic participation. —TN

✦ **E: Fundraiser** — This school celebrates RAK Month. Students and parents held a mini-march to combat cystic fibrosis, followed by a mini-bagel party. They raised over \$1,400 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. —NY

✦ **E: Caught Being Kind** — We encourage our students and staff to get “Caught Being Kind.” We have set up a display in the entrance of school, “The Kindness Zone,” and we have made hearts with suggestions of what children can do to show kindness to others. Examples of our suggestions are:

- ✦ Set up a board game to play with your family.
- ✦ Pick up another student’s jacket that has fallen on the floor.
- ✦ Ask a student you have never played with to join you at recess.
- ✦ Share your snack with a friend.
- ✦ Call your grandparents and tell them you love them.
- ✦ Sweep the kitchen floor for your parents.
- ✦ Take out the garbage without being asked.
- ✦ Pick up garbage on the schoolyard.

When a student is seen displaying an act of kindness, he is given a brightly colored happy face to print his name on. The happy face is mounted on our “Smile Makers” bulletin board in the main hallway of our school.

Weekly in the classrooms, students are given time to participate in “You Are Special Because.” Each student draws another student’s name from a hat. They then write something special about that student. The teacher gathers the special notes from all students and reads each one aloud.

On February 13th, we are having “Community Friend Day.” The students have been asked to think of others who are not as fortunate as them. The students are asked to bring an extra snack to school on that day. The extra snacks will be collected and brought to our neighborhood food bank so that others can enjoy a special treat.

On February 14th, our staff is sharing in a “Bring a Lunch for Coworker Day.” Staff members draw the name of a coworker from a hat. They are responsible to bring a special lunch for that staff member on February 14th.

Our staff also leave notes of praise in each other’s mailboxes and notes of praise to parents in the students’ agenda books for the month of February.

The children are responding in wonderful ways. —AB, Canada

✦ **E: “Caught” Being Kind** — A giant paper baseball mitt is posted on a bulletin board. Paper baseballs are passed out for students to write their names and kind acts on, and these are posted on the mitt for all the school students to see. —FL

✦ **E: Give a Dog a Bone** — A giant dog made from a board and padding is hung in the hallway. As students are observed being kind, their kind act is written on a paper bone and posted on the dog. —CO

✦ **H: RAK Shamrocks** — Students wrote RAKs on cut-out shamrocks and hung them in the school hallway, since March is their RAK month. —MI

ONGOING KINDNESS PROGRAMS

✦ **E: Citizen of the Month** — Teachers have begun recognizing students who commit RAKs. Each month, 21 students (one from each class) are named Citizen of the Month by their fellow students, teachers, and staff for behaving kindly, thoughtfully, or demonstrating strength of character. —OH

✦ **E: Ticket into Class** — I teach sixth grade in an inner-city school. We have a 30% transience rate, which means, during the course of one school year, 30% of our students will have moved in or out of our building. Facing this fact, I realized my students don't have a say in what happens to their lives, but they can have a say in how they react to their life.

In October, I showed a movie called "The Buttercream Gang" to my students. It was about a bunch of kids doing kind deeds in their community. So I decided to challenge my students to do the same thing. In fact, I said that it was their "ticket into class" the next day, they had to do one RAK in order to enter our classroom. Today, three months later, they are still doing one RAK daily in order to enter our room. I haven't told my students that they can't enter the room if I'm not there to greet them and ask about their RAK. They simply wait outside the door for me to be there, and they tell me their RAK. It is great!

I have a wide range of students and abilities of students, and all my kids participate in this project. I love it! They do too. We talked about why we continue with it...some kids were complaining, but we finally realized that if you want something to become a habit, it is best if you practice it every day. —MN

✦ **E: International Connection** — I run an after-school program with about 230 kids. I am starting RAK with them. My students will be collecting items for an impoverished school in Haiti and doing RAK in a local project as well. —NY

✦ **E: Various Activities** — This school emphasizes Random Acts of Kindness in their character Ed program. The students created a kindness chain of RAKs done; read a RAK each day over intercom; made cookies for senior center; made holiday cards for homebound seniors/Meals-on-Wheels; and made Valentines for veterans and for current members of the Army & Air Force. —MA

✦ **E: Kindness Nominations** — This school has an extensive RAK program at their school, including a RAK Club. Students are nominated by the staff for RAKs they have done; nomination forms are due on 25th of each month. Each month, the nominated students receive something: a book, inflatable pen, etc., and each student goes to microphone to explain what he or she did to earn the nomination. On first of the month, students' names and their RAKs go home in a newsletter to the parents. Three times a year, there is a student recognition assembly, and each nominated student receives a good citizenship certificate. One of their students suggested that the class with the most RAKs gets a pizza party, so they are considering this as well. There is great enthusiasm and participation in their program. —NY

✦ **E: Caught Being Kind** — This school recognizes kindness through a monthly drawing ("Caught Being Kind"), gives Beary Sweet Kindness trophies to recipients, and made RAK Week banners ("Use your heart and mind... be kind"). —SD

✦ **E: Kindness Chain** — Students at this school made a 360-foot-long kindness chain. Each link had an act of kindness written on it that had been performed by a student. They hung the colorful chain throughout the school as a reminder of the power of many acts of kindness and how kindness links us together. —NJ

✦ **E: Kindness Coupons** — Schoolchildren received a coupon for acts of kindness — cleaning up, trying hard to finish all their work, using manners, cooperating with other students and with adults. Students who accumulate 5 coupons got a "High 5" hand on the school wall. Also, for each set of 5 coupons, each student received a prize. Students' names were printed in the newsletter when they received 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 coupons. The goal was for every student to have a "High 5" hand on the wall by the end of the school year.

✦ **E: RAK Buttons** — Students performing a Random Act of Kindness receive a RAK button. When they see someone else doing a RAK, they pass the button on to that person, and so on. —OH

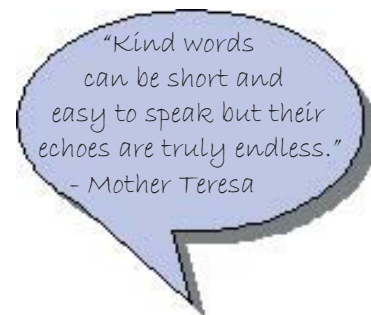
✦ **E: RAK Fund** — This school started a RAK Fund. They purchased school supplies for needy students; bought winter coats, jackets, mittens, and hats for them; funded field trips for students who couldn't afford fees; and funded cab rides to and from parent conferences for parents with no transportation. This program secures outside funding for its projects. —WI

✦ **E: Kindness Bucket** — I decorated a bucket with a koala face and called it our "Kindness Koala." When a student sees another student doing something kind, the student writes the kind act on a form and drops it in the bucket. I start each day by reading the kind acts from the day before and discussing how they help our classroom be a welcoming, friendly place. Sometimes we discuss the various choices that were available, why the student chose to do the kind act, and why the other student chose to report it to our "class koala."

✦ **M: No Putdowns** — A middle school uses RAK in their "No Putdowns" program. The guidance counselor discussed the need for change with some students, who then took ownership of the idea and helped the student body adopt an ethos of kindness. It has been very successful in reducing put-down behavior. —CO

✦ **M: Various Projects** — Our Boys & Girls Club has made the 2001-2 school year a Kindness Year. We delivered donuts to firefighters; created paper dolls for the children in hospitals around New York City who were affected by the terrorist acts; decorated city hall for Red Ribbon Week; participated in a street cleanup; donated candy to a school Halloween party; and made patriotic pins for members of the Boys & Girls Club administrative staff. —NY

✦ **M: Gratitude List** — We are doing an ongoing "Gratitude List." Every couple of days I ask the kids to list 3-5 things that they are grateful for, sometimes tying it to the lesson. (I teach health.) For example, the day we discussed substance abuse (alcohol), most of the kids



shared their gratitude that none of their family members drank or that they had stopped drinking. Then we shared our ideas and added them to the master list. Each addition to that list can only be mentioned once. At the end of January, when the semester ends, each student will write a letter to his/her parents or guardian, thanking them for all that they have done. I also will write a brief note and explain the attached master list. We are aiming for a couple hundred entries! I also am going to present each student with a “Blue Ribbon” achievement and give them extras to pass on to other friends, family, or community members. —NY

✦ **M: Kind Acts Hall of Fame** — At a martial arts school, students are encouraged to perform 30 RAKs per month. With 2,000 schools nationwide and 100 students per school doing 30 RAKs per month each, this equates to 6 million RAKs per month. (This would be a good math exercise for students!)

Students log their RAKs in a journal and turn it into their instructor for review after they've logged 50 RAKs. Students who accumulate 1,000 RAKs are entered into the “Kind Acts Hall of Fame.” —WI

✦ **M: Weekly drawing** — Mystery guests catch students and teachers doing good things that get written down and entered into a weekly drawing. Winners choose merchandise from the school store. —CO

✦ **M: Drawing** — Students and staff report kind acts (especially students standing up to bullies) by submitting nominations to a box in entry hall. In December, the drawing winner gets a CD boom box. —OH

✦ **H: Peer Outreach** — Our peer outreach organization has adopted the RAK idea for the year. So far we have bought flowers for a teacher, brought a box of donuts to a homeroom one morning, decorated the school with holiday decorations, baked cookies to give away to students and staff (with a small RAK note attached), and have worked with the special needs students at our school on academic projects. We had RAK cards printed up so that we can write a little note when we do something kind for someone.

We will be going to the elementary schools soon to connect with the younger kids in our school district, and we will plan a RAK activity with them. —Student, NH

✦ **H: Senior Buddies** — A high school teacher arranged for his students to develop a relationship with senior citizens at a rest home, one student per senior. They visited their senior companion every week during the school year and became very close. During the year, they had to deal with the death of one of their senior buddies, and they all worked through that grief together.

At the end of the year, the students created cards on the computer for their senior buddy, with photos of the two together and a personal letter to the senior buddy, improving their own computer abilities as they did so. They presented the cards to their senior buddies at a special luncheon to bring closure to the year. —WA

✦ **H: “Make My Day” Committee** — Teachers watch throughout the year for students who do kind acts or “make someone’s day” through helpful behavior. At the end of the year, these students are rewarded with a special “Make My Day” lunch put on by the National Honor Society students. —TN

✦ **H: Various Activities** — Members of a service club adopted a snow leopard at zoo; collected pop tabs in each homeroom for the Ronald McDonald House; helped monthly at a nursing home with wheelchair patients, luau, and pumpkin painting; helped host the county’s Special Olympics bowling tournament and provided buddies, ceremonies, and awards; provided monthly lunch for a women’s shelter, donating clothing and toiletries; sold cookie dough to raise funds for the American Red Cross and the Make-a-Wish Foundation; volunteered at a haunted house for four evenings to help raise funds for the Make-a-Wish Foundation; participated in three exchanges between city & suburban schools to help raise awareness, celebrate diversity, and promote community service & volunteerism. —PA

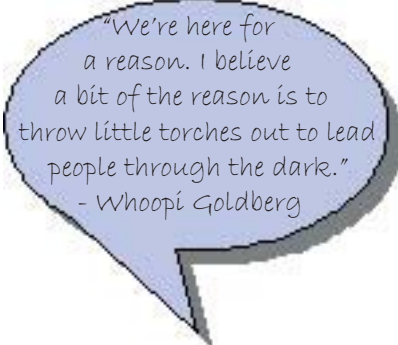
✦ **H: Secret RAK Society** — A group of students are in my weekly program, which deals with students at risk due to self-esteem issues. They have formed a secret society, and their mission is to observe acts of kindness done by their classmates. At the end of the week, we will be awarding certificates recognizing acts of kindness that have been given. We plan to keep this activity going year round. —NS, Canada

✦ **A: Kindness Bookmarks** — Students created kindness bookmarks for themselves and to give away as acts of kindness.

✦ **A: Various Activities** — Students in this very large school district have posters on the walls, collect reference books (for mothers working toward a degree), and coloring books (for their children) for a family shelter. They also bring ice cream, soft drinks, chips, and cookies to the shelter, because the kids don’t receive any of these things from government subsidies. The students leave this food at the shelter anonymously during lunch hour when the resident children are not there.

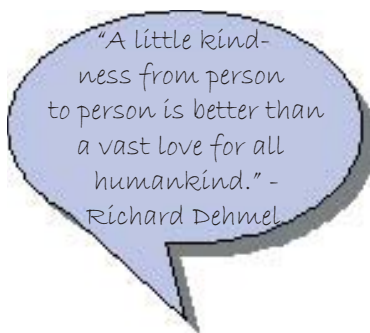
Students also create tray favors for a huge medical facility in Houston. They create Mother’s Day cards for all the women in a senior facility, under the assumption that by the time a woman reaches that age, she has mothered someone’s child somewhere!

To highlight three programs in this school district, they have a poster of a traffic light in their school hallways. Red means STOP bullying, teasing, and name calling; yellow means CAUTION concerning online chatrooms; green means GO do Random Acts of Kindness (to replace negative behavior with positive). —TX



KINDNESS FOR CHOSEN CAUSES

- ✦ **E: Charity Collection** — During RAK Week students brought in canned goods, paper goods & toiletry items to donate to a charity. —LA
- ✦ **E: Holiday Cards** — Students made handmade holiday cards for senior citizens' or veterans' homes for the winter holidays, Valentine's Day, Veterans Day, etc.
- ✦ **E: Eyeglasses Collection** — Students worked with the Lions Club to recycle used eyeglasses to help the less fortunate in other countries who need eyeglasses. —TX
- ✦ **E: Ornaments for Seniors** — Students created holiday ornaments for a senior citizens' home.
- ✦ **E: Birdhouse** — Students built a birdhouse for a hospice or senior citizen's home.
- ✦ **E: Quilts for Victims** — Design and create quilt covers to be sewn by others and distributed to trauma victims.
- ✦ **E: Thank-you Cards** — Create thank-you cards for public, school, or emergency workers.
- ✦ **E: Book Drive** — Students collected over 650 books for children and youth and gave them to Head Start and family shelters. —NJ
- ✦ **E: Materials Collection** — Collect yarn, fabric, etc., for people who sew or crochet for those in need.
- ✦ **E: Holiday Cheer** — For the "Kindergarten Kindness 2001" project, students filled plastic holiday figures with gifts to be delivered to needy children in Kentucky. Students also created happy holiday cards. —PA
- ✦ **E: Pop Tab Collection** — A school collected pop can tabs from students, parents, businesses, etc. A parent built a tall, clear "house" to put in the hallway so students can watch the tab level rise. Math students count the tabs before they pour them into the house. When the house is full, they will take it to the recycler and donate the proceeds to the Ronald McDonald house.



- ✦ **E: Charity Donation** — For two weeks, students in a class noted RAKs on slips of paper and placing them in a classroom box. The families agreed to donate a nickel a slip. At the end of the two weeks, students decided which charity would receive their donation. —OH
- ✦ **H: International Connection** — The students worked to provide holiday toys for some children in Nicaragua. Their goal was to add shoes to the traditional toy drive. The angel tree had specific requirements: no battery-operated toys and \$5.00 for a pair of shoes. With the cooperation of a couple of companies, one of which provided the freight, they provided each child with a pair of tennis shoes and a toy. They helped 543 children in nine rural areas of Nicaragua. —FL
- ✦ **H: Bingo Afternoon** — Students visited a nursing home and played bingo with the recipients. Afterward, they shared cake and refreshments, which the students had brought.
- ✦ **H: RAK Warmth** — Students in a sewing class connected with a first grade class in another school. These first graders were quite poor, and their families couldn't afford to buy them jackets. So the members of this sewing class used fleece to make a hooded jacket for each child. They met with their first grader and took the child's measurements, and then they sewed up the jackets. Finally, they had a pizza party with the first graders and presented them with their new jackets.
- ✦ **H: Animals in Need** — I created a RAK project called "Animals in Need" to promote kindness to animals both domestic & wild. I hosted a public event with speakers and publicity. I made many contacts and had a successful experience. At the time of my project I was fifteen. Your Project Planning and Publicity Guides helped me greatly. I felt that I was more professional in my organization and dealing with community leaders. —Student, FL
- ✦ **A: Personal Care Items** — Students collected sample-size toiletry items offered by hotels to take to an assistance center to be distributed to the poor and homeless. Since the homeless live from their bags or backpacks, small sizes work best. In just a few days, hundreds of items were donated to the box in front of the school's office. They delivered the items to the assistance center during RAK Week.
- ✦ **A: Seed Harvest** — After reading about seed harvesting, students can harvest seeds from different flowers in fall & package them. In the spring, they can give away the seeds or sell them, possibly for Earth Day. Donate proceeds to a homeless shelter or other charity the students care about. One school bought evergreen seedlings in bulk and sold them, donating profits to the Make-a-Wish Foundation.
- ✦ **A: Bicycle Drive** — Have a bicycle drive for needy children who have no bicycle.
- ✦ **A: Blankets for Babies** — Students in a Massachusetts school had a "Blankets for Babies" program. They collected money, bought baby blankets, and gave them to infants living at a residential substance abuse treatment facility. They raised more than \$250 and presented over 50 baby blankets to the facility.
- ✦ **A: Giving Tree** — Create a Giving Tree for holidays. Coordinate with a local shelter for a list of names and suggested gifts. Then a student selects a construction paper ornament with the name and gift written on it, and the student provides that gift, labeled with the recipient's name.
- ✦ **A: Spruce Up** — Organize recycling or a neighborhood cleanup. Plant a tree and/or bulbs for spring.
- ✦ **A: Share Warmth** — Students bring in mittens, scarves, hats, socks, etc., for those in need; younger students can decorate paper mittens for display. Theme: sharing warmth with others.
- ✦ **A: Suitcases for Foster Children** — A school collected suitcases for foster children. The students brought in toiletries like soap, shampoo, lotion, toothbrush, and made cards for the recipients and put the items inside the suitcases before they were delivered to Child Protective Services. They had hoped to collect one suitcase for each of the 46 foster children in their county, and they ended up with 78

suitcases and over \$800 in donations. Parent volunteers repaired suitcases as needed, and students assembled the care packages. —OH

Along with personal items, another group put a stuffed animal inside each suitcase with a tag attached to it that said “You are loved” or “We care about you.” —WV

RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

Many schools responded to the September 11th tragedy, 2004 tsunami and 2005 hurricanes with kindness, random or planned. Through this and other tragic events, we are all reminded of the power of kindness — how it moves us to action, inspires us to reach out and help, and empowers us when we may feel helpless. In many ways, students led the way toward fitting remembrances and toward a kinder world.

Because students occasionally experience other kinds of tragedy, whether personal, school-wide, community, or national in nature, we have included these project reports from among the many we received. Perhaps one can be adapted to fit a difficult situation your students are experiencing.

✦ **E: Paper Cranes** - We did some very large projects with the students creating origami cranes in remembrance of the 9/11 tragedy. --UT

✦ **E: Various Activities** - Students at this school sent letters and gifts to service personnel in Afghanistan. They collected and donated over 200 books for New York City students, and they collected and sent 250 teddy bears to students in the World Trade Center district.--NC

✦ **E: A Kiss for Kindness** — Our Girl Scout troop got a proclamation and chose the theme “A Kiss for Kindness” this year. They gave “It’s Your Turn” cards to the mayor and city commissioners with a Hershey Kiss and a request to do a kind deed the following week in honor of the people who died on Sept 11th. —FL

✦ **E: Letters to a Hero** — Students sent 100 letters to Mark Grillo, a New York City police officer injured in the terrorist tragedy. He later visited their school that proclaimed him “our hero.” —OH

✦ **M: Various Activities** — Students sent bottled water, gloves, and other supplies for rescue workers in New York; made red, white, and blue bracelets and key chains to sell to raise money for victims’ aid funds; brought in dollars for aid to Afghan children; raised almost \$5,000 for victims’ funds at a “Salute America” event that included food, raffles, and performances by the school band and chorus. —RI

✦ **M: Fire Truck Fundraising** — Students raised over \$447,000 to help the fire department of New York City purchase a new fire truck to replace a truck lost in the World Trade Center collapse. Fire trucks cost \$354,000, so the FDNY received a fully loaded fire truck and a special plaque for the fire department. —SC

✦ **H: Various Activities** — A high school sponsored a Disaster Relief Drive and sent \$610 to the American Red Cross in New York and Washington, D.C. IN addition, each RAK Club member did ten RAKs on World Kindness Day, Nov. 13th. —AL

✦ **H: College Activities** — College students strove to perform thousands of acts of kindness — one kind acts in memory of each of the lives lost on Sept. 11th. They also collected donations for those victims still recovering in hospitals as a result of the attacks. —OH

✦ **A: Collecting Games** — Our little club of eight children, ranging from ages 7 - 10, has been collecting games and making cards to send to a school in Louisiana where children and teachers have been displaced by Katrina. The games will be used for indoor recess.

MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS

✦ **E: Holiday Project** — Children’s RAK poems and drawings were assembled into a book for holiday gift-giving. —OH

✦ **E: Kindness And Conflict Resolution** — As a guidance counselor in an elementary school for nearly 500 students, I am often requested to address issues related to harassment or conflicts among students. In cases where students have a difficult time with traditional conflict resolution strategies, I’ve developed a different approach, using Random Acts of Kindness. The process is organized as follows:

First, I arrange for the group of children who are in conflict with one another to have lunch with me. (Lunch serves as a non-threatening time in which I can connect with students without pulling them from classes.) We arrange weekly lunches for at least six weeks.

Second, I read to them the book, *Chicken Soup for Little Souls: The Goodness Gorillas* (by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen). This book illustrates a story of children in conflict and their effort to do RAK for others and for those with whom they are in conflict. We also reference portions of the book, *Kids’ Random Acts of Kindness*.

Third, we work on RAK for others, first to those who are friends with group members, then to those within the group who are in conflict with one another. Compliance with doing RAK is monitored with our weekly meetings. In the past, they formulate themselves into a group working together, rather than students working against one another. —WI

✦ **E: Family Teams** — Every Monday afternoon we rearrange the whole school into “Family Teams” comprised of students from kindergarten through sixth grade, with any siblings, cousins, etc., within the same group. Every adult in the school takes a group, so that the size of each group is 12-13 students. In that venue, we talk about values, and we generally have a goal of the month. We also all read the “Book of the Month.” Yesterday we read *Miss Rumphius* (by Barbara Cooney), which deals with the idea that a person can hold a lifetime vision, and implies the difference one person can make in the world. One week we used the phrase “Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty.” Each team settled on one thing they would quietly do around the school to achieve the goal of kindness. —CA

✦ **H: Pass It On** — Members of a leadership club held a RAK Car Wash, charging no money. They only asked that recipients pass the kindness on. —CA

✦ **H: Underwear Drive** — One group of youth collected new underwear for the homeless — two for each person. They called their project “A Pair to Wear and a Pair to Spare.” Another youth group collected new underwear and socks for foster children.

✦ **H: Memory Book** — High schoolers interviewed senior citizens about stories from their past. The students then created a special book for each senior citizen containing his or her memories. —CA

✦ **H: City-wide RAK** — Two students involved their school and the city of Lincoln with Random Acts of Kindness. They contacted everyone in Lincoln: all 8 high school student councils, the mayor’s office for a proclamation, 100 restaurants, 7 bookstores, 7 community service clubs, 4 banks, 10 senior facilities, 21 grocery stores, 5 libraries, over 50 elementary and middle schools, the children’s museum, a theater company, and 10 churches. Restaurants had various promotions; the theater company donated prizes; the museum hung posters from a poster contest; churches put names into a hat so others could draw a name and do something kind for that person; bookstores put up kindness book displays; and banks served as drop-off sites for a teddy bear drive.

They honored people on each day of RAK Week — Mon: teachers; Tues: parents; Wed: government officials; Thurs: custodians; Fri: employees. On Parent Day, these two students sold carnations after school at the wholesale price, 50 cents, with poems attached for students to give their parents. This was very successful, and they sold out in ten minutes.

They contacted every community calendar in Lincoln and sent press releases to every TV station, newspaper, & radio station. They were interviewed on TV and received publicity in all areas.

Even the fraternities and sororities at the university got involved because these two students contacted the president of student senate, and he passed along the information to all the groups.

The students used the Gantt chart in our Project Planning Guide to plan the entire project.

One student said, “It just shows how if you really want to make a difference, even if you’re just in high school, you can.” -- NE

SIMPLE, ALL-SCHOOL IDEAS

Some educators are opposed to students being rewarded for kind acts, feeling that students should not receive any other reward than internal good feelings. We believe that there is room for both internal and external rewards. We reward our children for good behavior in many ways — with hugs, encouraging words, and sometimes awards. Kindness should be no exception. When students practice kindness often (for whatever reason), they will eventually discover the internal reward — the “helper’s high.” And as they look for ways to be kind, they develop the awareness of others’ feelings that is required for empathy to develop.

Following are some ways that schools have incorporated kindness in very simple ways. As one principal said, “Our kindness ‘program’ is very simple, but it sure works.”

✦ **E: Visit to the Principal** — Students who are observed being kind are given a kindness referral to the principal. The principal greets them, congratulates them with a handshake, and awards them a piece of candy.

✦ **E: Drawings** — The names of students observed being kind are entered in a weekly drawing for a small treat or toy. Then all the names collected (not just those who won the weekly drawing) are entered into a monthly drawing (with several winners) for lunch with the principal.

✦ **E: Happy Grams** — Give “Happy Grams” to students caught doing something kind.

✦ **E: Announcements** — The names of students who are observed being kind are read over the PA system every morning and are printed in the school newsletter that goes home.

✦ **E: Traveling Token** — A special token (small stuffed animal, paper mascot or star, etc.) travels around each classroom as kind acts are done. When a student is observed being kind, the token stays on his or her desk until the next kind act is done. If the token is made out of card stock or heavy paper, each student who receives it can sign the back. As each paper token is “retired” (i.e., filled with signatures), it is displayed in the hallway, with signatures showing, and a new token is put into play.

✦ **M: Discussion and Reflection** — During an in-class discussion, students report and discuss kind acts that were done by one another when a teacher may not have been present. The class discusses these kind acts, why each was important, and how both the giver and recipient felt, as well as the reporter of the kind act (since reporting a kind act is a kind act in itself).

✦ **M: Note to Parents** — When a student is observed being kind, the teacher surprises the student by mailing a note to the parents or guardians, reporting the kind act to them and commending the student’s kindness. The student is awarded a kindness certificate at the next school assembly.

✦ **H: RAK Coupons** — Students who are observed being kind are given a “\$1 off” coupon to be used at the student store. Their names are scrolled on an outside sign by a busy road. Their parents receive a hand-written card about their child’s act of kindness.

✦ **A: A Heart for RAK** — Students who are observed being kind are awarded a heart (cut from card stock or construction paper). The student’s name and a description of the kind act are written on the heart, and the heart is posted with others in an all-school hallway display. Other shapes can be selected instead, such as stars, leaves (on a tree), suns, smiley faces, etc.

✦ **A: Kindness Webpages** — Create school kindness webpages from one of the simple templates on our website. Announce your RAK activities, post photos, and find other kindness schools around the country with which to connect.



Special thanks to the many educators and students who continually share their kindness activities and reflections with us so that we may pass them on. Keep those ideas and experiences coming!