

College Kindness

Our College Kindness Activity Guide is full of ideas and activities that universities and students have used to spread kindness in their classrooms, dorms, campuses and cities.



College students and professors, please submit your own college kindness ideas and experiences for this document by e-mailing info@actsofkindness.org. Please specify that the activities are for college campuses.

1. University RAK Week

Submitted by Sara, New Hampshire

The Wellness Center's Student Advisory Board at Southern New Hampshire University participated in three activities during Random Acts of Kindness Week in February:

Board members launched the week by making Random Acts of Kindness labels and attaching them to 1,000 pieces of candy that were then distributed around our campus. Each label included information about Random Acts of Kindness 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 guest reading. We read to the classes at the elementary school and talked with them about Random Acts of Kindness Week as well as bringing them stickers to promote kindness.

2. Drive-by Flowering

Submitted by Shannon, Wisconsin

I lived in a very small town growing up, and my friends and I had to be very creative to alleviate boredom. One night, we decided to do a "drive-by flowering." We went to a few different fields and gathered bunches of wildflowers until they filled my family's van (not just with flowers...also with dirt...so be careful!).

Then we drove to our friends' and teachers' houses and left flowers tucked under the wiper blades of their cars and hanging from their front doorknobs. It was an unforgettable night.

3. University of Minnesota's "Month of Kindness"

Submitted by Amy, Minnesota

Program highlights include Clean Up Day and Winter Clothing Drive.

November has been declared "Month of Kindness" at the University of Minnesota. Over 60 campus organizations, departments and student groups are participating in an effort to put kindness and civility at the forefront of the University of Minnesota. The goal of the Month of Kindness is to unite the campus by encouraging acts of kindness that create an environment filled with goodwill, tolerance, pluralism and openness.

Practice Random Acts
of Kindness™

The Random Acts of
Kindness™ Foundation

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Individuals and groups within the University of Minnesota are constantly putting on programs that foster kindness to the community, the environment, one's health and wellness, the needy, animals, the state, the world, one another. The Month of Kindness is designed to draw attention to these events and integrate them into a month saturated with kindness activities. In this way, focus will be placed on the kindness the University community has to offer, not only in November, but throughout the rest of the year as well.

Dozens of groups will be organizing a variety of activities including a blood drive, canned food collections, a discussion series on kindness and free tutoring. Groups are encouraged to post their events on the University Events on-line calendar (www.events.umn.edu) under the heading "Month of Kindness."

Buttons that read "Be Kind, Pass It On" will be distributed by Goldy Gopher in Coffman Memorial Union on November 3 and at the St. Paul Student Center on another date. Buttons will also be available to be picked up at a variety of campus locations. Flyers with quotes about kindness (a different quote for each week of the month) will be distributed and posted around campus.

Three major events will serve as the kickoff, middle and conclusion to Month of Kindness.

On Sunday, November 2 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., individuals and groups are invited to participate in the Month of Kindness Neighborhood Clean Up. Volunteers will meet at 11 a.m. at the Dinkytown McDonald's restaurant for hot chocolate and instructions and then return after the clean up, for lunch and to celebrate what's been accomplished. For more information and to RSVP, contact Jan Morlock at University Relations, [e-mail address].

On Wednesday, November 19 at 7 p.m. in the Coffman Memorial Union Great Hall, 300 Washington Ave. SE, "The Simpsons" writer and producer, Mike Reiss, will speak about writing in Hollywood and screen never before seen footage of The Simpsons. The first 300 people to arrive with a canned good to donate to the food shelf will get a free signed Simpsons t-shirt. This event is sponsored by Hillel: The Jewish Student Center and the Minnesota Program & Activities Council.

Month of Kindness will conclude with "Winter Warmth From U," a winter clothing drive. On Wednesday, December 3, a bus will be parked in front of Coffman Memorial Union for individuals and groups to fill with good quality winter clothing to be donated to families in need, through Pillsbury United Communities, a Twin Cities nonprofit organization. Ben and Jerry's will be handing out ice cream and gift certificates and the University Dining Service will be distributing hot chocolate to every donor. KDWB will be broadcasting live from their van parked next to the donation bus on the Coffman Union plaza. For more information contact John Barber at [e-mail address] or Surbhi Madia at [e-mail address].

Amy Olson, director of Hillel, The Jewish Student Center at the University of Minnesota, and co-chair of the Interfaith Campus Coalition, brought the idea of "Month of Kindness" to the University of Minnesota. Inspired by a similar initiative at the University of Connecticut, Amy has been organizing a grassroots effort to establish Month of Kindness at the U. of M.

"My vision is that once we get something off the ground this year, Month of Kindness will grow into an annual tradition. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. People appreciate when kind deeds are done for them and they get a sense of well-being and fulfillment when they perform kind deeds for others. It is unfortunate that in our society so often only negative things get the headlines. This initiative focuses on the good we all have to offer."

Month of Kindness is partially funded by an Events Partnership Grant from the Student Activities Office at the University of Minnesota.



Below is kind of a summary of what is being done on campus (much is included in the press release above). Attached are the flyers we are printing up and distributing around campus. These quotes will also be run in the Minnesota Daily (campus newspaper), one each week in an ad. We got the quotes from your website.

CAMPUS WIDE PROMOTION

Buttons: We are distributing 4000 buttons that say "BE KIND, PASS IT ON." Goldy Gopher (campus mascot) will help kick off the distribution by handing buttons out at Coffman (Student Union) on November 3 and at the St. Paul Student Center on November 4. Buttons will also be available at the information desk at Coffman and the St. Paul Student Center and at the Residence Hall Info desks. If your group would like to distribute buttons, please let Amy know.

Minnesota Daily Ads: The Minnesota Daily will run an ad each week in November with a kindness quote.

Flyers: Flyers with quotes about kindness from different traditions will be distributed throughout campus, a different flyer each week. Participating groups will be asked to help run them off and post them around campus.

University Events Calendar: Groups are encouraged to submit their events to the online University Events Calendar. Instructions for how to do so are attached. University Relations has added a category called Month of Kindness so the activities can be so designated. If one sorts by Month of Kindness, one can get a list of all the activities so designated. To see the list, go to this link....

CAMPUS WIDE EVENTS: Several organizations are planning events. There are three campus wide events that will constitute the kickoff, middle, and conclusion, and we invite your participation.

Campus Clean Up Day (Kickoff Event):

Sunday, November 2
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

We will gather at 11 a.m. at the McDonald's restaurant for hot chocolate, instructions, and a send-off. Volunteers will reconvene at 1:15 to 1:30 for lunch and a celebration of what we've accomplished.

What else do volunteers need to know?

Come prepared for any weather--wear layers that can resist wind and water. Wear sturdy, comfy shoes. If you have work gloves, bring them. If you have a rake or utility broom, bring it. Eat a hearty breakfast that morning! We'll have some portable calories to take with you on the cleanup, and lunch will be served when we get back.

What will we be doing?

Mostly picking up trash and sweeping up any broken glass in public areas.

Where will we be working?

Within walking distance of McDonald's. We'll scope out the situation early that morning and direct teams of volunteers to the places that need spiffing up. The Dinkytown Business Association will have street sweepers out in the business district that day, so we will likely be working along the streets on the perimeter of Dinkytown, up 15th Avenue as far as Como, and on University Avenue if need be.

Be sure to RSVP to Jan at University Relations, [e-mail address], if you or members of your organization plan to attend. (We want to be sure to have enough food!!)

Mike Reiss (middle event):

Wednesday, November 19 at 7 p.m. Coffman Union Great Hall

Simpsons writer and producer Mike Reiss will speak about writing in Hollywood and screen never before seen footage of The Simpsons. The first 300 people to arrive with a canned good to donate to the food shelf will get a free signed Simpsons t-shirt. Sponsored by Hillel and the Minnesota Program & Activities Council.

Winter Warmth from U (Closing Event)

An event to collect warm, used clothing items for underprivileged families throughout the Twin Cities for the cold days of winter. As a motivational tool, there will be a Fill the Bus theme. On the Wednesday after Thanksgiving, December 3rd, there will be a U of M circulator bus parked in front of Coffman with the incentive to fill the bus with as many clothing items as possible. The clothes will be given to the Pillsbury Community Center. Through the help of the Pillsbury Community Centers, underprivileged families throughout the Twin Cities will receive winter clothes during the heart of winter.

Ben and Jerry's will be distributing ice cream and gift certificates and UDS will be distributing hot chocolate to every donor. KDWB will be broadcasting live from their van parked next to the donation bus on the Coffman Union plaza. This will be a very fun, exciting, and meaningful event. If you are interested in being a part of the Winter Warmth for U committee, please contact....

Handout for the Cleanup event:

MONTH OF KINDNESS NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN-UP
Sunday, November 2

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Our thanks to event sponsors....

Guidelines:

The purpose of this project is to indulge in an act of kindness and to have fun. Remember to also be safe! You will work with a team, and will have an area to cover. Instructions will be provided after you have registered.

Let people know that you are volunteering today as part of the University of Minnesota Month of Kindness. Wear your button proudly!

1. For safety's sake, wear gloves and visible clothing. Reflective tape is available at registration.
2. Cross streets carefully and in crosswalks. Watch for turning cars.
3. It's best to pick up litter in public areas only—this means streets, alleys, sidewalks, boulevards, parks. It's okay to pick up litter along the edges of people's yards, but (believe it or not!) some people may not want you in their yard, even if you are doing a good thing like picking up trash.
4. Don't pick up syringes, needles, condoms, as they might be biohazards. Make a mental note of where you saw them, and report the items when you get back to McDonald's at the end of the cleanup. We will send someone out later to pick them up and dispose of them safely.
5. Broken glass can be picked up with brooms and scoop shovels. If you see piles of broken glass and don't have the right tools with your team, report back to us when you return to McDonald's, and someone can get it later.
6. Picking up the little trash is important, too (ooh, those nasty cigarette butts). Take the time to really make a change in the way things look.
7. When you have filled a garbage bag, tie (or twist-tie) the bag closed, and leave it on the boulevard at a corner. A crew will be out with a truck to pick up the bags.
8. Come back to the cleanup headquarters at McDonald's upstairs dining room by 1:30 p.m. Food and beverages will be waiting for you. REMEMBER TO RETURN ALL EQUIPMENT AT THE END OF THE CLEAN-UP!

Good work! Thanks for pitching in for the Month of Kindness!

For a calendar of other Month of Kindness events, visit our website, click on "Detailed event search" and then select "Month of Kindness" from the drop down menu.

The Month of Kindness Steering Committee, chaired by Amy Olson, may be reached at [e-mail address].

Flyers (reduced in size to show here; each flyer was 8.5x11")

The small print at the bottom of each flyer says: "The mission of the Month of Kindness is to bring kindness to the forefront of the University of Minnesota community. Be kind. Pass it on."

For more information on joining the more than 60 campus groups that are participating in the Month of Kindness, e-mail [e-mail address]."

Follow-up letter to Neighborhood Cleanup Participants:

Thanks to all who came out on Sunday morning for the Month of Kindness neighborhood cleanup, and to all who helped make it a success! Thanks, too, to Mother Nature for holding off with the snow while we enjoyed being outside on a glorious fall day.

Thirty-plus volunteers picked up 61 bags of trash, making a striking difference in the appearance of the neighborhood around Dinkytown on that final day before the arrival of winter.

Volunteers included students representing several student organizations, University parents and siblings, faith community neighbors, Marcy-Holmes neighbors, and supportive University staff.

The MN Daily covered the cleanup in an article on Monday, and TV channels 4 and 5 had the cameras rolling for reports on the evening news.

Special thanks again to McDonald's Dinkytown Restaurant, Burrito Loco, Subway Sandwiches, Vescio's Restaurant, University Land Care and Charles Patterson, the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association, the Student Activities Office, the Office of Student Affairs, and to Peg Wolff and Carolyn Manthei-Lund, who made all the logistics work.

See the UMTC home page, "spotlight" section, for a link to more Month of Kindness activities, including the Interfaith Campus Coalition's blood drive on November 12, starting at 11 a.m. at Hillel House.

May November be kind to you.

Jan M.

Director of Community Relations, Twin Cities Campus, University of Minnesota

"One who knows how to show and accept kindness will be a better friend than any possession."

--Sophocles

Kindness quote flyers (originally letter-sized, but reduced in size for this publication) are on the following page:

*No act of kindness,
however small,
is ever wasted.*

—Aesop

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Month of Kindness
November 2003



The mission of the Month of Kindness is to bring kindness to the forefront of the University of Minnesota community. Be kind. Pass it on.

For more information on joining the more than 60 campus groups that are participating in the Month of Kindness, e-mail edison362@tc.umn.edu.

*Kind words can be
short and easy to speak
but their echoes are
truly endless.*

—Mother Teresa

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*Tenderness and kindness
are not signs of weakness
and despair, but
manifestations of
strength and resolution.*

—Kahlil Gibran

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E-mail Update, Nov. 14th:

Dear All,

Here are a few updates on Month of Kindness.

1. I am all out of buttons at Hillel! University Relations took a bunch of buttons to give to Goldy to pass out; we sent 1000 buttons over to the Residence Halls to be distributed; the Student Activities office had a bunch; the St. Paul Student Center Information desk had a bunch; Athletics had a bunch; and handfuls were distributed to a variety of student groups at Coffman including MSA and GAFSA. If you have any buttons you are not planning to distribute, please let me know so we can get them into circulation.
2. I have many copies of the Kindness quote flyers for weeks three and four. Please stop by the Hillel front desk next week to pick up any copies you want. We have quotes from Kahlil Gibran and Sophocles. If you ask nicely, we might even deliver them to you!
3. If you are up early this Sunday morning and listen to Radio K at 9 a.m. you might hear a phone interview with me about Month of Kindness.
4. The Minnesota Daily will print a guest column I submitted about Month of Kindness next week.
5. Please continue to post any events you may be doing on the University Events Calendar.
6. Go to our site to see the events posted on the University Events Calendar.

There are lots more events happening that have not been posted. Following are events I have been informed of. If you'd like me to include more events on this list, send details and I'll send out an update next week. Have a great weekend! —Amy

MONTH OF KINDNESS EVENTS

- Month of Kindness Closing Event: Winter Warmth from U: Winter clothing drive beginning November 17, culminating in filling a bus with collected clothing on December 3.
- Other events included an invitation to fast for a day with Muslim students (for which businesses donated funds to a food shelter); a food and clothing drive; cookie- and craft-making for a sale (with proceeds to be donated); school, hygiene, and cleaning supplies drive; panel discussions and rallies concerning tolerance, acceptance, and diversity; spirituality presentations.

E-MAIL:

Hey, everybody! Best wishes for a wonderful Thanksgiving! Check out the U. of M. homepage to see a feature on Winter Warmth From U and a great photo of Surbhi and John, the masterminds behind this incredible event. Thanks to all of you for making "Month of Kindness" such a success in its first year. It can only get better! —Amy

FINAL E-MAIL:

Dear All,

Thank you very much for your participation in the first annual Month of Kindness. I put it that way because it is my hope that Month of Kindness will become an annual event. We now have a bit of a track record so next year can be even better.

Yesterday's Fill the Bus event was truly outstanding. I think it surpassed everybody's expectations. Many thanks to Surbhi and John and everyone who helped them make this event possible.

At the beginning of next semester, I'd like to set up a meeting to talk about plans for next year. Watch your e-mail.

Check out this article that was in the Christian Science Monitor last week! They spelled my name wrong but I won't hold it against them. I'm still feeling kind even though it's not November any more.

Best wishes to all celebrating for happy and healthy holidays. Best wishes to all studying for happy and healthy finals. Stay kind! —Amy

4. Campus "Hugs"

Submitted by Janet, Tennessee

Our school newspaper, the "Settler," promoted Random Acts of Kindness, sponsored on our campus by Phi Theta Kappa. The Challenges Club at Volunteer State Community College is participating in the Random Acts of Kindness Week from Feb. 9-14th. We will be giving "hugs" (Hershey's candy Hugs) with an act of kindness card that asks the recipient to offer an act of kindness to someone else.

The Challenges Club is devoted to promoting the awareness of persons with disabilities. Its members consist of students with and without disabilities.

5. Penn State's Kindness

Submitted by Laura, Pennsylvania

I wanted to share a story of something my students just completed as a RAK (of course, all RAK stories are great stories!). Last year, you featured our program in one of your newsletters - I am part of Penn State University's new academic minor in civic and community engagement.

On my campus, Penn State Delaware County, the students enrolled in the minor were approached by an alum from our campus - someone who received his associates degree back in the 70's. He volunteers with the American Heart Association and with the cardiac recovery unit of a local hospital, as he has had a heart procedure in the past. He knew the local cardiac unit was short on "huggie pillows," heart-shaped pillows that are given to patients in recovery to help them with coughing and breathing exercises after surgery. He asked our group if we were willing to help out the hospital by making some pillows, as the hospital does not supply the pillows and relies on donations.

Well, it turned out one of the students enrolled in the minor underwent some heart surgery herself when she was 8 years old, and the entire class jumped on board for the project! Most of the students hadn't used a sewing machine since junior high school, but in two hours the group created 12 huggie pillows and wrote personal messages of inspiration and hope on them for the patients.

The hospital hasn't stopped thanking us for taking the time to make the pillows, and the students want to make more and hopefully start visiting some of the patients. You can see a picture of the students with the pillows at: <http://community.de.psu.edu/civcm/default.html> and the students even created an online photo gallery of the pillow-making process at: <http://www.de2.psu.edu/faculty/uxg3/CIVCM/photos/HuggieJan2006.wmv>

6. Students Today, Leaders Forever

Submitted by Anonymous, Minnesota

The University of Minnesota (MPLS and St. Paul campus) has established a month of kindness each year. During the month of March, Random Acts of Kindness are encouraged, suggestions are communicated to the student bodies, and volunteer opportunities are emphasized.

A student group has been established at the University as well, known as Students Today, Leaders Forever. This group is choosing to teach servant leadership, leading by example and then stepping back to help others as they lead. They will assist others to identify their talents and abilities and bring out the best in them. Their mission statement is "Our ultimate goal is to simply make an impact-to leave an everlasting mark, proving that we can make a difference, we can change the world, one person at a time." Their cornerstone event has been their "Pay It Forward Tour" each spring during spring break.

Students are invited to be a part of a Spring Break trip that does not include sun, sand, and parties. They are invited to take 11 days to travel from Minneapolis to Washington D.C., stopping each day in a different city to help with various volunteer projects. The entire trip is student-planned and student-led. The first year, there was one bus load of students. The second year, there were 4 busses with 150 students. I was fortunate enough to be a "bus mom" for one bus this year. This is an incredible opportunity for everyone. The group is working to establish chapters on other college campuses. Their website is www.stlf.net. Hopefully this will be an epidemic.

7. Sigma Kappa Sorority's Week of Giving

Submitted by Nicole, Michigan

It is so special that World Kindness Week has fallen in the same week as Sigma Kappa Sorority's Week of Giving! The Week of Giving also happens once a year during the week that Sigma Kappa Sorority was founded. November 9th, 1874 (131 years ago!) our loyal Founders began bringing sisterhood to life at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. To honor these five lovely women, and the Sigma Kappa chapters nationwide, we have a Week of Giving, a time for the sisters to give back to our community. Our Sigma Kappa Chapter at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan has put together these activities:

Monday - Baking cookies for our local philanthropy, Lincoln Square Assisted Living Home

Tuesday - Washing faculty and staff's car windows at our University (and leaving a note under the wiper stating how much we appreciate them)

Wednesday - Visiting the men and women and Lincoln Square to play bingo and have cookies!

Thursday - Cleaning up the trash at the Sorority and Fraternity houses around campus

Friday - A "Bounce-a-thon" (non-stop bouncing on a moonwalk for 12 hours at a visible spot on campus) to raise money for a local charity.

8. ?

Submitted by YOU??

Has your college or university passed on kindness? We'd love to hear about what your student group, dorm friends or class did to promote kindness. E-mail us at info@actsofkindness.org. We'll add it to this guide and you may be featured in an upcoming edition of the KindTimes newsletter!

**Practice Random Acts
of Kindness™**