

## Workplace Corner

Our Workplace Corner shares ideas that companies and organizations have used to share kindness in their workplaces.

To add your own Workplace Corner kindness, e-mail RAK at [info@actsofkindness.org](mailto:info@actsofkindness.org)

**Practice  
Random Acts  
of Kindness™**

The Random Acts of  
Kindness™ Foundation

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### 1. Little Bags of Candy

Submitted by Deana, Iowa

I am the coordinator for Children's Miracle Network at a hospital in my town. I am responsible for all of the employee fund-raising events that go on inside of our hospital.

Back in early February we held a Random Act of Kindness event for our employees. We sold bags of candy for \$1.50, carnations for \$1.00 or both for \$2.00. Employees were able to purchase these gifts for their fellow employees as a "thank you" or "great job." The gifts were then delivered to the specified employees during the week of Valentine's Day (Random Acts of Kindness Week).

The event went over fabulously! We raised over \$700 for an amazing charity and brought happiness to our coworkers at the same time. The looks on the faces of our employees made the whole effort worth it!

### 2. Birthdays

Submitted by Melissa, Texas

When I started at my job, I thought it would be nice—because it is such a small company—to have everyone be more personal. So I got a list of everyone's birthday. Every time one comes up, I bring a cake, and we take a moment out of our day to celebrate that person's birthday.

Everyone really gets a kick out of it, and it makes them feel cared for and special.

### 3. Secret Pals

Submitted by Anonymous

At our workplace, we have what we call secret pals. Whoever wants to participate fills out a form with information about themselves (hobbies, interests, favorite candy or colors, etc.).

One person collects these forms, then gives each form to a different person. So everyone has a secret pal that they do things for (e.g., give gifts, leave notes, or just about anything you would want to do). You know who you are doing nice things for, but they don't know who is doing it for them.

It is really fun. At the end of the year, we have a little party. We reveal who is everyone's secret pal, and then we start it all over again.

## 4. Scheduling Kindness Surprises

Submitted by Karlene, Indiana

Our organization is a great place to work, but there is always room for improvement. We value our fellow employees, and decided we should demonstrate just how we feel about them.

There are many of us in positions that are unique; therefore, interaction with other employees is rare. The physical location of our company is not conducive to fostering interactions with other employees either. Our departments are split up on different floors of our building, and the majority of us reside in 6'x8' cubicles.

For this reason, there are times that we feel isolated. Everyone needs to feel they are essential to the organization as both an employee and as a person. So we decided to break through the cubicle walls and reach out to our coworkers.

During our December meeting, we unanimously decided to perform Random Acts of Kindness on a monthly basis.

We created an "Acts of Kindness" schedule. Yes, a schedule. What happened to the "randomness" you might say? The recipients don't know there is a schedule. They have no idea what we're doing! We keep them guessing... "Who is next?" "Who is doing this?" "What is going to happen next?" So you see, it really is random... to the recipient, that is.

We created RAK "calling cards." Each recipient of our "Acts of Kindness" receives a calling card. It is our intention that the recipient will then use the card for someone else. Hopefully, this process will enable us to keep "passing on" the acts of kindness.



We assigned two Health Services employees to head up the Random Acts of Kindness for each month and for each department. The assigned employees are free to do the acts on their own, or they can include the entire Health Services Department.

Some acts of kindness are anonymous, while others are not. The total cost of each kind act is less than \$10. Our preference is that the only cost involved is our time and effort. In addition, the random acts are applicable to more than one person.

The schedule contains "suggested" acts of kindness based upon the department's individual needs or circumstances. An example we can share would be our Member Services group. It is difficult for them to leave their desks since they are on the phones nearly all of time. They miss out on free food in the break room a lot! Another reason for this is that our Member Services Department is located on a different floor from the break room, and employees can't always get there fast enough.

So our "Act of Kindness" was taking food to them on a tea cart. There were plenty of goodies on the tea cart—donuts, coffee, tea, and hot cocoa. In this case, we personalized the "act" to meet the need of the department.

See Karlene's kindness webpage at: [http://www.actsofkindness.org/member\\_sites/Karlene/index.asp](http://www.actsofkindness.org/member_sites/Karlene/index.asp)

## 5. Parenting Idea Pool

Submitted by Riaz-ul Haque, Ph.D. (Emeritus), University of Illinois

When it comes to education, kids and parents suffer in silence. The only avenues open to them are schools, tutoring, summer camps, counseling, and eventually medication. This is a lifelong struggle because kids, if they don't do well after graduation, continue to be source of stress to themselves as well as to their parents. These worries also bleed into workplace affecting parents' job performance, which, if not rectified, could lead to warnings from the employers and eventually to getting fired.

If we continue to regard this dilemma to be of the kids or the parents but not of the employers, then we are being unkind to all three, especially when kids, parents and employers are all part of life as we now know it. Why not cooperate instead of reprimanding, demanding and punishing!

One solution is an idea pool where innovative and analytical ideas and solutions are pooled and made available to the employees through a company newsletter. These ideas have to be over and above the conventional summer camps, tutoring, or similar keeping-busy activities without much learning. The ideas need to be analytical enough to spell out the problems in education while finding innovative ways to get around those problems, resulting in lessening the stressful situation both at home and at work.

Searching for such answers thus becomes a mission with the individuals, and sharing these ideas anonymously through a company or faith group newsletter are single, ego-less acts of kindness. The rewards blossom as people hear their colleagues talking about how their troubled kids are benefiting from this or that idea and how workplace is getting less stressful, since the proud parents are not bringing their worries to the workplace.

## **6. Share a Condo**

Submitted by Cindy, Illinois

My employer, Carolyn G., CEO of our company in Lake Zurich, Illinois, owns a condominium. She uses this condo to get away and refresh herself after a long week at work.

She felt so blessed to be able to enjoy this that she wanted to share it with her 45 loyal employees. She decided to lease and furnish a second condominium for the employees to use on the weekends.

The employees can earn points with several incentive programs that she has put in place and they can redeem the points for a limo to and from the condo, restaurant gift cards, etc.

The employees recognize this as a very generous act of kindness. We are all extremely fortunate.

## **7. Thanksgiving Door Bag**

Submitted by Brooke

The random act of kindness I started at my Youth services agency was a thanksgiving door bag.

I gave every employee a white sack and told them to decorate it and hang it on their door. Their other goal was to write at least one anonymous note to each person in the office thanking them; telling why they're appreciated; and so forth. It has been such a great success and has gotten the whole agency supporting each other! This idea can be passed on to other agency's, or to teachers and parents at home who want to do something for their wonderful children!

## **8. Not Going Away Pizza Party**

Submitted by Tia, California

I am throwing my staff a Not-Going-Away pizza party. Too many times, it seems like we only celebrate people once they are leaving (e.g., got a new job, moving away, etc.). RAK week seemed like the perfect time to do something fun that celebrated them for just being here.

## **9. RAK Week Activities in Tennessee**

Submitted by Ted, Greeneville, Tennessee

I own and operate the Century 21 franchise here in Greeneville. I decided to promote the concept to a high degree as a 'corporate' sponsor in 2005. I wrote an informative article for the local paper and took Bar-B-Q dinners on Thursday night prior to the official start of RAK week to feed 45 volunteer firefighters from around the county as our 'kick-off' Act of Kindness.

Additionally, I had a 30-foot banner created and erected out in front of our office facing a four-lane highway in our business district. Plus, I took an opportunity to promote the idea of RAK week to my area's State Representative - and I have talked personally to the County Mayor about making a public proclamation next week on courthouse steps. Lastly, I challenged the 23 real estate agents who work here to come up with their own Act of Kindness, regardless of how trivial it may seem (such as letting a car out into traffic).



## 10. Papering Daycare Centers

Submitted by Mary

We have a small office, but we use a lot of continuous feed white computer paper as we print daily reports. There are lots of blank sheets when reports form feed to the next report. We were throwing away a lot of perfectly good paper.

One of our employees has her two children in a small local day care center. We now collect this paper, and she brings it to the day care center for the kids to use for drawing and coloring.

I'm sure there are lots of workplaces that are throwing away these single sheets of paper. The paper would make good donations to day care centers or elementary schools.

## 11. Helping a Customer

Submitted by Jean

One of my customers at the coffee house where I work has brought in some books by a famous Russian author. I told him that my local library was selling paperback copies of this author's books for 25 cents each. He hasn't gone there to get them, so I plan to buy them and give them to him when he next comes to our store.

## 12. Tissues for Tears, Happy or Sad

Submitted by Bunny K.

I work in an Outpatient Cancer Institute where I take care of cancer patients; educating them at their chemotherapy and giving them hope and support.

I also provide them with a small token on their first visit for themselves and their families. I make covers for small packets of tissues, I call them "Tissues for Tears, Happy or Sad." They are usually bright colors, with themes of the season and especially breast cancer patterns. I try to take away some of their fears of their first day. Even the nurses use them when they are having a rough day. This little project of mine has grown and I donate them to friends who are diagnosed and women's support groups.

I also started a project five years ago where I had friends for a special birthday luncheon where we all created handmade get well cards for my patients who become hospitalized and may then enter a hospice environment. This has been going on since then. My friends are wonderful about continuing to support it.

## 13. Feel Good Faerie

Submitted by Bonnie, Florida

I'm a nurse and work as a Case Manager; we manage care for four large employer groups in Naples, Florida. It can be stressful at times and there have been some changes recently which aren't always well received. So I have been making an anonymous 'feel good faerie' surprises for the past five weeks. Since it's a small company it doesn't take a lot of time and if I choose to make a purchase for anything it's manageable.

Week One - I used helium filled, plain red balloons, attached a tag 'Enjoy Simple Things' used curly ribbon to attach.

Week Two - I printed one of the RAK bookmarks, added a tassel, found small pink, lip shaped post-its, added (also from your web-site) 'Keep smiling, it makes people wonder what you're up to.'

Week Three - I made a 'Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation.' I printed a rosebud, added 'For all you do... this Bud's for you. Thanks for being part of the team. You are valued.'

Week Four - I was away so they didn't find anything on Monday, which is when I discovered that it was making a difference!

Week Five - I placed a small candle in a holder I made from pink foam hair curlers cut into thirds, printed a picture of a hand to 'hold' the candle, all attached to a small 3 x 3 inch green felt covered square, added a sticker 'TOGETHER' and printed a very small card with a tiny candle with 'No one holds a candle to our team' and attached it standing upright beside the candle.

Week Five happened to fall on World Kindness Week, with Monday being World Kindness Day. For this I did something special for the entire company. I printed the Random Act of Kindness Foundation Mission Statement, a note of my own with the idea of 'what a perfect time to create a positive, appreciative and courteous work environment.' I kept it simple; I suggested it was 'a wonderful opportunity to start in our 'WORLD' at (the name of our company) and embrace new beginnings, respect and honor one another by showing random acts of kindness...' At the end I added a quote from Margaret Mead from your web-site. I enclosed World Kindness Day/Week and 'Pass It On' cards and gave everyone a \$1.00 scratch ticket. (a lottery type of thing). For Friday, I printed a bookmark I have with a verse, "A Little Love" by Mary Elizabeth Masters and put one in everyone's mailbox.

Week Six - The prize will be a huge candy 'gem' ring with a card stating, 'You are truly a gem, thanks for all you do!'

So, that's what I've done, and the kinds of things I do. I am very grateful as I believe I was blessed with a gift of imagination and creativity and I try to put it to use the best I can. If my small efforts can make even one second of difference in a life than I've succeeded.

As a follow-up, I wondered if it was making any difference or even noticed. I was away one week-end and unable to make and deliver the 'feel good faerie' treat. I was pleasantly surprised when I returned to work and overheard people talking and wondering what happened since there was no surprise. I think this is a wonderful program and intend to advocate it with one person, one day at a time.

(Editor's note: You can find RAK's graphics at: <http://www.actsofkindness.org/inspiration/graphics.asp>)

## 14. ?

Submitted by YOU?

*Help our Workplace Corner to continue to grow!  
Submit your own workplace kindness ideas and experiences for this document to:  
[info@actsofkindness.org](mailto:info@actsofkindness.org).*