



Random Acts of Kindness School Challenge 2019

In January 2019, Spreading Kindness Campaign challenged local school leaders and teachers to let us know how students in their schools are creating a culture of kindness. Over 20 schools (elementary through high school) answered the challenge.

Village School (Eugene, Oregon)

Project 1: As an alternate activity to "current events" Jesse Gammon's 7th/8th class wrote three encouraging notes to each other, mindful to include students they wouldn't normally interact with. The class had read about another school writing positive notes to each other and decided to do that instead of one day's current events.

Feedback from students:

- *I thought it was fun...it was a little more relevant to our lives than our current event articles.*
- *It was nice to write good things about other people...it made me feel good.*
- *My favorite part was when we gave notes to people we wouldn't normally think of writing to.*
- *I thought it was cool to write things nice to people you don't really like. If you think about them differently you might like them a bit more.*

Feedback from Teacher, Jesse Gammon:

- *The students were really into writing the notes to other students and really excited to receive them. The notes were spread out pretty evenly throughout the class. Having students think of others and what they can find to appreciate about them brought kindness to a more conscious level. They've asked to do the activity again.*

Project 2: The Assembly Committee has planned an assembly focused on kindness with Rich Glauber, local musician, for April 11th. It will be a whole school assembly and the Spreading Kindness Campaign is invited!!

Thurston Elementary (Springfield, Oregon)

Fourth graders are paired with Kindergarten buddies for the year. Together, with their buddies, students made various valentines for the senior citizens at ElderHealth, a nearby memory care facility. The valentines were handed out to the senior residents during their Valentine's Day party.

Using construction paper, glue, scissors, markers, and a whole lot of love, each 4th/Kinder buddy pair made as many valentines as they could during a 30-minute creative session. A teacher collected all of the valentines and delivered them to a manager at ElderHealth, to be distributed by staff during the seniors' party.

Interview with Teacher:

While the ElderHealth residents were the recipients of the valentines, the students also benefitted from that "warm, fuzzy feeling" that accompanies good deeds.

Did you discover anything that may be effective for encouraging kindness among your students?

Oftentimes, senior citizens are overlooked when thinking about a group of people to help. Students might say we should help the homeless, or abandoned pets, or people from impoverished countries, but they don't see elderly people as needing special attention. Many students did not even realize what senior care facilities do until we explained it to them. Some students' only exposure to elderly people are their grandparents.

What is an effective way to acknowledge students' efforts to act with kindness?

ElderHealth has reached out to thank the students by having the residents create a poster and write thank you cards. A few "high functioning" seniors are going to visit the school in two weeks to thank the children personally and present them with the poster. I think that will help the students recognize how their kindness touched others, which is a natural motivator.

Is there anything the Spreading Kindness Campaign can do to support your efforts at school to increase kindness?

I think the hardest part of "organizing" a kindness campaign is to think of needs that students are able to fill. If the Spreading Kindness Campaign sent out needs or requests from local agencies, like senior centers, preschools, rehabilitation centers, with specific things that young kids could do, it would be easier for schools to say, "Yes, we can meet that need!" I know that's not a very "random act of kindness," but it's kindness and child empowerment!

Mohawk Middle School and High School (Springfield, Oregon)

Ms. Bonney, a language arts and social studies teacher, worked with her Advisory and Art classes to create several projects to encourage kindness.

Her 6th grade Advisory class made kindness posters to display around the school. Art classes met after school to make tie-dyed t-shirts for an April auction to raise money for more kindness campaign activities. They hope to have a booth at the Mary Cole Days in August to sell kindness t-shirts, rocks and signs. Students collected river rocks to paint with kind words and sell at the Art Show.

The school recognizes students who go above and beyond to show kindness, empathy and understanding to their peers. The Youth Transition Program is making "Choose Kindness" t-shirts for these students.

Feedback from Teacher, Ms. Bonney:

- *"We are excited about continuing projects to encourage kindness and are planning to gear up this spring."*

El Camino, River Road Elementary (Eugene, Oregon)

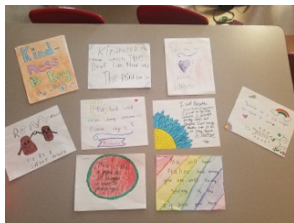
Dr. Eller, a PE Specialist, created Kindness Project that included pairing classes for Kindness Buddies, writing kind notes, and paying forward Kindness Coins. The goal was "Spreading happiness and helping kids thrive." More Kindness activities are scheduled such as a 30-day challenge workbook/journal for kids to encourage living kind, a kindness rock art project, a Kindness Club, a Positive Hopscotch Art Project, and a kindness wall in the Commons.



Feedback from PE Specialist, Dene Eller:

The kick off for The Kindness Project began at our school's 1st Healthy Heart PE Night in February. The event was well attended with over 350+ parents and kids. Attendees were encouraged to write KIND-O-GRAMS to anyone in the school and dropped in a box for inner school delivery.

Prior to the event members of the 5th grade class decorated "Kindness" collection boxes with cool artistry. The fourth graders (100+) were paired with first class KINDNESS BUDDIES. Each wrote a KIND-O-GRAM to their buddy and placed in the respective class Kindness box. The



paired classes exchange boxes on Thursdays and read their KIND-O-GRAMs on Friday at morning circles. Teachers also initiated the sharing of KINDNESS COINS to be circulated throughout the school.

Participating teachers were gifted KINDNESS COINS to spread kindness throughout the school. The target goal is to "do" a kind deed and pass the coin to another person who likewise pays it forward. Currently, 144 coins are floating around the school since February 15th.

Douglas Gardens Elementary (Springfield, Oregon)

Project 1: A student walks with a classmate everyday who needs to receive medication. Ms. Omeara sets a timer on her phone so the classmate can get his things ready.

Project 2: A fourth grader, walks nine younger classmates from their day care facility each day and ensures their safety as they go to their respective classes.

Feedback from Speech Pathologist, Melaney Grenz:

Since CS began this very important task, other intermediate students are asking and accepting volunteer tasks in our building. We have noticed a skyrocket in the tasks that intermediate students are volunteering for (i.e. Safety Patrol, recycling team). Parents, staff, and students notice CS's kindness each day when he crosses the crosswalk to diligently deliver the precious package of nine small children to school and back to day care each and every day.

Project 3: Six second-graders in Ms. Overall's class filled out a "Kindness Begins with Me" form to describe an act of kindness they did. The actions included helping to clean the room, helping a child who hurt himself and getting a computer for a friend.

Feedback from students:

The responses included enthusiastic "Thank You!" and "I enjoyed making her happy."

Project 4: According to principal, Carla Smith, the school has found several effective ways to acknowledge student kindness in the building. They have profiled students committing random acts of kindness at school assemblies. The school has Mustang Moment Drawings (for prizes) each Friday morning. They often award "Mustang Moments" tokens to students for random acts of kindness at school.

Feedback from Principal, Carla Smith:

We have embraced the phrase, "Kindness Matters" in the past three years at Douglas Gardens Elementary. We are following up this phrase with "Be a Role Model" to our intermediate grades (Fourth and Fifth Grader Students).

Churchill High School (Eugene, Oregon)

The Acts of Kindness Club celebrated World Kindness Day in November and wrote a note to EVERY student in the entire school (about 1200 notes. It was a pretty awesome to see every student receive a kind note on that day.) Kindness notes written by Acts of Kindness Club were also posted around the school to be taken by any student. The slips were gone in less than two days.

The Acts of Kindness Club watched for kind acts occurring in the school. The members identified exceptionally kind students and rewarded them with \$5 coffee gift cards. The students who received these nominations felt accomplished and happy they were chosen by doing something that comes naturally to them. It really showed these students that their kindness is appreciated by the staff and students at Churchill.

Acts of Kindness Club painted two murals, "Be the awesome you wish to see in the world" and "You're Strong, Brave, Awesome". Both murals function as daily reminders how important students are as well as how important everyone is in the world.

A book drive for Parenting Now and preschool aged children collected 30 books, and is on-going. The school has noticed that many students want to help others in need and implemented a Wheel of Kindness. Students spin the wheel to determine their random act of kindness. There have been lots of smiles and a more positive atmosphere. It led to students wanting to do the same act of kindness they observed.

Churchill's Leadership club wrote Kindness notes to staff members and staff felt very appreciated.

Cheerleaders at Churchill decorated every locker and hallway with kind and motivational Valentines with messages like "You can do it", "We appreciate you". Many students posted receiving their Valentine on social media.

Feedback from Acts of Kindness Advisor, Renee Neill:

Here at Churchill, our AOK club is always doing something new and innovative to impact the student life at Churchill. Our mission is the spread kindness and

positivity around the community, as well as making impacts on daily life at Churchill. We consist of students from every grade and gender, that are dedicated to making Churchill a better place for students and staff. AOK is a club that enjoys helping people and staying positive through all the stress of High School.

My name is Renee Neill and I teach PE at Churchill. I created Acts of Kindness Club this year because I saw a need at Churchill. What I have noticed since this Club started in September is that students genuinely want to help other students. The Club started with five members and is up to 20. I have found that this group always wants to do something nice for others, they are constantly looking for ways they can make a positive impact in the school. I believe that since Acts of Kindness has been doing kind acts throughout the 2018-2019 school year that other groups have been finding ways to spread kindness too. I look at the acts that the cheerleaders and leadership are doing at Churchill and feel that they too are on board with wanting to create a culture of positivity and kindness here at Churchill. I also am working with the Leadership Club at Churchill. We have a 20kindteen initiative where we are working with different community organizations to help them in some capacity.

I don't know if there is an effective way to acknowledge students' efforts to act with kindness, I try to be encouraging tell them they are doing a great job. I think that them seeing the reactions that students have towards their acts of kindness has been an effective way for them to feel appreciated for their efforts.

I would love if the Spreading Kindness Campaign found a way to honor the men and women who deserve a little kindness thrown their way. Acts of Kindness, Leadership, and Cheerleaders have done a great job showing kindness this school year. They would love a thank you card, or some kind of letter acknowledging their efforts.

Kelly Middle School, (Eugene, Oregon)

The 8th grade leadership class led by teachers Jason Miller and Kyle Kordon planned an assembly to present \$250 each to the Japanese and Spanish immersion programs. They had earned the money at a fundraiser at Barnes and Noble.

Feedback from Teacher, Jason Miller:

A satisfying feeling spread throughout the school as we watched the three extremely deserving teachers accept their checks with surprise and thanks.

This random act of kindness really taught the leadership class at Kelly MS that doing something good for other people is the best feeling and I think it inspired more students to follow in the footsteps of the leadership students and carry out a Random Act of Kindness.

Mt. Vernon Elementary School (Springfield, Oregon)

Sarah Knudsen, a speech/language pathologist at Mt. Vernon helped two groups of speech fourth and fifth grade students design different acts of kindness:

Project 1: Create new items (key chains) to donate to the student store for selling to the Trano Project which supports a teacher with cancer.

Project 2: Create acrostic poems with teachers' names and put them on nice posters as keepsake memories. Three teachers received the posters. Students and teachers brainstormed adjectives to describe the three teachers, matched the words with the letters in the teachers' names. Students completed rough drafts, then carefully wrote and designed the final copies. Students then went around and gave the posters to the teachers

Feedback from students:

- *I was surprised that when I told people that I was doing this, they wanted to do it too.*
- *I felt happy when I gave the poster to the teacher. They smiled and liked it too. They hung it on the wall.*

Interview with Speech/Language Pathologist, Sarah Knudsen:

I think they liked that I gave them permission to come up with their own ideas for the act of kindness. That way, they seemed to take ownership of it. I think it also was important for them to give the items to the intended recipients, so that they could see the effects of the act of kindness. After one student gave the poster to the teacher, the other group members wanted to watch each person give their poster, because then they could keep seeing the positive results.

What is an effective way to acknowledge students' efforts to act with kindness?

Taking the moment to look at what they are doing/giving, smiling, thanking them, and then if it is a tangible item, displaying it. The kids appear to feel special when they are acknowledged in this way. I think it is important at least to recognize when kindness happens, and point it out to others."

Is there anything the Spreading Kindness Campaign can do to support your efforts at school to increase kindness?

"The world needs more kindness, so maybe doing some community kindness outreach so that the students can see that kindness doesn't just happen in the schools."

Edison Elementary School (Eugene, Oregon)

Students made cards for hospital patients. Themes were kindness, raising spirits and Valentine's Day. Cards were taken to Sacred Heart University District and given to patients, families and staff on all the patient floors including pediatrics.

Walterville Elementary School (Walterville, Oregon)

During the 2017-18 school year, a group of 3rd graders began calling themselves *The Kindness Police*, as they wanted to promote kindness throughout our school environment. Being a group of well-intentioned eight-year-olds, they weren't exactly sure how to reach that goal, but they had goodness in their hearts.

This 'group' of now 4th graders continued to try to find itself, and it grew larger this year. Principal Dave Hulbert got involved and started meeting with them a few times per month, helping them develop their ideas and their leadership skills.

The group is now spreading kindness rather than looking for it. They have gathered some large flat rocks (4-5" in diameter), written kindness sayings on pieces of paper, and used Modge Podge to get the paper to stick to the rocks. They are called RAKRocks. Student sneak into classrooms at lunchtime to place a few RAKRocks on desks in classrooms.

The goal is that a student's day is brightened by this surprise RAKRock, and then that student spreads the love to others. Teachers are on board for encouraging the messages and the spreading, especially to those who might be struggling for some reason. When the student receives the rock, it will fill the bucket of both the receiver and the giver.

Feedback from Principal, Dave Hulbert:

Having some funding to expand our efforts would be helpful! We would love to create more RAKRocks and have more 'surprises' for students to find when they get to class. This effort ties nicely with our emphasis on a caring learning environment where students feel safe. And I LOVE that the Kindness Police is

student-initiated! Another great fact is that the group is VERY diverse in their peer groups and personalities! This is NOT a group of students who normally all associate together, but they are all excited and involved!

Camas Ridge, Eugene, Oregon

Feedback from Principal, Wes Flinn:

Here at Camas Ridge, we have had a thriving Random Acts of Kindness program for the past few years. Students, staff, and community members notice and write down random acts of kindness connected to our school attributes of being: compassionate, inclusive, respectful, safe, and welcoming. They are then read during morning announcements and posted for all our community to see outside our office as a way to affirm our practice and build an environment of kindness. Robi Sclafani, our front office assistant has championed this program, and it has become part of the fabric of our community.

Centennial Elementary School, Springfield, Oregon

Students in Room 10 made bookmarks with kind messages. They hid them in books in the library for others to find. 70 bookmarks were made and hidden. Another class made 20 so potentially 90 students received encouragement.

Feedback from students:

- When we were doing the bookmarks I felt kindness inside and outside.*
- Happy and it's good to make the school a better place and I think how I will make myself better and I know that my grandma who passed away will be proud of me just because of my teacher.*
- I have a good feeling about people seeing our bookmarks.*
- I noticed everyone was happy!*
- I noticed just doing the RAK made me feel good inside. I just loved it and it made me smile.*
- I noticed that it put a smile not only on the receiver's face but my class too.*

Interview with Teacher, Tiffany Asumendi:

We kept a journal for a week about RAK's students did individually and shared our acts each morning. We brainstormed ideas and added to our list as students shared. We also watched videos from the random acts of kindness foundation website throughout the day and brainstormed things we could do as a class.

What is an effective way to acknowledge students' efforts to act with kindness?

We shared as a class and celebrated. We also have a kindness recorder who looks for a records kind acts in our classroom in a journal. S/he shares his/her observations at the end of each day.

Is there anything the Spreading Kindness Campaign can do to support your efforts at school to increase kindness?

Keep up the reminders. Maybe offering mini-grants/funds that educators could apply for in small amounts to purchase things for RAK if students want to give something to someone else like toiletries to homeless people or if a school wanted to get t-shirts printed to create a kindness club.

Adams Elementary School (Eugene, Oregon)

Project 1: A student and his sister painted Kindness Stones and left them around their schools.

Project 2: A second grader and his/her grandmother practiced kindness on the playground by sharing equipment. The student noticed that she liked helping the other students feel good.

Arts and Technology Middle School (Eugene, Oregon)

A student and her friend painted kindness stones and distributed them randomly at their school.

Bertha Holt Elementary School (Eugene, Oregon)

A kindergarten and 4th grade buddy classroom wrote and distributed kindness notes for staff.

Interview with Teacher, Ashley Reich:

They loved doing it! The teachers enjoyed receiving the notes. It was a great way to start the day. It was appreciated by all.

Did you discover anything that may be effective for encouraging kindness among your students?

Explaining why it is important to spread kindness. People feel good when they feel acknowledges and appreciated.

What is an effective way to acknowledge students' efforts to act with kindness?

Tell them how it made those adults feel. Ask for examples of when they have received a random act of kindness.

Is there anything the Spreading Kindness Campaign can do to support your efforts at school to increase kindness?

It would be fun to connect schools together. Around testing time, we often send posters with words of encouragement to our neighbor schools. It is fun to share the love throughout the community.

Twin Rivers Charter School (Eugene, Oregon)

A Student planned to surprise his classmates with “Kind bars” during one of their outdoor workdays. All of his classmates who were working that day received the Kind bars. The gesture was well received and not just because working teenagers always appreciate food.

Agnes Stewart Middle School (Springfield, Oregon)

An autistic student made a thank you card for his teacher. Its important to reach out and include students with alter-abilities.

Thurston High School (Springfield, Oregon)

A student made a thank you card for his teacher.

Briggs Middle School (Springfield, Oregon)

The WEB is a group of 8th graders committed to making Briggs Middle School a kind, safe and inclusive place. WEB students made bookmarks with encouraging messages or reminders to choose kindness. The bookmarks were then distributed randomly.

Gilham Elementary School (Eugene, Oregon)

A parent encouraged her third grade daughter to watch for an opportunity to be kind and report it for the challenge. Her daughter and friend saw a box of schools things that had been knocked over by another student. They went over and cleaned it up.