



## Grassroots Resources to Create a City of Kindness

Thank you for your interest in Kindness. This paper is a guideline for people in a community who would like to develop a city of kindness initiative. We found these ideas helped Eugene become a City of Kindness, and we recognize that every city will approach this differently, in ways that work locally.

The first step in this grassroots process is to recruit several interested civic and business leaders to review the information resources and some of the action resources for ways to increase kindness. When there is sufficient interest, the group meets and discusses creating a Spreading Kindness Campaign Committee. It is helpful to have a comfortable, informal meeting place.

The Campaign Committee requires leadership from respected members of the community: a coordinator(s) to lead the effort and a leader for each sector to be included in the campaign (e.g. civic and faith groups, public schools and universities, government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations). The committee for Eugene and Springfield, Oregon was made up of volunteers, many retirees, and a part time paid staff person for helping to produce kindness resources and organize kindness events. Please [contact us](#) if you would like a list of community sectors participating in the steering committee.

The local Campaign Committee discusses how to provide information about the campaign and build enthusiasm for it among community members. The first three menu items below provide tools for spreading the word in the community and recruiting more community leaders to join the committee.

### **MENU OF INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR BECOMING A CITY OF KINDNESS**

The following are resources and approaches that were used in the Eugene/Springfield Spreading Kindness Campaign. Hopefully some of them will be helpful to your campaign.

#### **1. Resources that provide the rationale for the campaign.**

It is very helpful to have clear, simple handouts that describes your goals and the benefits. Two one-sheet handouts are available for distribution to stores, offices, and workplaces that are interested in the Spreading Kindness Campaign.

- A [one-page explanation](#) of what it means to be a city of kindness
- A [one sheet handout](#) on the personal and organizational benefits of increasing kindness
- A [thirty-second elevator speech](#) that can be used by supporters of kindness in talking with friends, neighbors, and co-workers to explain the value of increasing kindness

- A [30-minute video](#) of a talk given by Tom Tait, a National Cities of Kindness leader who—as Mayor of Anaheim, California—launched a very successful city of kindness campaign.

## 2. Resources to use in messaging—making kindness visible in the community.

Right away, begin messaging kindness by distributing signs (outdoor lawn signs or indoor window signs), button pins, bumper stickers, cards, and window clings.

- The Eugene/Springfield campaign will provide an unlimited number of buttons and cards for free
- The Eugene-Springfield campaign will also provide 20 yard signs and bumper stickers (in English or Spanish) for free.
- For businesses that pledge to increase kindness, we also have window clings with logos related to local current events; examples for Lane County Oregon communities are the [Olympic Trials](#) in 2020 and for the entire state of Oregon, the [World Championship Games](#) in 2021.



- Additional yard signs, bumper stickers, and window clings [can be purchased](#) at cost. Your kindness campaign committee would need to find a place to store and distribute these materials.

## 3. Resources for making presentations to community organizations.

Give introductory presentations to community organizations such as civic and faith groups, schools, government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. There are three foundational kindness PowerPoints available:

- 1) Personal benefits of kindness
- 2) Organizational benefits of kindness
- 3) Organizations involved in the spreading kindness campaign

Please [email us](#) if you are interested in receiving one of these PowerPoint presentations.

After using the resources above to engage the community, the committee would select priority sectors based on community interest and availability of committee members who would lead the sectors. After determining the priorities and sector leaders, the Campaign Committee would decide which of the menu items below to share with their community.

Almost all the resources listed below are available now. None of the items require payment to any organization. Members of the Eugene/Springfield Spreading Kindness steering committee will be available to answer questions, help make and assist with presentations, and serve as a general resource.

Note that another complementary approach to becoming a city of kindness is for the mayor to take the lead, as Tom Tait did in making [Anaheim, CA](#) a city of kindness. On November 3rd, 2019, Tom Tait made a keynote address at the Choose Kindness celebration in Eugene along with Eugene Mayor Lucy Vinis. These keynote addresses gave a significant boost to our campaign.

## **MENU OF ACTION RESOURCES FOR WAYS TO INCREASE KINDNESS IN THE COMMUNITY**

4. **Schools.** Increasing compassion and kindness in schools resonates well with most community members. In Anaheim and in Eugene/Springfield, we found schools to be open to kindness initiatives. Many schools undertook kindness projects that appear to have reduced bullying and improved student performance. A complete array of information resources (e.g., explanations of the importance of teaching kindness) and action resources (e.g., specific ways to inspire and teach kindness) have been, and continue to be, developed. Examples of some specific initiatives implemented in Eugene and Springfield are:
  - Twenty Eugene and Springfield schools' that participated in the 2018-2019 [Random Acts of Kindness Challenge](#).
  - Local school [kindness examples](#) and kindness programs from around the US.
  - An [event](#) to honor high school students by having them give a public talk about kindness and their community.
  - The 2019-2020 [Everyone Belongs](#) grant and award program.
  - An inspiring four-minute [music video](#) about kindness from Two Rivers - Dos Rios Elementary School in Springfield, OR.
  
5. **Civic and faith groups.** Compassion and kindness are central to all faiths and to most civic groups. It is important to have these sectors represented on the Steering Committee. Committee members can meet with individual leaders and coalitions of leaders from faith and civic groups. It is important to recognize that these groups often are already engaged in extensive efforts to relieve suffering and promote community well-being and these can be framed as “Kindness activities.” Suggest ways faith communities and service clubs can message the importance of kindness, both inside and outside their group; e.g., some illustrative actions based on this kindness motto: [See it, Say it, Spread it!](#) The Southtowne Rotary club in Eugene implemented its own version of an ‘Everyone Belongs’ grant and award program as a way to reach out to schools. [Email us](#) for details about the Rotary version of the ‘Everyone Belongs’ grant and award program.

Other ways civic and faith groups can bring a community together around kindness include:

- a. [Religious Community Information Exchange](#) (government leaders and faith communities share information about serving those in the community with great needs). [Anaheim’s](#) Religious Community Council. Here is the mission statement:

“Our mission is to provide a forum in which religious leaders can voice their concern about community needs in Anaheim, plan strategies for addressing those needs, and work together as individuals or with the help of their entire congregations to meet those needs. The Anaheim Religious Community Council is composed of ministers and lay leaders that represent religious organizations throughout Anaheim. All Anaheim churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and faith-based organizations are welcome to participate in this inter-faith create a friendlier, healthier, community.”

- b. Meetings to [bridge the political divide](#) (blues and reds come together for a structured discussion about finding common ground).  
[National organization](#) for bridging the divide.
- c. Civic and Faith Based PowerPoints have been developed:
  - 1) Service clubs (Rotary example)
  - 2) Overview of Kindness Campaign (United Way example)
  - 3) Professional Women's Group
  - 4) Political Parties
 Please [email us](#) if you are interested in receiving any of these presentations.

6. **For profit, nonprofit and government organizations.** Research shows that organizations that promotes a culture of kindness flourish. Nonprofit and government organizations are often mission driven to provide hope, help and support to community members in need, and this is kindness. It is helpful to identify and honor the especially kind for profit local businesses.

Offer interested organizations the resources below on how to build a kindness culture that benefits the organization and the employees. Make clear that by benefitting the organization and the employees, the organization is also contributing to the well-being of the community. Note that the list begins with simpler-to-implement resources, which are good starting points in meeting with organizations.

a. **Present organization-specific PowerPoints:**

We have PowerPoints that would be helpful as a starting point for developing a local presentation for a specific sector. When there is an interested business, present the rationale for increasing kindness in the workplace using the [one sheet handout](#) that can be augmented with these PowerPoints, each directed to a particular sector:

- 1) Overview: Kindness is a key to organizational effectiveness
- 2) Health providers
- 3) Government: Public Works
- 4) Protectors: Police and fire fighters
- 5) County commissioners and city council
- 6) Educational Service District
- 7) University

Please [email us](#) if you are interested in receiving one of the power-point presentations.

b. **Make staff more aware of kindness:**

- i. Create a [staff kindness challenge](#): Set a goal for a number of new acts of kindness, count the acts, and celebrate progress.
- ii. Measure the amount of kindness in the workplace, choosing from three measures: Surveys on kindness by [employees](#), on kindness support by [managers](#), and on [unkind/negative](#) workplace behaviors.

c. **Focus staff on kindness:**

- i. Schedule a time for employees to meet in small groups to discuss the [set of ideas](#) based on [this](#) Harvard Business Review article and make suggestions for increasing kindness. The meeting can end with employees filling out a kindness commitment on the last page of the handout.
- ii. Integrate kindness into the [personnel evaluation](#) process, e.g. the employee exceeds, meets, or needs improvement on kindness expectations. Also provide self-evaluation questions for an employee to prepare for the kindness evaluation.
- iii. Adjust focus of [customer service](#): Being polite is essential; being kind is more.

**d. Focus leadership on kindness:**

- i. For organizations that want to thoroughly integrate kindness throughout the organization, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has produced an excellent program providing [steps in developing a kindness program](#).
- ii. Offer the manager/owner the [set of ideas](#) based on [this](#) Harvard Business Review article on how managers can create a kinder, more positive workplace. In a larger organization with multiple managers, schedule a time for managers to meet in small groups to discuss the set of ideas and to make suggestions for increasing kindness. The meeting can end with managers filling out a kindness commitment on the last page of the handout.
- iii. A [research study](#) from the Harvard Business Review has managers carry out five acts of self-kindness each day.

**e. Customize content to fit a specific organization:**

- i. Have a planning group revise the set of ideas so that they align with the goals of the organization.
- ii. Select the PowerPoint already developed for that type of organization.
- iii. Gather appropriate handouts; for example, handouts for health providers and wellness programs from the [Blue Zones](#) and the [University of Michigan](#).