

the Kindness Connection



Kindness in Schools

www.kindacts.net

A Message from KindActs

...connecting hearts & inspiring kind acts...

Today, we have more tools and ways of communicating with each other than ever before. We have technology which enables us to stay connected, whether we are driving our cars, hiking in the mountains or walking on the moon. Yet for all these breakthroughs in technology which have provided us with faster and easier ways to stay in touch, somewhere along the line, we've lost touch. Our society is showing increasing signs of a breakdown in our ability as people to relate to each other. How is it that kids feel they need to bring weapons to school in order to feel safe and wars are still used as an option for resolving conflict? How is it that our modern society is plagued by a "common sense of not belonging" and malignant sadness is predicted to become the second most debilitating disease?



"... when i think i need to belong, i often follow others ... when i follow my heart, i feel like i belong regardless of others."

Brock Tully

Co-founder of KindActs

Much has been gained... yet something vital has been lost - something that all the status in the world, club memberships and technological breakthroughs in communication cannot give us - a true sense of belonging that can only come from being connected with our own heart.

Why Kindness Is So Important...

Kindness embraces the most fundamental of human needs: the need to belong. Kindness speaks to our deep human longing for heartfelt connections and provides us with a concrete, simple yet profound way to reconnect at the level of the heart and make a positive difference in this world. The more we connect with our own hearts, the more we realize how interconnected we all are. We become less focused on seeing our differences and more focused on making a difference.

Kindness knows no boundaries. It is a universal language which transcends all cultural, religious and political boundaries.

Kindness has the power to transform lives. We cannot commit a kind act without being positively affected. When we come from the heart, we feel more balanced and energized; we think more clearly; and are wiser in our choices.

But don't take our word for it. Commit a kind act today and experience the magic of kindness for yourself. Together, let's make it a kinder world, one act at a time . . .

Love

Nadine Marshall

Co-founder and Program Director of KindActs

Partners
in Kindness

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The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, USA

www.actsofkindness.org

The World Kindness Movement

www.worldkindness.org.sg

An Interview with . . .

Tania Walker

Grade Six Teacher at The Kirkbride Elementary School
in Surrey, British Columbia

Why is kindness important to you?

Kindness has a lot of power in terms of making people feel better about themselves. I believe that when people feel good about themselves, they are more likely to want to treat others with kindness. The motto I live by and try to teach others is the Golden Rule - treat others as you wish to be treated.

What motivated you to introduce kindness programs into your school?

The kids I teach are exposed to a great deal of anti-social behavior projected by the media and reinforced by their peers. Often they come home to an empty house, where the television is the main attraction. They watch programs and play games that model abusive behavior to other people. They have become a generation where kindness has taken a back seat to anti-social behavior and a "me first, looking out for number one" attitude. I see kindness, if properly taught, as providing kids with a powerful, positive model for interacting with each other.

How do you teach kindness?

For kindness to override violence, kids have to understand and internalize the benefits of being kind. It is important to:

- ✧ Model kindness in your interactions with them. Kids need to feel what it is like to be on the receiving end of kindness. When they feel good about themselves, they are more inclined to treat others kindly.
- ✧ Expect kindness from them. If a child behaves disrespectfully to me, I explain to them how their action made me feel and then provide them with an alternative. For example, I may say, "I will listen to what you have to say if you are respectful. Please rephrase your question."
- ✧ Show them that kindness leads to better solutions. I often take a current "hot issue" and use it as a case study. For example, if there was an incident of bullying on the playground, I will have the kids analyze what happened and come up with a turn-around solution. I will ask them questions like, "How do you think the bullies were feeling? How do you think the victim was feeling? What is something we can do that will make everyone feel good?" It is important that kids become aware of the consequences of their behavior and develop a sense of empathy. Once the awareness is there, they need to see how kindness can lead to better solutions.
- ✧ Make them aware of the chain reaction of kindness. I give my students examples of how a small act of kindness leads to something much greater. When they see that really little things matter and their small act can make a huge difference, they become excited. Kindness becomes cool. Kids need to find their own way to relate to kindness.

What are some examples of initiatives your school is involved in?

Kids Helping Kids

We set up a Kids Helping Kids committee to encourage kids to come up with projects that are kind and beneficial to the community. Our Month of Kindness is an example of an initiative our committee facilitates. The kids feel a real sense of ownership and excitement about these projects because they are involved in all stages of the project from idea generation to implementation.

The Kindness Chain

We first introduced the Kindness Chain project during our Month of Kindness in February 1999. To start off the month-long celebration, we brainstormed ideas on what acts we could perform that would feel good. Each class was then given coloured pieces of construction paper which then got divided into strips. The kids were encouraged to report and write kind acts they performed or witnessed on the strips of paper. The strips of paper were then

formed into links and joined to the chain of kindness, which, by the end of the month connected all the classrooms in the school. It was a wonderful sight - a school-wide chain of kindness. Examples of kind acts were also posted on each classroom's bulletin board.

Remembrance Day Peace Flame

This past October, I attended the Third Helping of Clam Chowder for the Soul where I learned about the World Peace Flame project. The idea behind the project is to have people from around the world focus on peace. Each participant was given a candle that had been lit by the original World Peace Flame and asked to light this candle every day while focusing their thoughts on peace. When I explained this project to our school's Principal, he incorporated the World Peace Flame ritual in our Remembrance Day Assembly. He used the candle I had brought back from the event to light a candle for each child attending our school. The kids were given their candle, along with an instruction sheet for parents, and asked to focus on peace for a few minutes every day. We then played the We Can Be Kind song, written by David Friedman and sung by Perry Dickison, and invited the kids to join in for the chorus:

**We can be kind
We can take care of each other
We can remember that deep down inside
We all need the same thing
And maybe we'll find
If we are there for each other,
That together we'll weather whatever
Tomorrow may bring
And maybe we'll find
True peace of mind
If we always remember
We can be kind**

This chorus is now permanently and prominently displayed in the entrance of our school.

Taking it to the Streets

Taking it to the Streets is a project that originated in 1995 with the purpose of rekindling the true spirit of giving. It is run by a group of individuals who have no motive other than a heartfelt desire to share. This past Christmas they brought gift bags, warm clothing and Christmas dinner to street people.

When I heard about Taking it to the Streets, I asked if there was any way I could involve the kids in this project. As it turned out, there were 1000 gift bags that needed to be decorated. At first, I was worried about not having enough people to help out but as the word got out, I found myself running out of bags. Teachers from eight other schools jumped on board. In the end, we not only had beautiful gift bags but some kids became so excited that they enrolled their entire family in baking cookies for the street people. The response was incredibly positive and many commented that they felt really good knowing there was something they could do.

Kindness Christmas Tree

This past year, a tree farm donated a Christmas tree to our school. We placed the tree in the foyer of our school and decorated it with colourful paper ornaments in the shape of stars. The school kids wrote a kind act that they performed or witnessed on each ornament.

What are some of the challenges you face and how do you stay motivated?

Sometimes it feels like I am taking two steps forward and four steps back and it is easy to feel discouraged. I realize that I am dealing with a lifetime of programming that needs to change. You can't force someone to be kind. They need to understand, internalize and want it for themselves. I'd like to reach all my students but even if I reach one in twenty, I know that it is worth it. Maybe that one person will go on to contributing to the world in significant ways. You just have to trust in kindness and believe that being kind is the right thing to do whether or not you can see the difference it is making and whether or not other people appear to appreciate it. Kindness always makes people feel good inside. When people feel good within themselves, they are more likely to want to treat others with kindness and the chain of kindness is set in motion.

For more information on how your school can participate in spreading kindness, contact Tania Walker (Thursdays and Fridays) at (604) 588-5711.

Kelsey and Friends' Kindness Story Review

Kelsey is Tania Walker's six-year old daughter and is a Grade One student at Martha Curie Elementary School in Surrey, British Columbia.

Kelsey's Personal Favourites:

David L. Rice's Because Brian Hugged His Mother story:

I learned that if you are kind to a person, they will be kind to another person and it will make a kindness chain. - Kelsey Walker

Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen's Chicken Soup for Little Souls: "The Goodness Gorillas" story:

I learned that if you are nice, the whole world could be nice. I like the puppy. - Kelsey Walker

Won't You Be My Buddy?

The "Buddy" program consists of assigning a student from a younger grade a buddy from a higher grade. Buddies are responsible for each other's wellbeing. The intention of the program is to foster a sense of goodwill and cooperation among school kids of different ages.

Hi, I'm Carly. I think the buddy system is really great. It shows that the young little buddies can have someone to cheer them up and that they will also have someone to be with. It also gives the big buddies a great opportunity to help out with little kids.

Written by Carly Golinski, a Grade Five student at Brighthouse Elementary School in Richmond, British Columbia.

Here are what some of the Grade Six students at Kirkbride Elementary School have chosen as their favourite kindness stories from Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen's Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul:

Barbara A Lewis "Reaching Out to a Stranger" story:

I learned a lot from this story and figured that if you do something good for someone, they might do something for someone else and it may keep being passed along. - Gagon Klair

Barbara Hawck's "Smile" story:

I learned that one smile can go a long way. - Natasha Hills

Andrea Hensley's "A Gift for Two" story:

This story makes me want to do good deeds like that. - Lisa Kelly

From Edmonton to Tokyo ... with Love

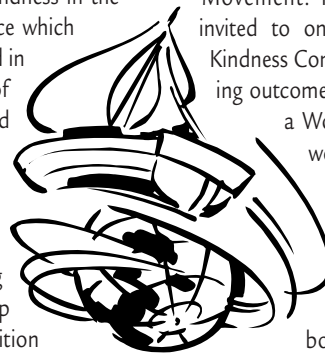
How did two elementary school teachers from Alberta go from running a two person campaign for Random Acts of Kindness Week in 1995, to representing Canada at the annual World Kindness Conferences in Tokyo?

For Colleen Ring and Debbie Riopel, the journey has been nothing short of amazing. In a nutshell, here are the series of events which have unfolded over the past few years, shaping Random Acts of Kindness in Edmonton. Colleen began to encourage her grade two students to focus on kindness in the spring of 1994 following a random act of violence which occurred in her Edmonton community and resulted in the murder of a young mother known by many of the children in Colleen's class. In an attempt to find some positive response to this tragedy, Colleen developed the Kids for Kindness Program. Its premise is that if kindness is something which we value as a society then perhaps we need to talk about it, and acknowledge students for performing these acts. Colleen received the Hilroy Fellowship from the Canadian Teacher's Federation in recognition of developing this program. Several months later, after learning of an American grassroots movement which would see a week in February devoted to kindness, Colleen's sister, Debbie Riopel, became involved. Together they set out to bring word of the week to the Edmonton area for February of 1995. Through Debbie's efforts, St. Albert proclaimed the week, officially the first

Canadian city to do so. Since these humble beginnings much has happened. Additional sponsors have climbed on board, volunteer committees have formed and the Week has been officially proclaimed in Edmonton as well as several other Alberta communities. For Colleen and Debbie one of the most surprising occurrences came when they were invited to attend an International Conference on Kindness held in Tokyo, Japan in October of 1996 hosted by the "Small Kindness"

Movement. To their delight, Debbie and Colleen were invited to once again represent Canada at a second Kindness Conference in the fall of 1997. Two of the exciting outcomes from this gathering were the formation of a World Kindness Movement and the resolve to work towards establishing World Kindness Day on November 13, 2000. So as you can imagine, it has been an amazing journey for two Alberta teachers who describe themselves as being extraordinarily ordinary.

The bottom line for these two has been the realization that if we are unhappy with the direction things are going in, then it is up to us to do something to change our course. Their experience has convinced them that not only is this possible but it is also within everyone's capabilities. *This article has been provided to us courtesy of the Canadian Kindness Movement. Be sure to pay them a visit at www.kindness.ab.ca.*



"some people love to be intelligent, but they're not necessarily wise... a wise person appreciates their intelligence but knows what's necessary is their love"

-Brock Tully

Up Coming Events

Cycling for Kindness

February 26 - September 17, 2000

In a bid to collect one million random acts of kindness, Brock Tully and a dedicated team are embarking on a seven-month, 10,000-mile cycling journey for kindness. The journey starts from Vancouver, British Columbia on February 26, 2000 and will encircle North America, returning to Vancouver on September 17 for a homecoming celebration. The journey's primary focus is to raise awareness of the impact of kindness and inspire people to take positive action in their own lives, communities and workplaces. The team is committed to playing an active role in making North America a kinder and more loving place to live... one s(mile) at a time. If you would like to support the team in spreading the transformational message of kindness, find out about our s(mile) campaign by visiting www.kindacts.net or calling Susan MacDonald toll free at 1- 800 -663-2331.

Porridge for the Soul

First Tuesday of every month at 7:00 am

Not just another breakfast meeting but an ongoing opportunity to enjoy connecting with inspirational speakers and like-minded individuals. Join us at 7:00am the first Tuesday of every month at the Canadian Memorial Centre for Peace, 1825 West 16th Avenue, Vancouver. Admission is \$12. Contact Darrell Ross at (604) 689-0553 or ddross@imag.net.

Just Singin'Round

First Wednesday of every month at 7:00 pm

Just Singin' Round takes place at the Vancouver Rowing Club on the first Wednesday of every month. It is an evening where talented singer/songwriters have an opportunity to showcase their music in a friendly and supportive environment, all the while raising funds for local charities. Suggested donation is \$10. KindActs is honoured to be the feature charitable cause for the months of March and July, 2000. For more information, contact Yvonne McSmimming at (604) 669-4387.

Clam Chowder for the Soul - Fourth Helping

Saturday, September 23, 2000

A special one-day event where community and business leaders share stories that inspire heart-felt action. Contact Darrell Ross at (604) 689-0553 or ddross@imag.net.

The Kindness Forum

Sunday, September 24, 2000

A forum for the sharing of ideas, stories and kindness initiatives. Contact Nadine Marshall at (604)515-KIND (5463) or info@kindness.net

World Kindness Day

November 13, 2000

For more information, check out www.worldkindness.org.sg.

Taking it to the Streets

December 25, 2000

What does a C.E.O. of a large corporation, a shoe salesperson, a 13-year old youth and a 40-year old street person have in common? All are touched by Taking it to the Streets, a project that originated in 1995 with the purpose of rekindling the true spirit of giving - giving for the love of giving. This year they will once again be bringing kindness and Christmas to street people. For more information, call Ruth at 876-2610.

Welcome! You Are About To Enter a School Kindness Zone

Join hundreds of other schools and communities around the world participating in the Kindness Movement. Here are some ideas of how your school might start its own version of "global warming"!

Start a Kindness Committee within your school where members brainstorm how to transform their school into a Kindness Zone. Create a framework for your kindness initiatives and set imaginations free . . .

- ☆ How could you use the Five Senses as a framework for creating a kind environment in your school? What would people entering the zone hear, see, smell, taste and feel? Would they see murals of kind acts; children playing in harmony; hear beautiful music; smell fresh flowers growing in the yard; enjoy home-baked cookies; feel welcome?
- ☆ How could the school curriculum be used to explore kindness through different subject areas? Encourage each teacher and every classroom to become involved to support your ideas and share their own.
- ☆ How might multi-culturalism be used as a foundation for a kindness program? How might different cultures and religions view and express kindness? What words in different languages are used to express the idea of kindness?
- ☆ How could kindness be researched in terms of Past, Present and Future? How could history be brought to life now to promote a more caring and kind future for everyone? What could different generations learn from each other? How might kindness be used to connect different generations?
- ☆ How can kindness be explored using the themes: kindness to oneself, to each other and to our environment?

These ideas come to you from Toni Crawford whose passion is to inspire caring connection through her work in community development, capacity building and youth advocacy. You can reach her at (604) 438-1149 or (604) 515-KIND (5463).

For "fun"raising ideas to support your school kindness initiative, visit our website at www.kindacts.net. To see how the kindness movement is growing worldwide, visit www.worldkindness.org.sg.

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