INTRODUCTION

Listed below are project ideas that build understanding of RAK’s 12 Kindness Concepts. Each project is designed around a stated objective and RAK’s Kindness Paradigm, which focuses on inspiring and empowering students with kindness skills that prompt them to act kindly toward others and share kindness.

Some suggestions for implementing the projects:

- These ideas are meant to inspire teachers to create their own project and do not describe the project in detail. Use the Project Planning sheet on p. 9 to develop a project that fits the needs of the class.
- Consider printing out and hanging the appropriate Kindness Concept poster in the room and discussing the concept before beginning the project.

ASSERTIVENESS

Standing up for yourself and what you believe in while being respectful of the rights and beliefs of others.

Let’s Be Kind! Campaign

Objective: Students will be able to evaluate ways to stand up for themselves and what they believe in while respecting the rights of others.

Inspire: Ask what it means to be assertive (definition: Expressing yourself effectively and standing up for your point of view, while also respecting the rights and beliefs of others). Then, have students discuss situations when it is important to be assertive (when someone is being rude or bullying others, when a person can’t speak up for themselves, to resist peer pressure, etc.). Discuss the challenges of being assertive and speaking out.

Empower: Brainstorm different ways that students can encourage the school community to stand up for themselves and resist peer pressure. For example, they could:

- Make posters that promote respecting others as a way to combat bullying, including a few ways to respond to a bully and also ways to show kindness.
- Create a song about respecting others rights and standing up for what you believe in.
- Make a video about how to resist peer pressure and suggest ways to deal with a bully.
- Design an assembly that focuses on anti-bullying or ways to resist peer pressure.

Act: Have students plan and create the project.

Share: Once they are finished, have students share what they made with the school. Then, have them discuss in class what it was like to create and share the project.
CARING

1. Baskets of Caring

Objective: Students will be able to show caring for people who need help (like the homeless or elderly in need) by creating baskets of food or goods to deliver.

Inspire: Ask what it means to be caring to others. Then, have students discuss practical ways they can show caring to people in the community who may not have money or food, asking them to identify groups of people who may be in need. (Possible ideas are creating baskets of food or supplies, such as toothpaste, toothbrush, gloves, hats, etc. for the homeless, baskets with letters that show caring.)

Empower: Have students discuss the different projects and then take a vote on what project they want to do. After the vote, determine the scope of the project.

Act: Have students gather the materials for the baskets, perhaps through donations from the school community or local merchants.

Share: Once they are done, have the students deliver the baskets to a homeless shelter, retirement home or other location where the baskets are to be shared.

2. School Beautification Project

Objective: Students will be able to discover what it means to care for their school by raising money for and planning a beautification project.

Inspire: Ask what it means to show caring toward their school. Then ask students for examples of how they can care for their school (i.e. planning a school garden, a school or playground clean up, painting a mural on a school wall, etc.) Write their responses on the board.

Empower: Have students develop those examples into possible projects that show caring for their school. Then have them brainstorm how they can raise money for those projects and how they can interest other people in doing this project. Perhaps they want to place penny jars around the school to raise money, create posters to encourage interest in the project, etc. Students will need to have their project approved by the principal. Consider having them contact the school board or the local media to generate community interest in the project. They may want to contact local businesses to solicit donations for the project. Consider working with other classes to raise money for and create the school beautification project during RAK Week in February.

Act: Spend time designing and creating the project. Make sure to emphasize that the pennies don’t seem to have much value, but when combined, they do make a difference. In the same way, one kind act may seem insignificant, but many kind acts practiced daily have a great impact.

Share: Once the project is finished, have students reflect on what they learned from the project and how showing caring at school can improve the community and how people feel about the school.

3. What Makes a True Friend?

Objective: Students will be able to determine what it means to be a true friend and ways to show a friend that they care.

Inspire: Ask students to turn to a partner and discuss what qualities they think make a true friend and how they can show a friend they care. Come together as a group and ask for students to share what they discussed. Write the qualities on the board.

Empower: Have students write in a journal about what barriers there might be to developing true friendships, how they could overcome those barriers, or ways they can strengthen their friendships.

Act: Encourage students to reach out to at least one friend during the week and tell that person why they are special or make a card or do something else that shows how they care for that person. If student feels they don’t have a close friend, have them think about ways they can develop a support network by sharing the worksheet from the Building Support Systems lesson in the High School Emotional Care Unit.

Share: Have students reflect on the experience of sharing kindness with a friend.
4. Artifacts of Caring

Objective: Students will be able to discover what artifacts from their lives reflect caring and kindness.

Inspire: Ask students to explain what an artifact is and what they can learn about cultures from artifacts.

Empower: Then ask students to think about what kinds of artifacts are in their rooms at home or in the classroom, and to describe the use of these objects. Then have them think about specific ways the objects can be used to promote caring (i.e. a favorite book can be read to a younger student, a pair of old shoes can be given to the homeless, an instrument can be played at a nursing home.)

Act: Have the students commit to using their favorite artifact in a way that promotes caring in the community. This could be done individually or as a class.

Share: Have students reflect on what it was like to use something that was important to them to show caring toward other people.

5. Free Coffee/Hot Chocolate Stand

Objective: Students will be able to show caring for people at school by offering them free coffee and hot chocolate.

Inspire: Have students discuss whether they think small acts of caring and kindness can make a difference.

Empower: Have students plan a day when they can offer free coffee and hot chocolate at school or in the community. They could station themselves in the parking lot, at the school entrance, at a sporting event, etc.

Act: Set up a free coffee and/or hot chocolate station. Pass out hot drinks with a smile.

Share: Have students reflect on the experience. Did they feel that their small act of kindness made a difference? In what ways? Would they do it again?
FAIRNESS

Fairness Skits

Objective: Students will be able to analyze what it means to be fair through performing skits for the class or the school.
Inspire: Ask students what it means to be fair. (If necessary, share the RAK definition, which is: Treating people in a way that does not favor some over others.) Then, ask students to give examples of how they can be fair to others at school or at home. Write the examples on the board.
Empower: Divide students into small groups and have them write a skit about being fair or not being fair, using the examples written on the board or examples they develop in their group.
Act: Have students perform the skits for each other or for other classes. After each skit, talk about ways that the students showed fairness or didn’t show fairness, and what would have been a fair way to interact with the others.
Share: Have students discuss how they can be fair to others at school or at home and commit to those actions.

GRATITUDE

1. Janitor Appreciation Day (or secretaries, bus drivers, volunteers, etc.)

Objective: Students will be able to discover what it means to show gratitude toward the janitors (or other people who help) at their school through an appreciation day.
Inspire: Ask students who are the people who help make their school a special place. If students can’t think of anyone, begin the discussion by mentioning janitors, bus drivers, volunteers, paras, secretaries, etc.
Empower: Discuss practical ways they can show gratitude to these people (such as making cards, planning a special meal or event, picking up the classroom for the janitors, etc.) Write these ideas on the board.
Act: Have students decide on a project that shows gratitude and who they want to show gratitude to. Then have them plan the project.
Share: As a debrief, have students discuss what it was like to show gratitude to these people and how they can continue to show gratitude in their lives.

2. Being Grateful

Objective: Students will be able to evaluate ways they show gratitude to friends and family.
Inspire: Ask what it means to be grateful (RAK definition: Being thankful when someone has shown you kindness or caring; not taking anything for granted.)
Empower: Have students brainstorm ways that they can show gratitude and thankfulness to a friend or family member.
Act: Encourage students to show their gratitude by making a kind card, a special gift, or offering to help that person in some way to show gratitude.
Share: Have students reflect on what it was like to show gratitude to these people and how they can continue to show gratitude in their lives.
1. Reaching Out to Those in Need

**Objective:** Students will be able to evaluate what it means to be helpful to others by reaching out to those in need.

**Inspire:** Ask students to discuss what it means to be helpful and why it is important.

**Empower:** Then, ask students to create a list of situations where people might need help (a younger student is being bothered at recess, an older person needs help getting groceries out of their car, a classmate is struggling in math, etc.) Write the situations on the board.

**Act:** Have the students decide what they are going to do to be helpful and commit to doing that within a certain time frame (by tomorrow, next week, etc.)

**Share:** Check in with students to find out how they felt after being helpful. Students could share as part of a class discussion or record comments and thoughts about the activity on a poster in the class or in journals. Have them commit to being helpful to someone on a regular basis.

2. “Adopt” a 6th Grade Student (for 8th graders)

**Objective:** Eighth grade students will be able to discover what it means to be helpful through “adopting” a 6th grade student for the day (or longer).

**Inspire:** Ask eighth grade students to discuss what they remember about sixth grade and what challenges they faced. Is there anything they would want to tell a sixth grader to ease their stress or anxiety about middle school?

**Empower:** Discuss ways that they can help out a sixth grader for the day (such as eat lunch together, work on homework, do a sport, or just hang out together).

**Act:** Working with the administration, pair an eighth grade student with a sixth grader. This might be a useful activity to do at the beginning of the year and it could be expanded to more than one day. Plan interesting activities for the day or week.

**Share:** Have students reflect on the experience. Do they want to continue working with that younger student? What was easy? What was challenging?

3. Tutor Younger Students *(possible student leadership project)*

**Objective:** Students will be able to demonstrate what it means to be helpful by tutoring younger students.

**Inspire:** Ask students to think about what it means to be an effective tutor and be helpful to students who may be struggling with math, science, reading, etc.

**Empower:** Explain that they are going to tutor younger students and have them determine in what subject area they would be most comfortable tutoring another student, such as math, science, reading, etc. Consider providing some tutoring tips to the students:

- [http://www.cgc.maricopa.edu/Academics/LearningCenter/Training/Pages/Tips.aspx](http://www.cgc.maricopa.edu/Academics/LearningCenter/Training/Pages/Tips.aspx)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZPpsl79y2w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZPpsl79y2w)

**Act:** The tutoring could be done during the school day or as a drop-in tutoring time after school. If it works best to tutor during the school day, have the school counselors identify students that need tutoring and in what subject area. If it is an afterschool drop-in session, set up stations and have students choose in what subject area they want to offer tutoring. They could even make signs that show what subjects they can help with. Determine how often and how long they will mentor the younger student or offer the drop-in tutoring time. This could be a month-long project, a semester, or longer; students could meet once or twice a week or whatever works best for the students and teachers.

**Share:** Have students share their experiences. What were the challenges and the positive aspects of being a volunteer?
6 - 8 PROJECT IDEAS

INTEGRITY

Integrity Murals

Objective: Students will be able to examine what it means to show integrity and create a mural that describes ways to show integrity to display at school, a senior center, nursing home or other public place.

Inspire: Ask students what integrity means (being honest and doing the right thing when no one is looking). Then, have them share ways they can show integrity at school, at home or in the community (doing their homework, telling the truth, picking up trash on the playground, caring for someone in need, helping an elderly person cross the street, etc.) Write their suggestions on the board.

Empower: Hand out markers, crayons or colored pencils, and other materials to decorate a poster. Roll out a long sheet of butcher paper. Have students work together or independently on a section of the mural to create a picture that shows integrity. Students may want to write or draw one scene or more than one scene. Once they are done creating the mural, have them decide where they want to hang the mural.

Act: Have the students display their mural at the school or take a field trip to a nursing home or senior center to display the mural. Have them explain their specific part of the mural and why it was important to them.

Share: Challenge students to show integrity to others in the ways they drew or wrote about in the mural.

2. Handling Conflict with Integrity

Objective: Students will be able to identify ways to show integrity in their actions even during a conflict.

Inspire: Ask what it means to show integrity (Definition: Acting in a truthful way, behaving properly when no one is watching).

Empower: Have students discuss with a partner a situation (without naming names) where they have had a conflict with someone or gotten angry and upset, and then share how they handled those situations. Write their responses on the board, under columns that say Positive Ways to Handle Conflict and Negative Ways to Handle Conflict.

Act: Have students divide into groups of three or four and create a role-play that demonstrates either a positive or negative way to handle the conflict. If the role-play focuses on a negative way to handle the conflict, have the students discuss how the people in the situation could have shown integrity.

Share: Challenge students during the week to try some of the techniques for handling conflict in a way that shows integrity.
PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance Banner

**Objective:** Students will be able to discover what it means to show perseverance and create a classroom banner to record how they kept trying.

**Inspire:** Ask students what perseverance means (keep trying when something is hard). Have students share when something was hard for them and they kept trying.

**Empower:** Post a large banner on the wall with Perseverance written in large letters across the top. Consider posting the RAK Perseverance poster on the wall next to the banner. At a designated time each week, have students write or draw on the poster a situation when they kept trying and share with the class what they did.

**Act:** Encourage students to try when something is hard and to draw or write what they did on the banner.

**Share:** After a certain amount of time (or as the situations are posted) review what the students have written or drawn, and ask people how it felt to keep trying in that situation.

2. Persevering through Adversity

**Objective:** Students will be able to examine what perseverance means by discussing the life of a famous person who faced obstacles (like Helen Keller, Rosa Parks, Thomas Edison, Oprah Winfrey, Nelson Mandela, etc.)

**Inspire:** Ask what it means to show perseverance (keep going in spite of difficulties or obstacles, not giving up). Have students share with a partner a time in their lives when they showed perseverance in a difficult situation.

**Empower:** Have students read a biography about a famous person. They can all study the same person or different people. Here’s a list of people: [http://www.biographyonline.net/people/overcame-difficult-odds.html](http://www.biographyonline.net/people/overcame-difficult-odds.html)

Discuss the person’s approach to life, how they overcame enormous obstacles and how they learned to appreciate life more fully through serving others.

**Act:** Have students discuss in small groups how they can commit to doing something they know is hard and what steps they can take to make sure they will stay committed. Have them set a goal around this commitment: will they have this done in a week? A few weeks? A month? If desired, discuss the value of having a perseverance partner, someone who will help them remain committed to their goal. Then have students choose or assign a partner to check in with on a regular basis who can challenge them to persevere.

**Share:** Have students discuss what it was like to persevere. Did they reach their goal? If not, how can they continue to work to overcome obstacles? Also discuss how they can use what they learned through persevering to help others overcome the same challenge.
RESPECT

1. Respectful Team Player

**Objective:** Students will be able to evaluate and implement ways to become a respectful team member.

**Inspire:** Ask students how they can show respect when working with others and the challenges of being respectful when someone is difficult to work with.

**Empower:** Ask students to give examples of when they worked well in a group and when they have had challenges. How did they handle the situation when someone made a mistake, didn't communicate well or insulted another person? How can they show kindness and respect for members of their own team, other teams, a coach and themselves? Write on the board student suggestions for how to be more respectful in a group.

**Act:** Have students commit to trying some of these ideas when they are part of a group discussion, working on a group project, at practice for their athletic team, play rehearsal, etc.

**Share:** Have students reflect on what it felt like to implement some of the strategies. What was easy? What was difficult? How can they make the strategies a daily practice?

2. Creating a Respectful Classroom

**Objective:** Students will be able to discuss and implement ways to create a respectful classroom.

**Inspire:** Ask students to define what respect means to them and how they can show respect to others (i.e. listening without interrupting, returning things promptly, respecting privacy, treating others how you would like to be treated, showing courtesy to others, etc.)

**Empower:** Brainstorm ways to create a respectful classroom and write their ideas on the board.

**Act:** Consider having students develop a “respecting others motto” or ways they could be respectful to others and write the motto or ways they will be respectful on a sheet that is posted in the room. Then have students commit to showing respect in class in those ways. When someone feels respected, have them write that on the poster.

**Share:** After a week, a month (or whatever the class decides), have students talk about what it felt like to show respect to others. Did focusing on respect make a difference? Were people trying to be more respectful?

3. Respect Journals

**Objective:** Students will be able to examine ways to show respect to themselves and others through journaling.

**Inspire:** Ask what it means to show respect to themselves and others. Write some of these ideas on the board, like: treating others how you would like to be treated, resolving conflicts nonviolently, and showing courtesy and consideration to others.

**Empower:** Have students discuss with a partner a recent situation where they treated themselves or others with respect or someone showed them respect.

**Act:** Once a week for a month or longer, have students write in a journal completing a sentences stem like:

- "When talking with other people, I can show respect by...
- "When people make fun of me, I feel...
- "My parents or the people I live with know I respect them...
- "My parents or the people I live with respect me by...
- "I can be a better listener by...
- "People show their respect for me when...
- "Insulting others is...
- "My friends know I respect them when...
- "My friends respect me by...

Have students commit to showing respect in the ways they wrote about in their journals.

**Share:** Have students discuss what they learned from writing about respect and trying to be respectful to others.
RESPONSIBILITY

1. Canned Food Drive

Objective: Students will be able to demonstrate responsibility to the community through a canned food drive.
Inspire: Ask students how they have shown responsibility at home or in their community.
Empower: Explain that one way to show responsibility is to collect food for those in need. Then ask for ideas for how to organize the food drive.
Act: Plan and hold a canned food drive at your school and deliver the food to your local food bank or shelters for the homeless. Have the students make kindness cards to include with the canned food delivery.
Share: Ask students to share what it felt like to show responsibility to those in their community who don’t have enough food.

2. Coat, Glove, Hat Drive

Objective: Students will be able to demonstrate responsibility to the community through a coat drive.
Inspire: Ask students how they have shown responsibility at home or in their community.
Empower: Explain that one way to show responsibility is to collect new and used gloves, hats and coats during the winter to donate to those who need them. Then discuss ways to organize the collection of the winter clothing, determining whether to work with the whole school community to expand the project. Another idea would be to work closely with the student council on the project.
Act: Plan and hold a coat drive at your school and deliver the coats, gloves and hats to shelters for the homeless.
Share: Ask students to share what it felt like to show responsibility to those in their community who need clothes to stay warm in the winter.

SELF-CARE

Forgiving Others

Objective: Students will be able to evaluate what it means to forgive others and determine some ways to forgive.
Inspire: Discuss as a class what it means to forgive others. What makes it challenging? Is it easier to forgive some people or situations than others? Explain to the students that while it may be difficult, it’s important not to respond impulsively or reactively to the situation. It’s important to calm down until you are ready to talk to the person. If something big or hard has happened, it may take awhile to calm down. Or, they may be ready right away to move through some steps toward forgiveness (you may want to write these on the board or project them):
• Accept what they have done, because you can’t change the past.
• Let your feelings out in a positive way, such as writing them down.
• Talk with an adult you trust or a friend about what happened and figure out whether you are ready to forgive.
• Tell the person how you feel in a calm and clear way. Explain, don’t blame, i.e. “I felt hurt when ____________.”
• Ask the person to make things right.
• Reflect on the situation in a way that is personally meaningful to you.
• Forgive the person with words either directly or silently: “I forgive you” and let it go.
• Find a way to do something kind for the person.
• Check in with your feelings. Do you feel better? If so, move on. If not, start over from Step 1.
Empower: Have students discuss with a partner a situation or person they need to forgive and walk through the steps to forgiveness suggested above.
Act: Have the students write a note to the person they want to forgive or find a time to talk to that person.
Share: Ask the students to share what it was like to forgive that person and how the person responded.
SELF-DISCIPLINE

Kindness Flower Bed

Objective: Students will be able to develop self-discipline by planting a flower bed.
Inspire: Ask students to explain what it means to show self-discipline.
Empower: Explain that they will be asked to show discipline by creating a Kindness Flower Bed.
Act: With the help of other classes and the school community, plan and create a flower bed on the school grounds. Assign jobs to different classes. Ask the school community or local merchants to donate flowers, dirt, wood to build the beds, shovels, work gloves, etc. Create and display a Kindness Plaque with kindness quotes collected by the class. Also plan how to maintain the project through weekly weedings.
Share: Ask what it felt like to create a Kindness Flower Bed for the school and what they learned about self-discipline. Have students continue to care for the flower bed.

ALL KINDNESS CONCEPTS

1. Kindness Posters/Zone

Objective: Students will be able to examine what it means to be kind by creating and displaying posters.
Inspire: Ask students for examples of how they can show kindness in their home or community.
Empower: Divide students into groups of five. Hand out a poster board and markers to each group. Explain that as a group, they need to develop one idea to put on the poster that encourages others to be kind. Explain that simple is better. Some examples “Help an elderly person cross the street.” or “Be responsible at school.” or “Respect your teacher.” or “Smile and show a friend you care.”
Act: Allow time for students to create and decorate their poster. Decide as a class when they are going to hold up signs around school, such as during lunch, after school or during a passing period. Then have them display their posters.
Share: After they display their posters, ask them what it felt like to encourage others to be kind with their posters.

2. Random Acts of Kindness Club

Objective: Students will be able to describe what kindness means by creating a Random Acts of Kindness Club.
Inspire: Ask students for examples of ways they can show kindness to others. Write their examples on the board.
Empower: Have students discuss with a partner which ways of showing kindness are easy for them and which ways are difficult.
Act: Start a Random Acts of Kindness Club and commit to doing at least one Random Act of Kindness per week.
Share: Record the activities in a class journal or on a poster and prepare to read entries to your class. Ask students what it felt like to do random acts of kindness.
3. Random Acts of Kindness Week Activities *(all school activity)*

**Objective:** Students will be able to discover what it means to be kind through RAK Week activities.
**Inspire:** Before RAK Week in February, have students talk about how they can show kindness at school and in their community. Figure out ways that K–2 students can work with students in grades 3–5 to develop the list of activities and determine each grade’s role in those activities. Activities could include: trash pick-up, visiting a senior home, homeless shelter, children’s hospital to share Valentines or sing, raising money for an animal shelter, etc.
**Empower:** Have the school’s student council or RAK Club sponsor an activity each day during RAK Week and announce the events each morning over the intercom.
**Act:** Do the activities that are suggested for the day or week.
**Share:** Reflect on what it was like to work together as a school to spread kindness.

4. Kindness Check Lists *(for RAK Week)*

**Objective:** Students will be able to examine what it means to be kind through showing kindness to others.
**Inspire:** Ask students for examples of how to be kind. Write those ideas on the board.
**Empower:** During RAK Week, have students create an individual checklist of at least five ways they will be kind during RAK Week. Activities could include: helping neighbors weed their lawns, picking up litter, smiling and saying thank you to the bus driver and doing anything else that is kind. For more ideas, check out our database.
**Act:** Have students share kindness in the five ways they wrote down on their checklist.
**Share:** Ask students what it felt like to show kindness during RAK Week and what they learned.

5. Searching for and Publishing Kindness Stories

**Objective:** Students will be able to examine what kindness means through gathering and writing stories about kindness.
**Inspire:** Ask what it means to show kindness to others.
**Empower:** Then have students share with a partner a story of when they have been kind or seen someone be kind. Also have students search for kindness stories on the Internet.
**Act:** Have students type up their stories and create a website (or a book) with their stories and link to others that they find on the Internet. Share the link with other classes and ask them to contribute kindness stories as well. Considering asking whether these stories can be shared during morning announcements (without using names).
**Share:** Ask students what it was like to talk about and share kindness with others.
PROJECT TITLE: ________________________________

DATE TO FINISH PROJECT: ________________________________

PROJECT GOAL: ________________________________

MATERIALS NEEDED:
1 ________________________________
2 ________________________________
3 ________________________________
4 ________________________________
5 ________________________________

PROJECT STEPS:
1 ________________________________
2 ________________________________
3 ________________________________
4 ________________________________
5 ________________________________
6 ________________________________