

Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Clubs

Explore these RAK Club ideas for students and staff.

Feel free to adapt these ideas to your own campus environment, and keep us posted about your kindness activities!

CONTENTS

Forming a RAK Club

For Teachers	2
For Students	2
Certificate	2
Goals	2
Officers	2
Promoting Your Club	2
Ideas	2
RAK Week	2
Create a Kindness Website	3
Fundraising	3
Motivational Kindness Slogans	3

Reports from RAK Clubs	3
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RAK Club Corner

Add Your RAK Club Activity Descriptions!	7
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FORMING a RAK CLUB

TEACHERS

The best place to begin is often within your own classroom. Start talking to your students about Random Acts of Kindness, and perhaps give them an assignment to do an act of kindness and write about it.

Gather interest from your students who may want to be involved in a club, and help them get on their way! The initial group of students forming the club should have a brainstorming session to see what the students are interested in, what motivates their fellow students, and how the RAK Club can best reach out to your school and community.

The members of your club can choose an activity from any part of this guide or other documents in our Education or Community section. They can also brainstorm their own ideas, tailored to the needs of their school or community.

STUDENTS

First, gather a few students who are interested in starting a RAK Club.

Talk to the school's activity director or the principal or vice principal about what steps need to be taken to officially start your RAK Club. There may be special school requirements or specific people whom you need to talk to before you can start a club.

Find a teacher, school administrator, or parent who is willing to act as the club's advisor. An advisor is essential to help keep you on the right track and to offer suggestions when you get stuck.

CERTIFICATE: Let us know you've formed a club! Call us at (800) 660-2811, and we will mail you a Random Acts of Kindness™ Club Certificate.

GOALS: Develop a set of goals and ideas that will help you in the first weeks of the club's existence. Allow these goals and ideas to change and evolve over time as your club becomes more organized and your membership grows. For guidance in writing a purpose and set of goals for your RAK Club, read the following sample mission statements:

- To constantly remind every person in our high school to perform at least one Random Act of Kindness every day.
- To build self-esteem and raise school morale by showing every person at our school that he or she really can make a difference.
- To bring everyone at our school together in a cooperative, caring way.
- To remind everyone to look for the good in people and praise it — all the time!

OFFICERS: If you have a large group, form a team of leading officers to perform different tasks.

PROMOTING YOUR RAK CLUB: Advertise the RAK Club to the entire school and give a time and date for the first meeting. The "not so random" planned events are to promote awareness in the school so students can use it as a launching pad for doing kind acts every day on their own. Refer to the slogans further on in this section to help you promote your RAK Club. You might have a poster or bookmark contest incorporating a kindness slogan.

IDEAS: Use the activity ideas in this guide as a starting point for planning your club's activities, and call us if you need more suggestions. Be sure to brainstorm any new ideas, try them out, and report back to the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation. We are always looking to pass along new, successful RAK activity ideas!

RAK WEEK: Be sure to include RAK Week as one of your RAK Club's primary projects. RAK Week is an ideal opportunity to plan some wonderful activities for your club within your school and in the community. It's also a great way to promote your RAK Club throughout the school and involve the entire student body in your activities.

CREATE A KINDNESS WEBSITE: Use one of the simple templates on our website to announce to other RAK clubs and educators your club kindness activities and to share kindness photos, stories, etc.

FUNDRAISING: Discuss fundraising ideas; ask your teacher advisor for guidance on this. Your RAK activities should not be too costly; there are many fun ideas to make a little money for your club. Some traditional school fundraising events are candy sales, car washes, and raffles. You can also look to your community, merchants, and corporations for support. Make sure all activity ideas and events are approved by the appropriate school authorities beforehand.

MOTIVATIONAL KINDNESS SLOGANS

(can be used on posters, flyers, bulletin boards, newsletters, etc. — a great way to promote your RAK Club!):

- Kindness is a gift you give to others.
- Spread kindness to everyone you meet.
- Kindness — Pass it on!
- Kindness begins like a ripple of water.
- Make friends with kindness.
- Kindness makes your heart glow!
- Kindness is...being a friend to someone who doesn't have one.
- Kindness connects us all.
- Kindness is...helping when someone is in trouble.
- Paws for Kindness (if you have an animal mascot).
- Imagine...a world filled with kindness!



REPORTS FROM RAK CLUBS

Following are a few of the reports we have received from our many RAK Clubs. Some clubs concentrate on one activity, while other clubs are larger and become involved in many activities. **Please do not be overwhelmed by the activities of some of these clubs. Rather, start small, and allow your club to grow organically as the members discover their collective power to make a difference through kindness.**

Among the various projects listed below, you may find just the right activity for your RAK Club.

Planting Flowers — Random Acts of Kindness Club members planted flowers on the school grounds. Most of the students had never planted anything before. They were thrilled to tend their flowering plants, watch them grow, and make their school a beautiful place. —NJ

Canine RAK — Random Acts of Kindness Club members baked dog biscuits and arranged with an animal shelter for a class visit. The students fed the dogs their treats, brushed them, walked them, and played with them. —NC



SSAK — SSAK (Students Spreading Acts of Kindness) promotes “kindness, not violence” and is offered by the guidance counselor. Its mission is to perform acts of kindness, not only within the school but throughout the community. Last year nearly 50 students attended this elective class that met twice a week for 40-minute sessions. SSAK projects quickly expanded to include the entire school population (740 students, parents, staff, and faculty). Projects completed were student driven and therefore were quite successful.

They recently received two awards as a result of this class. One was \$3,000 and will give the class a chance to research charities as well as perform additional acts of kindness. The group will decide how this money will be used.

This year's class consists of second and third grade students. The initial project was making red, white, and blue ribbons and cards for the faculty members. Some of the projects from last year were:

- Penny-Nickel Challenge: SSAK challenged all local schools to collect pennies and nickels for The Make-A-Wish Foundation. Nearly \$3,000 was collected in all as a result of this challenge. Children genuinely wanted to help other children with life-threatening illnesses.
- Pen Pals: SSAK formed a pen pal relationship with a local senior center. Students and seniors exchanged letters twice a month, learning about careers, historical events, and the evolution of technology. The semi-annual project culminated with a field trip/holiday celebration to the senior center, bringing handmade gifts from SSAK members. Students not only increased their writing skills, they developed compassion and understanding for elderly individuals.
- Teddy Bear Collection: Over 300 new and “bearly” new stuffed teddy bears were collected and delivered to Florida Hospital’s Child Life program and Arnold Palmer’s Children’s Unit. Another 275 stuffed animals were collected and given to local missions and shelters.

Students raised money to pay for the field trip by hosting Valentine lollipop sales, donut sales, and a drama night production. The money raised through these activities allowed them to also pay for and make personalized teddy bears (for ill children) at the Build-A-Bear Workshop in Orlando. Students then took a field trip to deliver the items to the hospital.

- R.O.C.K-a-thon (Reaching Out to Cancer Kids): Students organized and participated in a school-wide relay race involving jumping over hurdles and maneuvering through tires. Pledges were raised in order to send a child with cancer to camp with his/her family. \$5,152.58 was raised to send five children and their families to camp.
- Painting project: Students and their families gathered on a weekend to help paint a Habitat for Humanity house. In addition, they provided a large variety of snacks and treats for a group of over 50 volunteers. The students were so excited about this. Later, they brought house warming gifts to the homeowner.
- Other projects included creating Thanksgiving and Easter baskets for families in need, collecting pop tabs for The Ronald McDonald House, and organizing a clothing drive for Goodwill. The students also collected pumpkins for their peers needing an act of kindness. Money was raised to buy Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas gifts for over three dozen children and families. Finally, they sent over 350 cards/letters to veterans to let them know how much they are appreciated. —FL



Goodwill Kids Club — A middle school in Sanborn, NY, has had a Goodwill Kids Club for four years. They do forty service activities during the year. They have 100 members in the club, and it is growing consistently. Membership is voluntary.

After five activities, the members get a T-shirt (that cannot be bought), and they are announced and congratulated over the public address system in the morning. Each member volunteered 110 hours last year (2000-2001).

The club was formed after the death of a seventh grade child. Club members sold stars for \$1 each in honor of the student. They sold 1,000, then reordered and sold 1,000 more, then 1,000 more. People put the stars in their windows. The students raised \$3500 and funded an entire Disney World wish for a terminally ill child.

Every first Saturday, they do a food shuttle run from Wagner’s and get cakes, etc., that would be put into the dumpster. They bring the food to a shelter in Buffalo. The students prepare food and serve 300 people a meal, drink, and dessert. It’s always an eye-opener for the students.

Once a year, the students make 1,000 sandwiches for the poor at a community mission center in Niagara Falls.



During autumn 2001, they:

- raised \$2000 for Red Cross, which was matched by a bank to equal \$4,000.
- sold patriotic T-shirts for United Way.
- collected clothes, socks, cards for rescue workers thru Salvation Army.
- cleaned the beach in Ft. Niagara.
- gathered coats for the poor.
- provided 470 gifts from tags on a tree, for the needy from six local agencies and a reservation. They learned later that the young recipients exclaimed with delight, “Santa found us!” as they discovered the tree and gifts.
- created craft items for patients at Children’s Hospital.

These activities bond both the students and parents who are involved. —NY

Various Ideas — A teen kindness club meets weekly to talk about kind acts they have done and plan future acts of kindness. They:

- distributed chocolate hugs to whole school
- had a car wash and bake sale, with 50% of proceeds going to victims of a nearby apartment fire
- initiated a welcome committee so new transfer students can shadow a current student. —OR

RAK Initiative Group — The young women at a high school in Ontario, Canada, did the following kind acts as part of their Random Acts of Kindness Initiative. Their work continues. They:

- bought lunch for homeless people
- shoveled the snow for a neighbor
- took pasta over to neighbor and left it by the door
- surprised family by making them cookies
- baked goods and sang holiday carols, for the patients and staff at a nursing home
- made gingerbread cookies for the children at a local hospital
- spent time with a grandfather at hospital
- donated \$100, as well as cookies, to a local women's shelter
- wrote unsigned thank you letter to the drama teacher for her hard work on a recent school production
- sent holiday card to a friend that they hadn't seen in awhile
- helped with holiday dinner
- sent cookies to the school secretary anonymously
- brought candy canes to a first grade class
- after using the school washroom, a student picked up all the garbage and toilet paper lying around to help the janitors at the end of the day
- helped parents with holiday party
- wrote thank you letter to a nurse who takes care of their mother
- donated clothes to the Salvation Army
- family bought children (of a parent who is in prison) some presents
- cleaned the house while family was out
- gave presents to a less fortunate family
- sent cards of kindness to friends in distress
- gave scarves to homeless men in Toronto



Months with a Theme — A high school RAK Society does a different project each month:

- **Sep:** Domestic Violence Awareness (coordinated with the local safe house) — RAK members collected toys, books, and travel toiletries for victims of violence; participated in a candlelight vigil held in honor of victims of domestic violence; heard a guest speaker discuss facts and myths about domestic violence.
- **Oct:** Disaster Relief Drive for the victims September 11th — Money was collected for the American Red Cross in New York and Washington, D.C. The RAK Society also sponsored a Pennies for Patients campaign to collect pennies for cancer research and treatment of cancer patients.
- **Nov:** Annual Can-a-thon — They collected 289 cans of food for the Salvation Army for Thanksgiving. RAK members also campaigned for Kindness for All. RAK members did ten RAKs on World Kindness Day, including making copies for teachers, cleaning the school grounds, helping host Parent/Teacher Day, tutoring ESL students, painting the school mailbox, helping teachers with a survey, cleaning the library, running errands for teachers and staff, and writing letters of appreciation to businesses for supporting the school team during football season.
- **Dec:** They took an angel from the Angel Tree and bought holiday gifts for children. They also collected money each Friday during English classes to purchase a bicycle for a member of the community who needed one for exercising after an extended illness.
- **Jan:** Child Abuse Prevention — They participated in an essay contest sponsored by the safe house and distributed

ribbons in honor of victims of child abuse.

- **Feb:** Books — RAK members read their favorite stories to children at the elementary school. They also helped decorate for Dr. Seuss's birthday at the elementary school. They sponsored a school wide reading time at the high school.
- **Mar:** Random Acts of Kindness Month — The members rewarded students and teachers for their continual acts of kindness by having a special event each day of RAK Week. On Monday, smiley pencils were given to students and teachers. Tuesday began with a special smiley song composed by RAK members and sponsors that was sung to everyone over the school intercom. Everyone received candy.

On Wednesday, club members distributed smiley buttons to fellow students. On Thursday, yellow ribbons were given to students and teachers to wear and to tie on car antennas in honor of RAK. Friday was proclaimed Smiley Day, and everyone was encouraged to wear yellow.

The first annual Decorate a Smiley contest was held. Smiley faces adorned the halls, and students and teachers enjoyed sharing their creative smiley faces. The student who had decorated the most creative and original smiley received ten dollars and a smiley certificate. The winner and the winning smiley face were featured in the community newspaper as well as in the school paper. Smiley cookies were served during lunch. The day ended with a kindness dedication of poems that had been composed by RAK members to students and teachers who had done exceptional acts of kindness throughout the year.



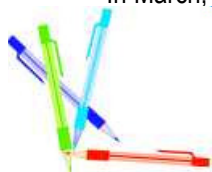
- **Apr:** Annual Children's Hospital Drive — During the past five years, RAK members have collected over \$1,200 for this cause.
- **May:** May Day — A Random Acts of Kindness award is given to the student whom the student body has chosen as one who exemplifies kindness. The RAK award is one of the most cherished awards at our high school. In addition to sponsoring and promoting these projects, the RAK Society helps people throughout the school year.

Cards, candy, balloons, or flowers are sent to students, teachers, and staff when one is sick, hurt, or has a death in the family. The RAK Society also assists monetarily at times. The RAK jug is always visible, and students contribute to it every day. —AL

PIO Society — This Pass It On Society of about 80 students engages in a variety of kindness activities. They call themselves the PIO Society as sort of a Fraternity/Sorority reference. They operate on the "premise that high school students face so much stress and anxiety that there is a great need to create bright spots in their days through simple Random Acts of Kindness" (Brian, PIO Moderator). Here are some of their activities. which are all student run. Recipients of kind acts are encouraged to pass the kindness on to others.

- Quarterly, the members paint posters with inspirational sayings and kindness quotes for the school hallways.
- Once a month they give out quotation cards with similar sayings. The cards are printed on photo paper (so they last longer) on the computer and are business card size. Students tape these into their notebooks and post them in their lockers.
- In September and May, they give out free Otter Pops, donated by parents. These get lots of smiles on a hot day. In December and January, they have hot chocolate and hot apple cider mornings. In March, they give away 500 carnations donated by a local florist.

- They have a teddy bear drive for a children's home. They provided over 500 stuffed animals for abused children for the holidays.
- This year they gave out 400 Pass It On pens during Welcome Week. Each pen has an inspirational quote on the side.



Brian says, "I would like to thank you for the Teacher's Guide, which we use regularly in our search for new activities." —CA

RAK CLUB CORNER

Valenkind's Day

Submitted by Susan (New Jersey)

I am the advisor of our school's PEPP Club (Peers Educating Peers Positively), and we are sponsoring a Kindness Awareness Week. We have several activities planned.

- Students are creating bumper stickers with messages & quotes of kindness to place throughout the school.
- The week before Valentine's Day, students are selling carnations along with a Heartprint—a card that will leave a kind message or thought for another student. These will be delivered on the day we call Valenkind's Day.
- Proceeds from our sale will be donated to "Pennies for Patients," which is a national fundraiser for the leukemia & lymphoma society.

School-Wide Kindness

Submitted by Kelly (Washington)

As a school counselor, I try to do a school wide project every year at our elementary school. I received information about your foundation and thought I could base my school wide project on Random Acts of Kindness. So here is how it works.

1. We have bi-monthly themes that give us a focus for our Random Acts of Kindness:

- **Sept/Oct:** citizenship and friendship
- **Nov/Dec:** older adults and family
- **Jan/Feb:** community and other schools
- **Mar/Apr:** school staff and volunteers
- **May/Jun:** animals and community as a whole

2. I teach a school wide lesson in every classroom the first week of every month, related to the above themes.

- **Oct:** the power of unkind words and how they leave "crinkles" in our hearts
- **Nov:** woven thank-you flags that are sent to the local veterans hospital. Read the book *The Wall* by Eve Bunting
- **Dec:** lesson on diversity among families and situations, in conjunction with food drive with PTSA.
- **Jan:** Peace Cranes, in conjunction with an elementary school in Taiwan. We will make origami peace cranes with peace messages on them and send them to our host school in Taiwan.

The other months are in formulation at this time. We'll be working with the humane society sometime in May and working with community people for some of the other lessons. I just adapt the same lesson to fit all students at our school so they are learning the same message.

3. RAK Club: This is a club that is for third through fifth graders. The club is based on service learning and community service. The kids have a three-step process (some writing, some getting signatures from staff members and signing a contract) to be part of the RAK Club. (I can send you more information or examples if needed.)

Through this process, I get responsible kids who are going to make the club successful. The kids in the club will brainstorm some service learning projects, and then we will implement them. Another thing they will do is to deliver the items that the school wide lessons produce to the people in need (e.g., pictures to senior homes, etc.).

The kids get special things for being in the club as well. They receive badges that are similar to our "security badges" that the staff wear. They also get special surprises. I had a local farm donate small pumpkins for all the students in the RAK Club, so they are in on the receiving end of RAK as well.

4. RAK Weekly Awards: I have staff and students on the lookout for RAK throughout the week. They have nomination forms to nominate students that they see doing RAKs around the school. Staff members are also awarded RAKs, and parent volunteers can be nominated as well.

The awards are announced over the intercom on Friday mornings with a RAK announcement or reminder. The child receives an award, a candy treat, and their picture is taken. The picture is put on a construction paper brick with their name and RAK. Each week the kids are seeing that brick wall grow, and they want their face and RAK on the wall. I am hoping to cover a large area by the end of the school year.

5. Buddy System: I had teachers buddy up with a needy student who needs extra attention or support. They agreed to eat lunch with their buddy once a month to check in and see how they are doing.

6. Staff RAKs: to increase RAKs and morale among the staff. The principal and I are always providing RAKs for the staff. A local coffee stand offered to come to the school and make all the teachers lattes/ coffee drinks one morning. Another thing we are going to do is randomly give a teacher an extra half hour and take over their class so they can have some extra time one day.

Teachers actually do not have a lot to do with this project, when it comes down to it. I think that is why it has been successful so far this year. They just support the program that I am running and continue the teaching in their classroom once I have left for the month. It really has been great.

I hope this gives you more of an explanation of our project. There is definitely more to it, but that is at least the skeleton of the project.

Note posted later about getting the staff involved:

I have gotten the whole staff involved and on board. We are using Random Acts of Kindness as a school wide project throughout the entire year. It is our main and primary focus. There are quite a few branches of how that is being implemented throughout the school.

The staff has been receptive to the idea because I end up doing a lot of the work and they just help me implement. There is one school wide lesson I teach to all grades each month. Once I teach the lesson, they use my offshoot ideas to continue the teaching of the idea for the month. There is RAK club, and its main purpose is to do service learning projects. Teachers help provide adult chaperones for field trips, etc. We have weekly RAK awards that everyone at the school can be awarded (staff included).

You just need someone willing to take the time to implement and do the leg work, because teachers have enough to do.

RAK Clubs

Submitted by Dr. Jean Allen, Tristan's Quest

Our nonprofit organization works with children with behavioral and emotional challenges. In the fall of last year we got a grant and started two Random Acts of Kindness Clubs in two of the self-contained classrooms in our school system.

What a marvelous experience! We have seen young, little lives be turned around because of our program.

This year I am proud to say that we got funded again for the RAK Club program and have added one additional classroom at another school. We have had two articles in our local newspaper (I'll forward copies to you) and the children are well into their kindness activities this year!

All three schools where we have a Random Acts of Kindness Club will be celebrating World Kindness Week next week, and our kids are getting a chance to be leaders in a school wide activity!

We put together a PowerPoint presentation about all of the clubs' activities last school year and have shown it to various organizations and faith groups here in our community. We shared the success of our RAK Club model with many special education teachers at the 53rd North Carolina Exceptional Children's Conference last week.

I just wanted to take the time to thank you. We are gaining momentum here! Kindness...pass it on!

Incognito Students for RAK

Submitted by Chad, high school student (Alabama)

We usually try to make the day of a person who is down better. We usually know what is going on because we have a small high school of about 500 people including staff.

We give cards on everyone's birthday and give gifts, such as candles and other neat things to students and teachers having a rough time.

Our latest gift was to a teacher that is having a baby and was put on bed rest. We gave her and a husband a gift certificate to a local restaurant.

We sign everything we give "RAK." No one knows what that means, and suspense is building at Deshler High School. The cool thing is no one knows who is in it, either. We even have our own hand signals and handshake; it is so much fun.

We learned about RAK from a cool teacher, Mrs. Turner. It is our third block class that started it, and so far, that is all that is in it.

Kindness Community Outreach

Submitted by Betsy (Indiana)

In early December, I contact the director of our local food pantry. She was down to five cans of food on the shelves.

Our Kids Care Club began a can drive for the next two weeks. We made it a contest between classes, with the prize being an ice cream party. At the end of the campaign, we had collected over 4,000 cans of food. On December 14th, the kids stayed after school to help load the food. I heard remarks like, "Some child won't go hungry now."

We have another project for March for the food pantry. We are sponsoring a soup supper and canned food drive. We have opened our project to the public, and many local business have donated items for the supper. We hope to sell at least 500 tickets to the event. A local bank has offered to be a drop-off site for canned goods for us.

The children also had a read-a-thon and collected \$221 to give to our local Angel Tree Project here in Tipton, Indiana.

RAK Club in China

Submitted by Valerie Nathanson (originally of Canada)

My name is Valerie Nathanson, and I am a Canadian educator teaching at an international school (grades preschool to high school) in Shekou, Shenzhen, People's Republic of China.

Back in February, I asked student volunteers to come to a "Kindness Committee" meeting. That is all I said; I did not try to convince anyone to come. Eight little nine- and ten-year-old girls came to it. From that first meeting, our RAK club has grown

to include the whole upper school and even the staff.

What kinds of things have we done?

- We sold candygrams during Valentine's Week [which is also Random Acts of Kindness Week] to raise money to sponsor an Appreciation Luncheon for the most under appreciated members in our school: the cleaning staff, the security guards, and the bus drivers. We served them their favorite foods in a room decorated with candles, flowers, and music. The students spent time learning how to serve with excellence before the luncheon. One of the guards told us afterwards that if we ever decided to open a restaurant it would be a SIX star restaurant, because we not only served their stomachs, but also their hearts and memories. This luncheon was the highlight of many of their entire lives, he said, and they would remember it forever.
Unexpectedly, our luncheon became a recruitment tool for many other students wanting to join our RAK Club.
- Each class in our school drew the name of another class out of a hat, and we committed a RAK to them. For example, our nine-year-olds surprised the six-year-olds with a goldfish bowl, which held ten fish and lots of food. Much excitement there in that class! Our senior high students delivered congratulatory roses to each student in the kindergarten after they performed "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" for their parents and other classes.
- Our club sponsored a drive for personal hygiene items for the homeless people of Shenzhen. Our goal was 100 items. By the end of the week we had collected over 530 tubes of toothpaste, combs, brushes, toothbrushes, bottles of soap, shampoo, nail clippers, etc.
- A group of students visited the Nanshan Social Welfare Center, an elder citizens' home. We stayed and visited them for several hours, and even though we spoke very little of one another's language, smiles and laughs and hugs and friendship were shared by all. We are planning a return visit with many more surprises in store for them.
- We are now in the midst of planning a Strawberry Tea dessert party charity fundraiser, the proceeds of which will be going to help disadvantaged schoolchildren in rural China.

Our club has grown from eight members and a teacher to almost the entire school community....all upper level children, most of the elementary, and the staff. We plan on getting involved with the Asia Animals efforts to free the moon bears as a year long project for us. The culmination will be a trip to the sanctuary, where we will work for several days.

We are the QSI International School of Shekou Random Acts of Kindness Club. Please include us on your RAK Club list.

Would you like to contribute a RAK Club activity or some project ideas to this document? Please email your RAK Club experiences to info@actsofkindness.org and specify RAK Club in the subject field. We'd love to hear from you!