Simple Acts of Kindness

What goes around comes around - and with kindness it really does. Research shows that being kind to others increases our own levels of happiness as well as theirs. What's more, it has a domino effect - kindness is contagious, so it makes our communities nicer places to be. Recent research into brain functioning has confirmed that we are hard-wired for love and compassion. So it's not all about chasing individual success - our communities and society flourish when people look out for each other.

When we're kind to people we know it strengthens our connections with them and provides a source of support. Research shows that we may benefit from giving support more than those receiving it - and we're also more likely to get support in return when we need it. This may not be like-for-like support, or even from the same person, but being kind to others builds a wider support network which increases well-being all round.

Doing kind things for strangers helps build co-operation, trust and a sense of safety in our communities. It also helps us to see others more positively and empathize with them. These are the foundations of a thriving local community and a flourishing society - one which builds well-being all round.

Kindness can be as simple as a smile, a thank-you or a word of encouragement. It's a way of connecting, even if only for a brief moment, with those we pass in our daily lives. It doesn't have to cost anything or take much time - what's important is that it's an act of genuine care and thoughtfulness for another person. Kind acts can be spur of the moment, like when we notice someone in need. For example, we might give up our seat on the train or pick up and return someone's glove when they drop it. Opportunities to be kind pop up all over the place - like handing on a newspaper we've finished reading, letting someone take our parking space or passing on an unused ticket.

Kind acts can also be thought through in advance - planning to do something for a friend, neighbor or loved one or because we want to spread some daily joy. There are unlimited ways to be kind to others - we only need to keep your eyes open and pay attention to those around us to start seeing opportunities to help.

To be kind, it's important for us to be aware of the people around us - and to notice their needs and feelings. We all have an innate compassion but sometimes it takes bit of time for us to tune into it. As the Dalai Lama says: "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible."

1. Plan for kindness - Do some thinking about what you might do to spread some kindness - then you're more likely to spot opportunities when they come up. Make yourself a list of small actions you could take in your daily life - they don't have to cost any money at all. Think about people you know and others that you pass by in the course of the day. What could you do today or tomorrow? What do you feel drawn to doing? There are lots of ideas below to get you thinking.

2. Have a kindness day - On a particular day, perhaps once a week, try to perform at least 5 different acts of kindness for different people. Make these things that you wouldn't ordinarily do. Afterwards, think: How did you feel after you did each act? How do you feel at the end of the day? You could also do this as a challenge with friends and get together in the evening to talk about what you got up to. Go on spread a little kindness!

3. Do it together - Try to think about kind things you could do with friends, family or neighbors. You can swap ideas and support each other. Doing new things together helps build connections, which also increases happiness, so it's a win all round. If you've got children, get them thinking about what they can do too. Ask them what kind acts they gave or received that day - they might share some lovely stories with you!
Finding Joy in Your Life

Life is a journey down smooth paths, rocky roads and downright treacherous terrain. Joy comes naturally during the easy times of life, but it takes effort to find moments of happiness during adversity. Here are six ways to find joy during the entirety of life’s journey.

Enjoy the good times
When things are going really well in your life, enjoy yourself. This is a time to build memories that will sustain you during difficulties. Capture these moments by taking pictures or writing in your journal. Keep mementos in a treasure box so that you can take them out from time to time and reminisce. Focus on the positive aspects of your experiences and ignore minor mishaps. Science Daily reports that viewing past experiences positively can improve your happiness. Building happy memories now can help you through the more challenging times in your life.

Nurture your relationships
Nothing has greater potential to make us happy than our relationships with others. USA Today says that the happiest people surround themselves with friends and family. Materialism is toxic to happiness because it tends to create competition with others.

Nurture your relationships and build a good support system that will sustain you during adversity. Do not be afraid to let others help you through your trials.

Show gratitude
Gratitude is recognizing the abundance and blessings in your life, even in the midst of difficulties. It is appreciating the things that you have. It is savoring the moment and not taking things for granted. It is finding the hidden blessings in unexpected challenges. PsychCentral.com reports that expressing gratitude not only makes people happier, it can increase energy and improve health. In addition, grateful people are hopeful, empathetic, helpful and forgiving.

Live in the moment
There are moments of joy in even the most painful times of life. Look for them. It can be a baby’s smile, a phone call from a friend, a funny TV show, a beautiful sunrise or a sudden summer shower. You need respite from the pain. Open your heart to these moments and rest in them.

Embrace nature
Nature is good for our health and well-being. Canadian science writer, David Suzuki says that spending time in nature can reduce blood pressure, anxiety and stress levels. It improves your sleep, increases your vigor and boosts your immune system.

Exercise
Most of us know that regular exercise improves our health and helps us maintain a healthy weight. Exercise can also make us happier. FitDay.com says that exercise lowers stress and anxiety, which lowers cortisol levels in the body. In addition, endorphins are released when you exercise. Endorphins stimulate the brain, reduce pain, lower stress and boost feelings of happiness. You can increase your happiness from exercise by working out with others or combining exercise with nature. Anytime you feel the need for a shot of happiness, put on your running shoes and take a jog around the park.

Life is full of pain and sorrow as well as ease and happiness. Those difficult times can make us relish the good times all the more. Embrace your life here, where you are now, and enjoy the journey.

We must have all Wellness Certification Forms and Income Review Forms (including SS Statement or bank statement) by the end of December.

If you haven’t already done so, please bring the forms to your December workshop, or mail them to arrive no later than the end of this month.
Holiday Workshops

SEACOAST
Wednesday, December 14th at 11:00 AM
(Note time change)
First Parish United Church, Somersworth

CONCORD
Wednesday, December 21st at 10am
Friends Conference Room

LAKE'S REGION
Thursday, December 15th at 12:00
Sacred Heart Parish
31 Gilford Ave Laconia (building behind the
Church offices on corner of Union and Gilford)

NASHUA
Tuesday, December 13th at 10:00 AM
St. Philip’s Greek Orthodox Church
500 W. Hollis St., Nashua

MANCHESTER
Wednesday, December 21st at 9:30 AM
Manchester Christian Church
1308 Wellington Rd., Manchester

HAMPSTEAD/DERRY
Thursday, December 22nd at 1:00 PM
Hampstead Library

Please remember your pot-luck contribution!

Welcome New Foster Grandparents!
Jacqueline Fulton ~ Belmont Elementary
Linda Brooks ~ Paul Smith School
Marie Hinchee ~ SNHS Early Head Start

December Anniversaries
Years of service
Joan Henry 3
Edwina Hunnings 4
Marie Monier 4

Friends Program
December Holidays!
Monday, December 26th
Tuesday, December 27th
Friday, December 30th

The Pay Period Schedule for 2017 is included! A list of the agency’s holidays is included on the back.
Wishing you and your families peace, joy, and love this holiday season.

Foster Grandparent Program
~ Annie, Dee, Nancy, and Margo
FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

2017 PAY PERIOD SCHEDULE

Please fax or email timesheets on the Fridays listed below to: FAX: 226-3884, Email: ssilva@friendsprogram.org. If regular mail is used, please mail to arrive by the **DUE DATE**. For assistance please call 603-228-7621.

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** Timesheets due EARLY before the HOLIDAY**

See reverse for Friends Program 2017 Holidays
Agency Holidays for Calendar Year 2017

New Year’s Day: Monday, 1/02/2017
Martin Luther King Day: Monday, 1/16/2017
President’s Day: Monday, 2/20/2017
Memorial Day: Monday, 5/29/2017
Independence Day: Tuesday, 7/04/2017
Labor Day: Monday, 9/04/2017
Columbus Day: Monday 10/09/2017
Veterans Day (observed): Friday, 11/10/2017
Thanksgiving (2 days): Thursday, 11/23/2017, Friday, 11/24/2017
Christmas (3 days): Monday, 12/25/2017, Tuesday, 12/26/2017, Friday, 12/29/2017