

## Kindness Practices

Even if you don't have time for a regular volunteer project, your children learn immeasurably by watching the small differences you make. Below are "kindness practices" you can start right now.

- 1. Hold a door.** When you're out shopping with your kids, hold the door for the person behind you, help an elderly person lift something heavy, pick up something that's fallen (even if you didn't drop it), smile at others and thank someone for a simple kindness.
- 2. Share what's growing.** Have a garden? Share a bouquet of zinnias, a basket of tomatoes or a bunch of basil with friends or neighbors.
- 3. Assist with lawns or pets.** Do you have neighbors who are elderly or whose spouse who is ill or serving in the military? Lend a hand by watering, sweeping, pulling weeds or walking their dog.
- 4. Tidy the 'hood.** Make a habit of caring for your surroundings. Carry a small trash bag on your neighborhood walks, and move leaves and debris away from storm sewers to keep water runoff moving during rainstorms. When hiking, leave wilderness spots cleaner than how you found them.
- 5. Have a fun kindness conversation.** What's the fun part? Have some BIG discussions at dinner.
- 6. Bake and share.** Whenever your family bakes a batch of cookies, muffins or bars, wrap a few to share with neighbors or friends.
- 7. Spread good cheer.** Think about ways your child can show thoughtful creativity. If you're hosting a family barbecue, have them make a welcome sign or place cards. If it's a reunion, perhaps they could help you design nametags.
- 8. Host a Birthday Drive for PRISM:** Having a birthday party soon? Bring gifts for kids in need ranging from birth to teens, instead of bringing birthday gifts for her/him. The kids have fun dropping off their gifts in person, taking a tour and doing a fun volunteer project. You can also host a drive for Birthday Room items, including toys, party supplies and wrapping paper anytime of the year. A packet of information on how to do this is available by contacting Kevin Lytle at [klytle@prismmpls.org](mailto:klytle@prismmpls.org) or calling 763-432-4210.
- 9. Make Fleece Blankets:** Call to deliver your blankets to the Home Free Battered Women's Shelter @ 763-559-9008. Blankets are seasonal and will accept them during the Fall and early Winter months.
- 10. Make Sandwiches:** The Sandwich Project Minnesota helps feed about 4,500 people per week through various shelters and food shelves... and they need your help. You provide supplies for and assemble 150 meat/cheese sandwiches and deliver them to a drop-off location. Step by step instructions are included [here](#). This is another great project for families, a group of friends or co-workers! Volunteers are also needed to deliver sandwiches to local shelters and food shelves - [click here](#) for more info.
- 11. Collect Canned Food:** Deliver cans of non-perishable food to IOCP @ <http://www.iocp.org>
- 12. Share your Musical Talents:** Hammer is often looking for music instructors or people to sing/play/teach an instrument for residents: go to <http://www.hammer.org> for more information.
- 13. Cook and Deliver Meals:** Contact Open Arms @ <http://www.openarmsmn.org>
- 14. Make Nite Nite Bundles:** Do something special for a child in need. A "Nite Nite Bundle" includes a fleece blanket, book (for ages 0 to pre-teen) and a stuffed animal. These can be delivered to the Sojourner Project, a non-profit that provides help to victims of domestic violence and other forms of interpersonal violence. *More info:* Please wrap the blanket, book and stuffed animal in clear cellophane wrapping, paper and ribbon. If you'd like to make the blanket, see the [step by step instructions](#) for a no-sew fleece blanket. *Contact info:* Becca Welna at [becca@sojournerproject.org](mailto:becca@sojournerproject.org) or 952.351.4067
- 15. Make Animal Treats and Craft Projects:** Is there an animal lover in your house? Check out ideas for [crafts projects](#) that will help the animals at the Animal Humane Society feel more at home - like the snuffle ball pictured here. We even have a recipe for [peanut butter dog biscuits](#) - you can make these for

your dog or your neighbors' dogs! Oakwood Pet Clinic will also take the dog biscuits to hand out to their patients. The Animal Humane Society will take both the toys and the homemade dog biscuits. See below for more info! Contact info: [volunteer@animalhumanesociety.org](mailto:volunteer@animalhumanesociety.org)

Address for Animal Humane Society: 845 Meadow Lane N., Golden Valley 55422

**16. Make Reusable T-shirt Bags:** Put your old t-shirts to good use! Help the environment with a reusable shopping bag made out of a t-shirt. That's all you need is a t-shirt and a scissors - no sewing required! A great project for kids - [click here](#) for how-to instructions. You can use the bags or if you make extras, the organizations below will put them to good use! Contact info: T-shirt bags can be dropped off at Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners (IOCP) at 1605 County Road 101 N. in Plymouth 55447 or contact Najmo Yusuf at [NYusuf@iocp.org](mailto:NYusuf@iocp.org) / 763.489.7505 with any questions. Also note that bags can also be dropped off at PRISM at 1220 Zane Avenue N. in Golden Valley 55422 or contact Kevin Lytle at [klytle@prismmpls.org](mailto:klytle@prismmpls.org) / 763.432.4210.

**17. Healthy Snack Packs:** This is a great project for a family gathering, a group of friends or for co-workers! Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners (IOCP) is looking for healthy snack packs to hand out at school youth programs and in affordable housing neighborhoods. Healthy snack ideas include jerky, trail mix, fruit (apples/bananas don't need refrigeration), granola bars, dry cereal, dried fruit, popcorn, water bottle, fruit roll-ups, Nabisco Good Thins crackers and applesauce cups. Specific instructions are included [here](#)! Contact info: Najmo Yusuf at [NYusuf@iocp.org](mailto:NYusuf@iocp.org)/ 763.489.7505

**18. Letters to Soldiers:** Let soldiers know how much you appreciate their service to protect us. Letters and drawings from children will be shared with deployed soldiers from MN, along with some food treats. A great way to make a soldier's day. Send letters and drawings to: The Heinzen Ditter VFW, 19020 Hamel Rd., Plymouth 55446, C/O Plymouth Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

**19. Make Beds for the Homeless:** This craft project not only helps the homeless, but reduces landfill waste, too! Just take plastic bags from the grocery store, turn them into "yarn" and crochet a mat that can be used to provide a small comfort to people in need (such as a sleep mat for homeless people). Just follow the [video instructions](#) - this can be a great group project, too! Contact info: Mats can be dropped off at St. Stephen's Human Services at 2309 Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis 55404. Please contact Amber at [ABecker@ststephensmpls.org](mailto:ABecker@ststephensmpls.org) or 612.879.7636 to coordinate drop off.

**20. Non-slip Socks:** Some cozy socks and puffy paint are all you need for a fun craft project that can be used by any age! Make these non-slip socks for yourself, your family, your friends – anyone who wants warm feet! See the easy [DIY video](#) for directions.

Please visit [www.westsidecia.org](http://www.westsidecia.org) for the next volunteer opportunity!