



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.

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.

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.

Assist with lawns or pets. Do you have neighbors who are elderly, whose spouse is ill or serving in the military? Lend a hand by watering, sweeping, pulling weeds or walking their dog.

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.

Have a fun kindness conversation. What's the fun part? Have some BIG discussions at dinner.

Bake and share. Whenever your family bakes a batch of cookies, muffins or bars, wrap a few to share with neighbors or friends.

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.

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 or calling 763-432-4210.

Make Fleece Blankets: Call to deliver your blankets to the Home Free Battered Women's Shelter @ 763-559-9008. Blankets are seasonal and will be accepted during the Fall and early Winter months.

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.

Collect Canned Food: Deliver cans of non-perishable food to IOCP @ <http://www.iocp.org>

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.

Cook and Deliver Meals: Contact Open Arms @ <http://www.openarmsmn.org>

Please visit www.westsidecia.org for your next volunteer opportunity!