

KINDNESS

This month our PALS program is focusing on KINDNESS. Students who are observed doing a random act of kindness will be recognized each week, and at the end of the month there will be a drawing with the winner receiving breakfast from Oscar Delta. We would like to ask that you help us encourage our students to spread kindness. The following is an article with information on guiding students to be kind.

How to Guide Teenagers in Showing Kindness by Molly Thompson

Today's teens are often viewed as self-absorbed, and the news headlines feature stories of teen bullies and mean girls. But teens can be kind, too, and you can help your teen develop the habit of showing kindness for others. Teens might roll their eyes at "corny" stuff such as smiling at people and holding doors for others, so help them tap into their own version of kindness by coming up with things they can do in their own circles -- help the equipment manager stow team gear after a ball game, pump gas for Mom without being asked or carry a heavy backpack for a friend on crutches.

Talk to your teen about what he thinks it means to be kind, then share your expectations for how he treats others. Kindness may seem an outdated notion to kids, but encourage them to look at a few of the "random acts of kindness" books or web sites to get ideas. Brainstorm to come up with specific acts he might do for his friends or neighbors. Identify opportunities where you can work together to do something kind for someone else. Remind him that being kind doesn't mean spending tons of money or time; rather, it's about making someone's day a bit easier or a little brighter.

Model the kindness you want your teen to emulate. Teens recognize hypocrisy when they see it, and aren't likely to place much importance on being kind if your approach is of the "do as I say, not as I do" variety. Ensure your teen consistently sees you helping your neighbors, opening the door for people and being patient with the cashier who's struggling with a price scanner. She'll see that you're putting your money where your mouth is and begin to recognize the positive impact kindness has on others.

Do things on a regular basis as a family that show kindness to others, so such actions become part of the routine for both your teen and his younger siblings. Serve as greeters at church or help out with a community park clean-up day. Take your teen along when you're delivering a meal to a family who's grieving or picking up a prescription for a sick friend. If you and your teen pull into the driveway and notice the elderly couple next door unloading groceries, take a minute, grab a few bags and help them out.

Encourage your teen to show kindness in ways that appeal to them. By finding things in their own comfort zone, they are less likely to feel awkward or resentful. If they are a runner, sign up to hand out water at a community 10K race. Your athlete can play catch with a young neighbor and a computer whiz can help set up Grandpa's new computer. Encourage your teen to get some friends together to serve a meal at the senior center or be reading buddies to a group of kindergarteners.