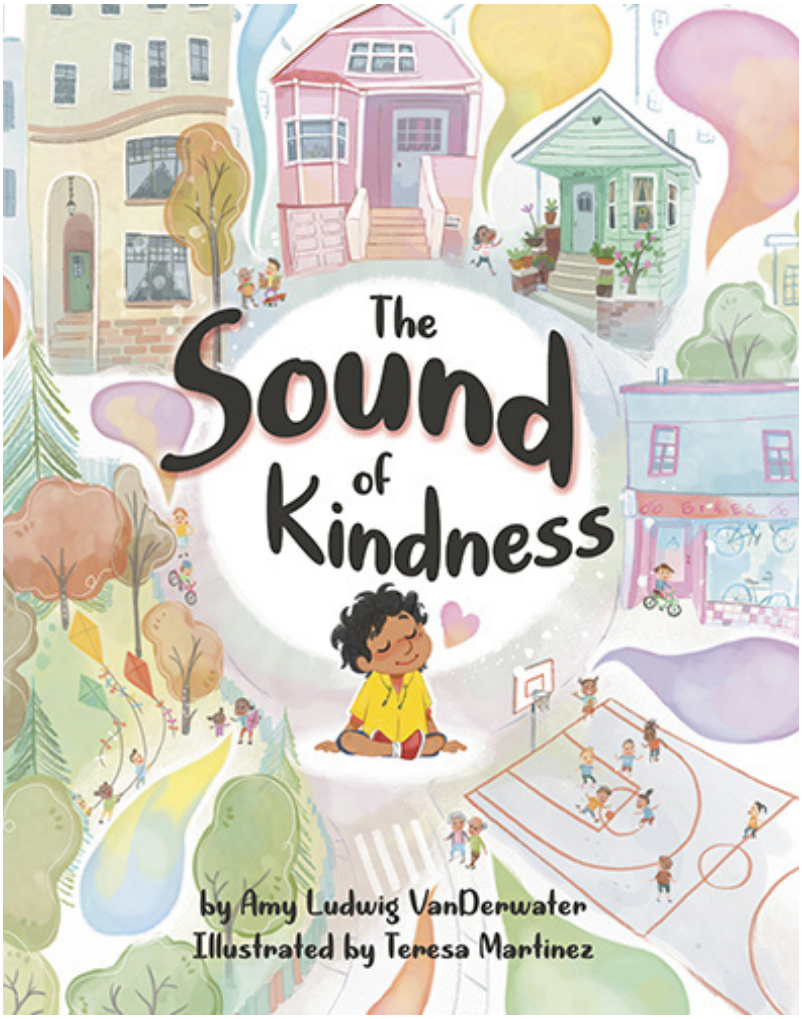

The Sound of Kindness

Written by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater
Illustrated by Teresa Martinez

ISBN: 978-1-4338-4149-1

A Guide & Activity Collection for Guardians & Educators

Magination Press
American Psychological Association

Published by Magination Press, an Imprint of the American Psychological Association

This heartwarming book touches on the themes of kindness and socio-emotional resonance, and the belief that our words matter.

Follow an adult and a child as they explore their neighborhood, listening for the sounds of kindness. Words of friendship, gratitude, support, generosity, and love... we can see and hear them if we try. What will you hear if you take a kindness walk?

Kindness is all around us every day, if we know where to look—and listen!—for it. This book is a gentle and encouraging acknowledgment of how much it matters to be kind... in our families, friendships, and communities.

This guide was created by education consultant, Eileen Hanning. Her company, Read Learn Reach develops curriculum and training for learners of all ages.

The guide was designed by Georgia VanDerwater.

"A parent and child go for a walk in their neighborhood, finding examples of kindness in the dialogue they hear... Martinez's illustrations effectively highlight the parent and child and the people interacting in each spread... Inspiration to find—and perhaps spread—acts of kindness in our world."

—*Kirkus*

"Readers are asked what kindness sounds like in this patient and engaging picture book. An adult and child are followed on a kindness walk, during which they observe, primarily by listening, kindness all around them. The fact that the relationship between the adult and child is never explained provides the opportunity to apply the book to a wide range of family/friend arrangements.

—*Jon Lasser, PhD.*
Psychologist, school psychologist, professor and associate dean for research in the College of Education at Texas State University

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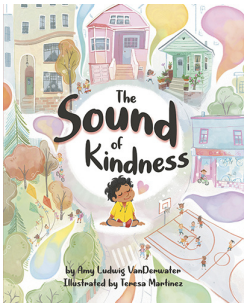


Author Amy Ludwig VanDerwater

Amy Ludwig VanDerwater has taught writing for over 20 years and is author of books for children and teachers including *Forest Has a Song*, *With My Hands: Poems About Making Things*, *Read! Read! Read!*, *That Missing Feeling*, *If This Bird Had Pockets: A Poem in Your Pocket Day Celebration*, and *Poems Are Teachers: How Studying Poetry Strengthens Writing in All Genres*. She has blogged at The Poem Farm (www.poemfarm.amylv.com) since 2010 and lives with her family and pets in a whimsical old Western New York farmhouse.

Find Amy online here:
https://linktr.ee/amylvpoemfarm

Illustrator Teresa Martinez

Teresa Martinez is a children's book illustrator who grew up in Mexico. She studied graphic design in Arte AC and took painting courses in Italy to learn different techniques. With more than 20 years of experience, she is also illustrator of books *Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved Our Planet*, *Mi Ciudad Sings*, *It's Not a Bed It's a Time Machine*, *Swan Lake*, *Again Essie?*, *The Halloween Tree*, and *Ecoline*.

Teresa currently lives in Puerto Vallarta, a small beach town full of kindness that inspires her work.

Follow Teresa on Instagram at: @teresamtzjun

Interview with Amy:

Why do you think it's important for children to recognize kindness around them?

We can choose what to focus on in the world, and when we pay attention to the generous acts of other people, we feel hopeful, inspired, and interested in becoming more kind to those in our own lives.

Why did you decide to have a grown up and child exploring kindness together? Why in their neighborhood? Why not kids at school or a family on a trip?

Sometimes a story just shows up on the page, and this one did so for me. I do pay attention to words and how words make me feel, and I do believe that what happens in and around our neighborhoods makes us who we are. We do not need to travel or go places to be kind. We can see and hear and feel kindness and goodness right where we live. Kindness sprouts everywhere!

What kinds of reactions do you hope *The Sound of Kindness* inspires?

People are busy and live busy lives. My hope is that this short book will remind us—me included—that kindness can be part of any moment or any interaction. Each time we talk or work with another person, we can choose this path. Remembering to slow down and to take a deep breath can help me remember to think of others first.

What does kindness sound like to you?

For me, kindness is the sound of not hurrying, the silent sound of someone looking into another person's eyes and understanding what that other person needs at that moment. It does not take a long time to do this, but we do need to pause for a moment to think about someone else. Kindness sounds like listening, watching, and choosing with another person in mind. Then, after the quiet, kindness is the sound of gentle words, warm like sunshine.

Do you have a memory of kindness you'd like to share?

I feel lucky to have had many people treat me with kindness, but today, one story stands out. When I was six years old, I had my tonsils removed. When I woke up afterward, I was given a small doll with yellow yarn hair and green satin legs. An anonymous volunteer sewist had made her for me as a present to enjoy during my recovery, and even though I did not know this sewist, I loved my doll and loved that a stranger had taken the time to make her just for me. Many many years have passed, and I still think about this kind volunteer maker.

What is it like to see the illustrations someone created to go with your words?

Honestly, I hug the book. There is a certain magic that illustrators create, taking alphabet letters and punctiation and turning these ink squiggles into scenes and colors and whole worlds that readers can hold. As I am not a visual artist, seeing art that matches my writing makes me feel thankful and connected to the illustrator, even though I usually never meet the illustrator in person. I am humbled when I imagine Teresa spending time with my words.

What inspired you to write *The Sound of Kindness*?

I was inspired by all of the people that have been kind to me, all of the people who have been kind to my family and friends, and all of the people I see being kind to others every single day. It is important to pay attention to the good things in our world, and kindness is everywhere. When we pause, pay attention, and look for kindness... we will always find it.

Interview with Teresa:

Where did you find your inspiration for the illustrations of *The Sound of Kindness*?
Amy Ludwig VanDerwater's script touched my heart instantly and as I read it for the first time, images started to take shape in my mind. I'm the kind of person who appreciates every kind gesture, even the smaller ones.

The story is all about how kindness sounds. Your task was to show how that looks. How did you figure out how to do that?
I feel that kindness is something that comes from the heart, something that flows in a soft, subtle, dreamy way, like a cloud... And I related that feeling to the watercolor style, a technique I know very well, and tried to mimic some characteristics of the style using digital tools.

Tell me about how you developed the idea of having the speech bubbles and people being kind visually to be darker or more prominent in the illustrations than the surroundings.
I had three elements to work on: the characters, the setting, and the actions, which, in this case, were the people speaking: the speech bubbles. As I mentioned earlier, kindness has a soft form to me, that is why the dialogue bubbles are big clouds floating at a focal point of the composition. The main characters had to stand out, that is why I painted them in bold colors. Then I tried to keep the surroundings as simple as possible to focus the attention on the main action and characters to make the reading smoother.

How did you decide which action to show for each bit of kindness in the text?
Because the kid and adult were taking a walk, I mapped out the route they would take: first they would bump into neighbors, then maybe they would walk by some local stores, a school, a bus stop, until they reached the park and then they would make their way back home. Then I thought of a situation for each scenario that would match Amy's text.

Did you collaborate with Amy on the illustrations or did you create them using her text as a guide alone?
Amy provided me with some great ideas which were helpful, but she also gave me free will to do as I saw fit.

What does kindness sound like to you?
In our everyday surroundings that we usually take for granted, if we pay attention to the little flower that grows in the concrete, the bird that chirps every morning, the neighbor that greets us, the smile from a friend, a hug from a loved one, or maybe our pet that is happy to see us, we will notice that there are little sparks of kindness that remind us that we are part of a system of love.

Do you have a memory of kindness you'd like to share?
Well, there is something I'd like to share, although it is not a memory precisely: my husband and I thank each other frequently, even for the smallest gesture that to others might be insignificant. To us it is an important form of recognition that comes from the heart and makes us feel loved.

Are you working on another picture book? If so, can you tell us what it is about?
Of course. I'm currently working on a couple of books. One is about the importance of taking care of our environment and the other is a fun tale that mixes tacos, waffles, guacamole and hamburgers.

Sensing Kindness

The Sound of Kindness explores what acts of kindness sound like, but you can use all your senses to notice kindness around us. Your senses are hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and smelling. If you like, read *Me and My Senses* by Joan Sweeney to review the five senses.

Now, explore kindness with all your senses. What you discover may be different from other people because kindness means different things to different people.

You can even cut out your kindness squares to create a classroom kindness quilt!

Sensing Kindness Drawing Pages can be found on pages 13-15.

Kindness Bingo

Hunt for examples of kindness around you.

As you saw in the book, kindness is everywhere if you just pay attention. Use your senses to search for kindness around you.

To customize your bingo card, brainstorm together different acts of kindness you might see, such as:

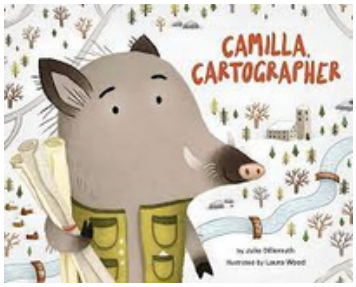
- Holding a door
- Encouraging someone
- Sharing a toy
- Inviting someone to play or sit with you
- Comforting someone who is sad
- Writing a thank you note
- Giving someone a hug
- Listening carefully to someone
- Helping with a chore or task

These Bingo boards can be customized by teachers, student groups or individual students. Leave a few empty spaces on the bingo card so if you or your students observe an act of kindness that's not on the bingo card, you can add it!

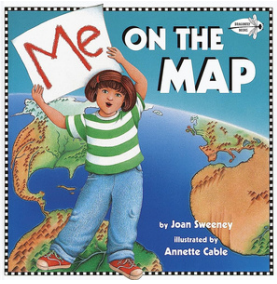
Mark each act of kindness you find and write down or draw a picture of where you found the act of kindness. A bingo template for this activity can be found on page 16.

Mapping Kindness

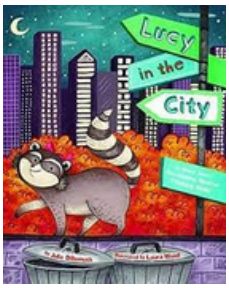
To learn about maps and making them, read a book to get started.



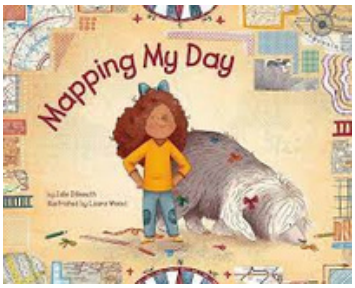
Camilla, Cartographer
by Julie Dillemuth, PhD



Me on the Map
by Joan Sweeney



Lucy in the City
by Julie Dillemuth, PhD



Mapping my Day
by Julie Dillemuth, PhD

Now, use the template on page 17 to make a map of the area where you hunted for kindness. Include big landmarks like important buildings, big streets, or natural features like rivers, lakes, or parks. The map can be of a whole neighborhood, or it can be of a school, a house, or even a classroom.

Once you've made your basic map, go back and add markers for the kinds of kindness you found. This activity does not need to be done in one sitting, and can take place over several days.

Make up symbols for different kinds of kindness you see, and define them in the map key. Examples include:

- A hand for helping
- A heart for encouragement or support
- A pawprint for helping or caring for animals
- A flower or the earth for caring for the earth
- A present for a gift

Let the acts of kindness you find inspire the symbols you choose.

When you are done with your map, share it with a friend or family member. Go for a walk and show them where you found kindness. Add any more examples you find.

A kindness map template for this activity can be found on page 17.

Kindness Every Day

Create a kindness calendar! Use this weekly calendar template to create your own Kindness Calendar. For each day of the week, you can choose to:

- Look for an example of kindness around you,
- Do something kind,
- Read a kindness book

You might even make a large Kindness Calendar! A Daily Kindness Chart template can be found on page 18. A kindness book list can be found on pages 10-11.

Catch People Being Kind

In many schools, adults "catch people being kind." When you see someone being kind, give them a smile or a thumbs up. You could even say, "Wow! That was so kind of you!"

You could also make certificates to give to people, like classmates at school, recognizing them when they've been kind. Or you could make badges to hand out that celebrate their kindness. Or you could write a thank you note to someone you catch treating you with kindness. Printable badges for this activity can be found on pages 19-20.

Have a Kindness Party

Choose an act of kindness that you'd like to take on with friends. Maybe it's planting flowers in a community space, gathering supplies for an animal rescue or food for the food bank, or creating care packages or greeting cards for people in who might appreciate some cheer.

Contact the group or person you'd like to help and share your idea. Get permission to do your project and find out what is needed to make sure your idea is really helpful. Arrange a time when you can deliver your donated items or do your activity.

Find a time and place when you and your friends can come together and work on your project. Plant the flowers, make flyers asking for donations, sort donations, or create care packages or cards. Have some music and snacks while you work.

Deliver what your group has gathered or created to the organization or group of loved ones you've decided to share kindness with. Talk with your friends about the project, how it felt to work on it, and how it felt to complete it. You might even decide to have another kindness party!

A kindness party invitation template can be found on page 21.

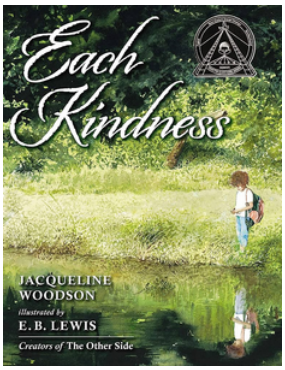
Kindness Books for Children

Grow Kind
by Jon Lasser, PhD
and Sage Foster Lasser

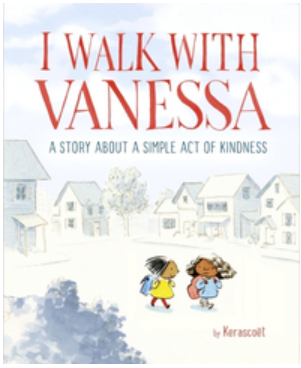
I See You
by Michael Genhart, PhD

The Kindness Book
by Todd Parr

Kindness Makes Us Strong
by Sophie Beer



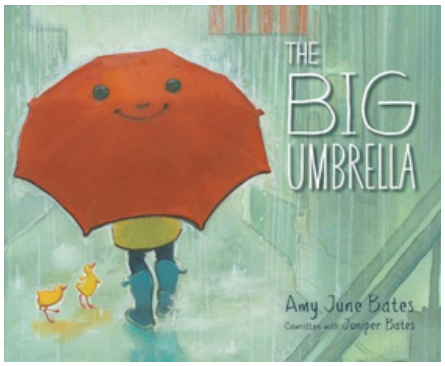
Each Kindness
by Jacqueline Woodson



I Walk With Vanessa
by Kerascoët

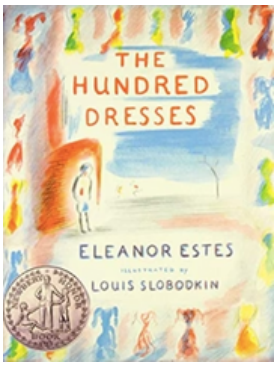
Kindness is a Kite String
by Michelle Schaub

Be Kind
by Pat Zietlow Miller

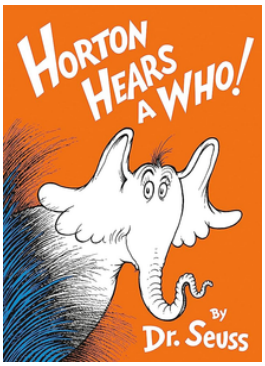


The Big Umbrella
by Amy June Bates

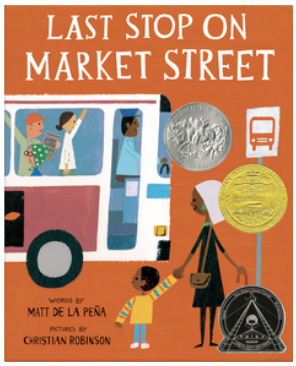
Wonder
by R. J. Palacio



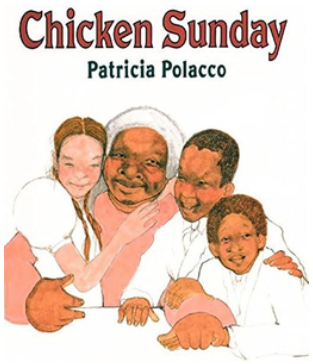
The Hundred Dresses
by Eleanor Estes



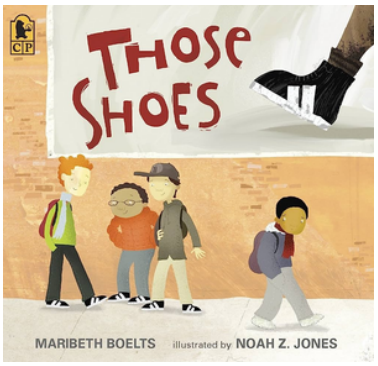
Horton Hears a Who!
by Dr. Seuss



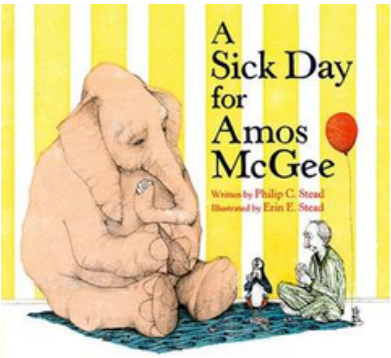
Last Stop on Market Street
by Matt de la Pena



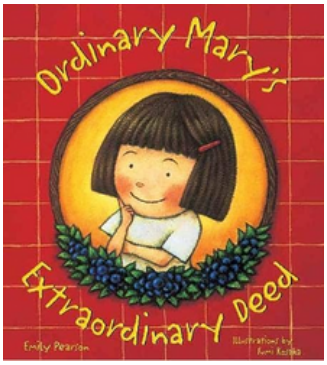
Chicken Sunday
by Patricia Polacco



Those Shoes
by Maribeth Boelts



A Sick Day for Amos McGee
by Philip C. Stead



Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed
by Emily Pearson

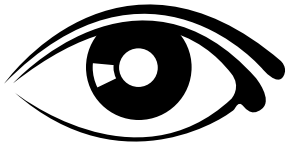
Kindness Books for Adults

Kindness Will Save the World
by James Crews

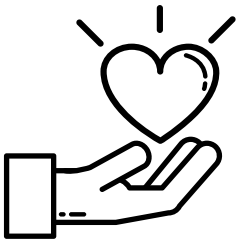
The Path to Kindness
by James Crews

Sensing Kindness

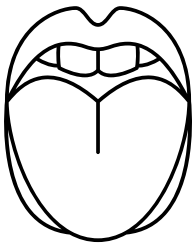
What does kindness sound like?
This book explores what it sounds like to a child and their grown up. Kindness might sound different to you. Maybe it sounds like a friend cheering for you at a soccer game or singing Happy Birthday to you. Maybe it sounds like a loved one calling, "Dinner's ready!" or a relative saying "Welcome! I've missed you." Think about and listen for what kindness sounds like to you, and draw a picture.



What does kindness look like?
Start by looking carefully at the book illustrations and point out examples you see. Then look around you or think back through your day: what other examples of kindness did you see? Take a Quiet Kindness Walk, like the one in the Note to Readers, looking instead of listening. Draw a picture of your example.



What does kindness feel like?
It might feel like a warm mug of cocoa or a hug. It might feel like a stuffed toy or cozy blanket someone gave you. Draw a picture of your examples of how kindness feels.

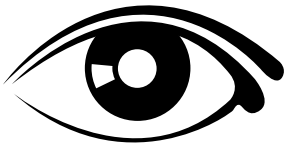


What does kindness taste like?
It might taste like a glass of water offered when you are thirsty or your favorite food cooked by someone who cares about you. Draw a picture of your tastes of kindness.

What does kindness smell like?
It might smell like fresh cut grass from helping a neighbor or your favorite flower from a friend. It could also smell like home or like your favorite food. Draw a picture of your smells of kindness.

What does kindness sound like?

This book explores what it sounds like to a child and their grown up. Kindness might sound different to you. Maybe it sounds like a friend cheering for you at a soccer game or singing Happy Birthday to you. Maybe it sounds like a loved one calling, "Dinner's ready!" or a relative saying "Welcome! I've missed you." Think about and listen for what kindness sounds like to you, and draw a picture.



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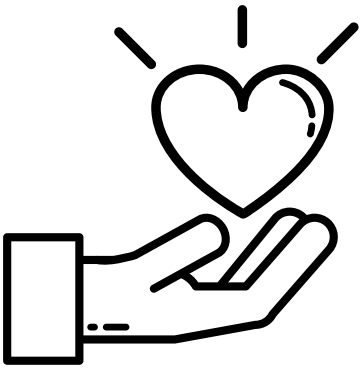

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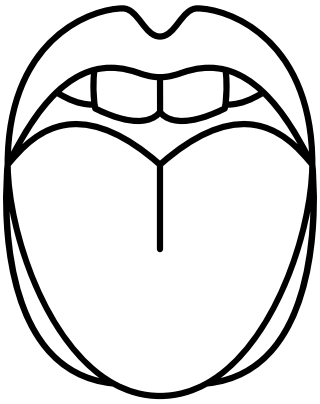

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What does kindness smell like?
It might smell like fresh cut grass from helping a neighbor or your favorite flower from a friend. It could also smell like home or like your favorite food. Draw a picture of your smells of kindness.

Kindness Bingo

Brainstorm different acts of kindness you might see (or create!) in your daily life. Fill out your bingo card with your favorite acts of kindness, leaving a few spaces empty for new ideas!

Now, go find kindness! Check off each bingo square when you find that act of kindness, and draw or write where you found it.

		♥		

My Kindness Map

by _____

Kindness Key:

Kindness Every Day

Each day, engage in a kindness activity: either finding kindness, being kind to another person, or reading a kindness book. Try to log at least one kindness activity for every day of the week

	Sunday	***Monday***	***Tuesday***	***Wednesday***	***Thursday***	***Friday***	***Saturday***
Kindness I Found							
Kindness I Offered							
Kindness Book I Read							

Certificate

OF KINDNESS

This certificate is presented to:

_____

For their act of kindness:

_____

Certificate presented by: _____ Date: _____

Kindness Badges

I WAS KIND TODAY!

BE KIND

KINDNESS ROCKS!

Kindness Thank You Note

I appreciate your kindness!

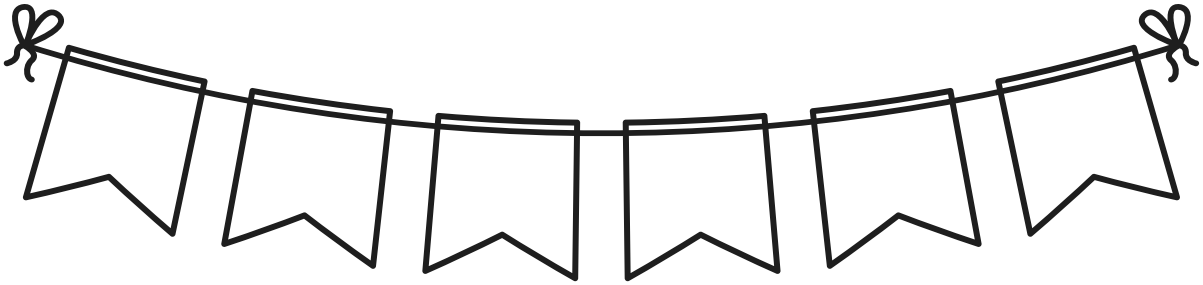
Thank you for _____

_____

_____

♥, _____

Kindness Party Invitation



JOIN US FOR

A Kindness Party!

When: _____

Where: _____

Act of Kindness: _____

_____

_____