



# THE KINDNESS PROJECT

spreading kindness in school classrooms



**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

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spreading kindness in school classrooms

We're using **World Kindness Day** (13th November) to launch Kindness Projects in schools across the country, to help school teachers make their classrooms kinder places to be.

Encouraging kind behaviour in schools can make a big difference and is so much more than just a 'nice to have'. Evidence shows that promoting kindness among young people directly **reduces disruptive behaviour** and helps to **increase social and emotional wellbeing**.

Promoting kindness has also been shown to help **reduce bullying** in schools. Bullying obviously has a serious impact on children's wellbeing and bullies are often suffering themselves too. Running a Kindness Project provides a positive and inclusive way forward.

## STAGE 1: DO KINDNESS

Every Kindness Project starts with doing: using creative activities to explore, promote and experience caring and compassionate behaviour. It's important that children learn by doing, not just by talking or thinking about kindness. This helps their ideas become real and tangible; and with repetition, it helps them to start forming new habits.

To help teachers create a Kindness Project to suit their classroom, we've included some inspirational materials in this pack:

### For primary school teachers (pages 4-10):

- A case study from *John Stainer School*, which has made kindness its November theme for the last two years. It's a great example of getting pupils thinking about kindness through activities which engage them both in and outside of the classroom;
- 5 activity ideas from the fantastic children's book *Do Nice, Be Kind, Spread Happy* by Bernadette Russell with illustrations by David Broadbent - which can be printed and used in classrooms. The book is also being offered at a very generous 50% discount as part of the Kindness Project (see page 10 for details).

### For secondary school teachers (pages 10-14):

- A case study from *Graveney School*, which has been doing some excellent work promoting kindness with its Key Stage 3 and Year 13 students;
- A selection of kindness activity ideas (both classroom-based and external), developed by the US-based *Random Acts of Kindness Foundation*.



## STAGE 2: NOTICE KINDNESS

The second element of the Kindness Project involves asking young people to notice acts of kindness done by others around them. This teaches them to actively look for the good things that others do - and it helps to create a culture which rewards caring behaviour.

Research also shows that kindness is contagious. Noticing kind acts not only makes us feel like we are living in kinder world, it encourages us to be kinder to others as well.

A great way to encourage this is to set up a **Kindness Wall** in your classroom. This is a place where pupils can put up messages, stories, photos, drawings or thank-you notes about kind things people have done for them - or kind things they've seen done for others.





The wall is a great way to celebrate the activities of the Kindness Project. It creates a sense of momentum as it grows day by day and also rewards those that behave kindly.

For pupils that may feel shy about putting up their messages, we suggest using an anonymous **Kindness Box** where they can post these - and then taking some time at the end of each day to read out and pin up new notes to the wall.

## STAGE 3: SHARE KINDNESS

The more we share kindness the further it will spread and help to create a kindness revolution. We are asking teachers to help spread this as far as possible by sharing kindness in these ways:

- **Send this link** to colleagues who care about creating kinder environments for young people, inviting them to download the pack and get involved: [www.actionforhappiness.org/schools](http://www.actionforhappiness.org/schools)
- **Let us know** about your plans to run a Kindness Project so we can promote your school: [schools@actionforhappiness.org](mailto:schools@actionforhappiness.org)
- **Share photos** on social media, either of pupils doing kind acts or of your Kindness Wall as it builds each day:  [facebook.com/actionforhappiness](https://www.facebook.com/actionforhappiness)  [@actionhappiness](https://twitter.com/actionhappiness)

# FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

CASE STUDY: John Stainer School



*“We know that carrying out kind acts creates a virtuous circle and the more kindness is praised and modelled by the staff in our school, the less incidences of bullying and unkind behaviour there are”* Adrian Bethune, John Stainer School, Lewisham.

John Stainer School re-branded Anti-Bullying Week (17-21 November) as *It's Cool To Be Kind Week*, with children going out into the local community to carry out random acts of kindness.

One child went with their parent to greet commuters with home-made cakes at the local train station. A commuter wrote to the school to say that it had made their evening and an Ofsted inspection that week noted how “pupils show great care and consideration for each other”.

This year, they are taking things further: as well as children being asked to carry out random acts of kindness in their home learning, each class and their teacher will be challenged to carry out a good deed in the local community. It could be anything from clearing litter from a local park, to performing a song at a local elderly home. Anything to bring a smile to people's faces so that children can experience how good it feels to do kind things for others!

To learn more about the activities at John Stainer School contact [schools@actionforhappiness.org](mailto:schools@actionforhappiness.org)



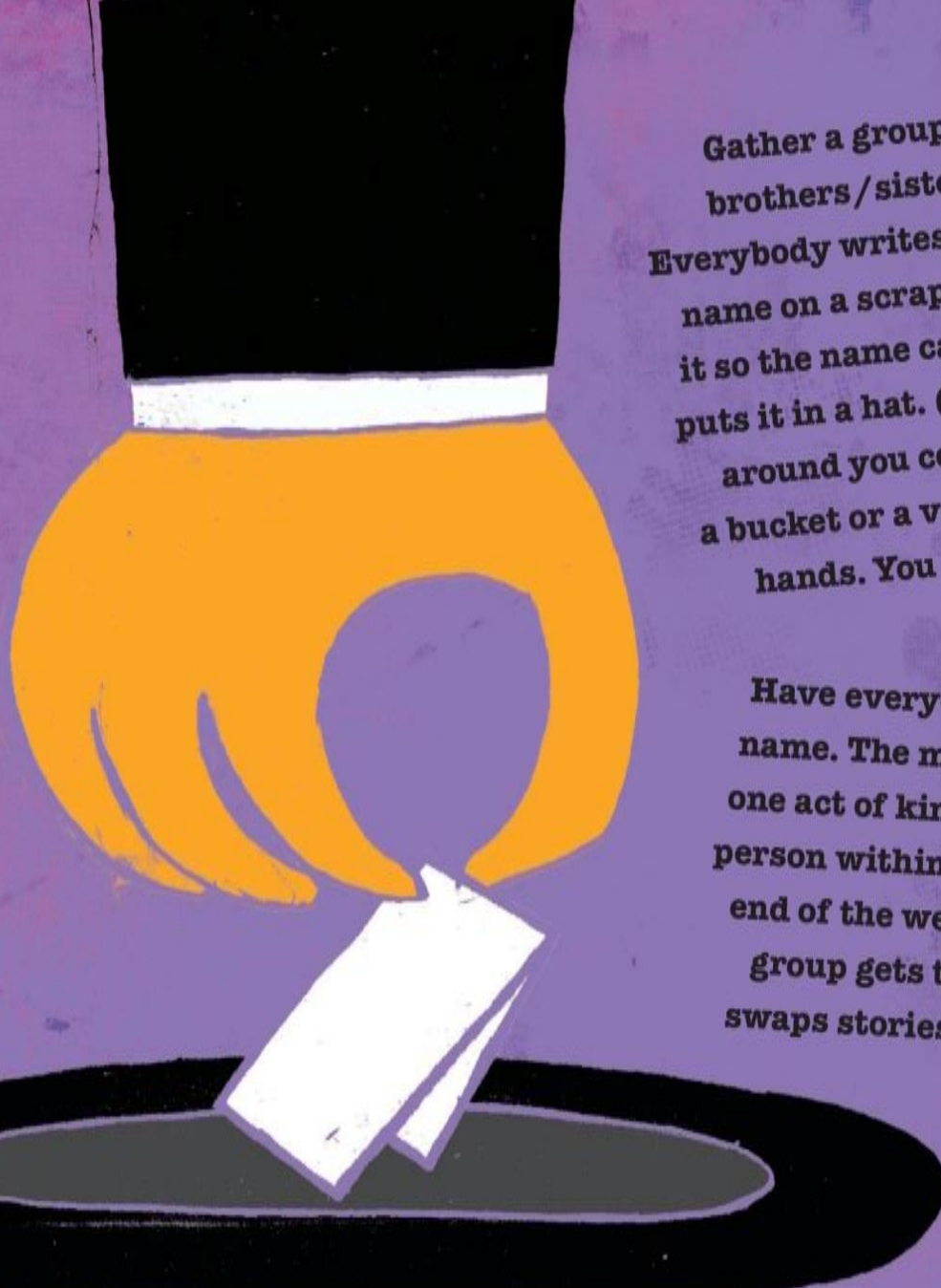
# New Kid In Town

When you're new, it can be hard to make friends. If you find out someone's just moved to your area, invite him or her over for a play-date.

Send them a hand-written invitation saying 'Welcome to [name of your town]', with a few tips on how and why your town is cool. (Perhaps the parks are great, or the people are friendly, or you get lots of snow, or there are no fire-breathing dragons).

Finish the invite with 'You're going to like it here!'. They'll feel great, AND you'll have a new friend.





Gather a group of friends /  
brothers / sisters / cousins.  
Everybody writes down his or her  
name on a scrap of paper, folds  
it so the name can't be seen and  
puts it in a hat. (If there's no hat  
around you could use a box,  
a bucket or a very large pair of  
hands. You get the idea.)

Have everyone pick out a  
name. The mission is to do  
one act of kindness for that  
person within a week. At the  
end of the week, the whole  
group gets together and  
swaps stories of kindness.

If it goes well,  
you could make it  
a regular event.

# Hat Trick



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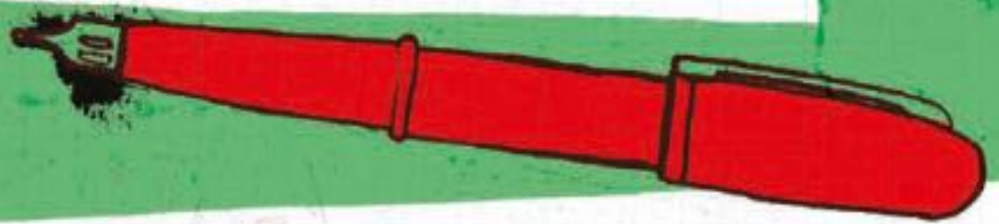
# COMPLIMENT SLIP

In the Olden Days before emails, offices used to give out pieces of paper called compliment slips. My mum said it always disappointed her that there was never an actual compliment on them, so let's fix that!

Use strips of scrap paper with some ready prepared compliments such as:



'That is the best hat in town!'



"Your hair has made me happy."



Carry spares with you so you can write more. Grab the opportunity to make someone's day by handing him or her one.

(If you are feeling extra brave, you could just say it.)

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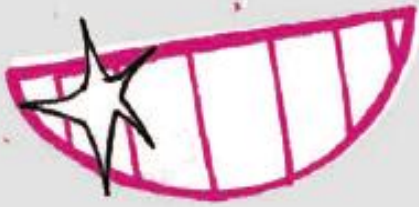
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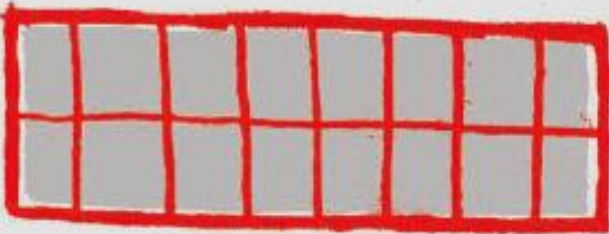
# Smile Collection Mission



Spend one whole day saying hello and smiling at absolutely everyone you see.



Don't worry if they look a bit surprised, or think you might be a bit of a loony. Every time you get a smile or a hello back, count them up and do a tally at the end of the day.



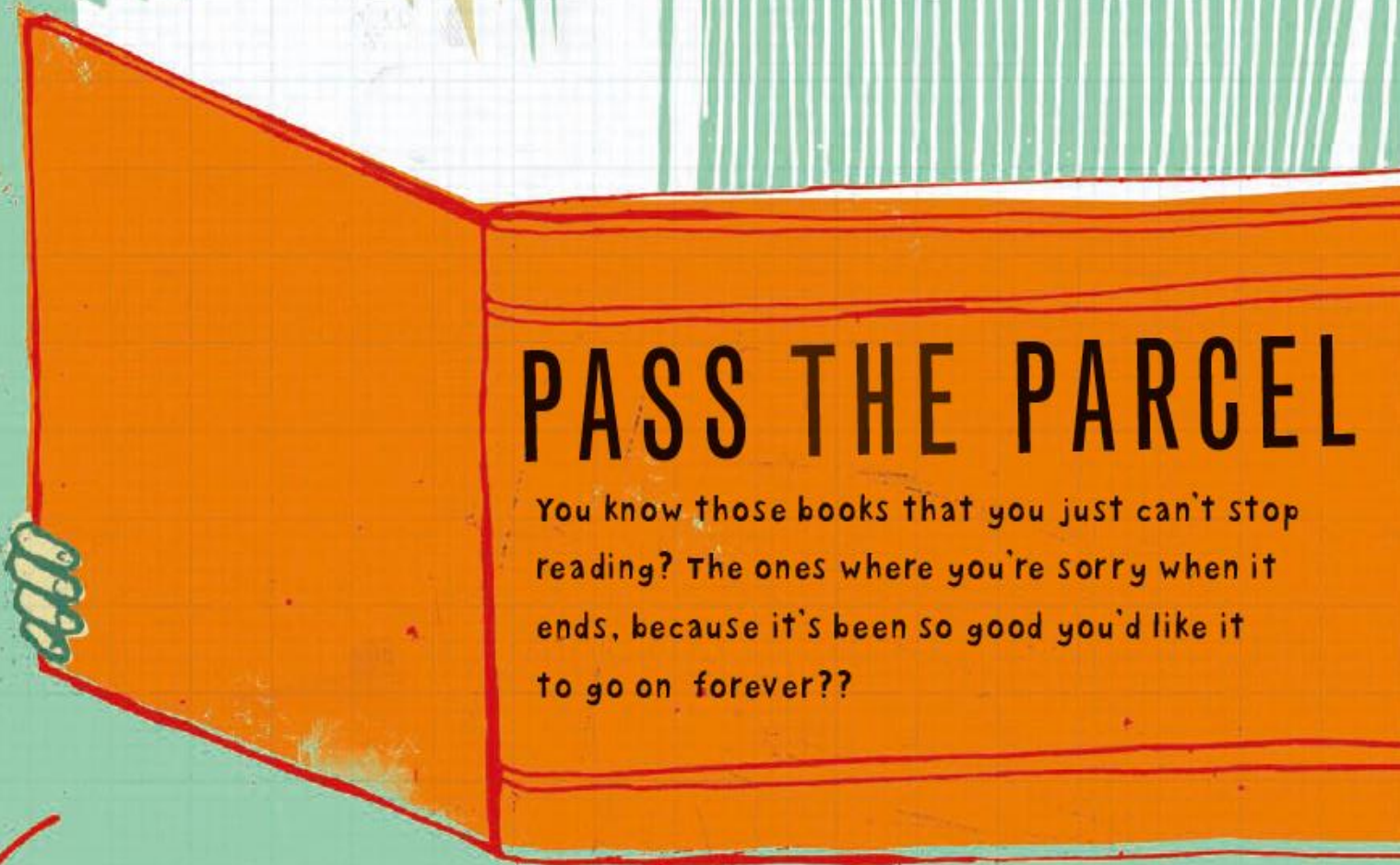
You could try a smile competition with a friend. Your mission: to beat each other at the number of smiles and hellos you manage to receive in one day.



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# PASS THE PARCEL

You know those books that you just can't stop reading? The ones where you're sorry when it ends, because it's been so good you'd like it to go on forever??

Why not pass that book on to a random stranger?  
Write a note on the inside cover saying why you liked it,  
and that you hope they like it just as much.

Suggest that when they have finished  
reading they leave it in a public space for  
another stranger to pick up.







**Do Nice, Be Kind, Spread Happy**  
By Bernadette Russell

**Acts of kindness that kids can do to spread a little joy – with a side order of mischief!**

It's nice to be nice. You make someone else feel happy, which makes you feel happy too, and happy people tend to be nice to other people – so what starts small ends up as a big, smiley chain-reaction of happiness. We challenge you to try it!

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# FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

CASE STUDY: Graveney School



*“We launched our Kindness Project because we recognised that we need to ensure that our students get the recognition they deserve for being kind. We want to focus on cultivating good habits of character as well as academic, music and sporting success. Ultimately, we want our students to be happy and kind. Schools are not just exam factories but should help nurture good character traits in our students”*

Clare O’Brien, Graveney School, Tooting.

The teachers at Graveney School have:

- Developed a 7 week tutorial programme for Key Stage 3 about kindness
- Assigned Year 13 “Kindness Ambassadors” who give out certificates to kind students
- Created 4 Kindness Hall of Fame boards
- Run assemblies and a whole staff training day on kindness and wellbeing.

This year they are working on creating new kindness-related resources for KS4 and KS5. They hope to launch their Kindness Project on World Kindness Day with a special assembly. They are also planning to make a film about the impact of their kindness activities.

To learn more about the activities at Graveney School contact [schools@actionforhappiness.org](mailto:schools@actionforhappiness.org)

# KINDNESS ACTIVITY IDEAS

The following activity ideas have been developed and generously contributed by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation (to find out more about them see page 15).

## 1. Compassion Discussion

- Have students discuss what it means to show compassion to others (i.e. thinking about others' needs, not just our own, noticing when others are sad or are in need, listen closely when others talk to you, doing what you can to help.)

## 2. Handling Conflict with Kindness

- Have students think of situations where they have become angry and upset, and share how they handled those situations. Have them brainstorm how they could have responded to the situation with kindness.

## 3. Kindness Checklist

- Have students create individual Kindness Checklists to encourage them to complete several daily acts of kindness. Activities could include: picking up litter, smiling and saying thank you to the bus driver, helping a friend or doing anything else that is kind.

## 4. Role-Playing Compassion

- Have students create a role-play where they show compassion. For example, what would compassion look like if: a friend was confused by what the teacher said? Someone was sad because her mother was sick and in the hospital? Your sister was crying because she didn't make the basketball team? A new student was feeling lonely and left out? Have students perform their role-plays for the class.

## 5. Buddy a Younger Student

- Organise older students to "buddy" younger students for the day. The students could eat lunch together, do homework together, play a sport together, or tutor younger students in a subject they find challenging.

## 6. Free Coffee/Hot Chocolate Stand

- Set up a free coffee and/or hot chocolate station in an area where commuters pass by. Hand out free hot drinks to the morning commuters and wish them a good day.

## 7. Kindness Zone

- Have students place inspiring kindness signs at the entrances to your school and classroom to remind people to remember to practice acts of kindness.



## 8. Canned Food and Winter Clothing Drive

- Hold a canned food drive and give the food to your local food bank or shelters for the homeless. Hold a coat drive and collect new and used coats throughout the school and community and donate them to a fire station to be distributed to fire victims and/or to local charity shops.

## 9. Publishing Kindness Stories

- Gather a collection of kindness stories from students, teachers, families and staff. Publish and distribute the “book” to the school and community. Allow students to keep a few copies to give to people who have made a difference in their lives or offer to people as an act of kindness.

## 10. Forgiving Others

- Discuss as a class what it means to forgive others. Then have students think about someone they need to forgive and write a note to that person. To extend the activity, have students talk to the school library about forgiving late fines. In return, students could volunteer to help librarians with book organisation and cleaning.

## 11. Being Grateful

- Have students brainstorm ways that they can show gratitude and thankfulness to others in the school or the community. Then encourage them to show their gratitude by making a kind card, a special gift, or offering to help that person in some way to show their gratitude.

## 12. Kindness Posters

- Divide students into groups of five. Hand out a poster board and markers to each group. Explain that as a group, they need to develop one idea to put on the poster that encourages others to be kind. Explain that simple is better. Some examples “Help an elderly person cross the street.” or “Respect your teacher.” Or “Smile and show a friend you care.” Allow time for students to create and design their poster.

## 13. Creating a Respectful Classroom

- Discuss with the class what it means to show respect to others (i.e. listening respectfully, returning things promptly, respecting privacy, treating others how you would like to be treated, showing courtesy to others, etc.) Then brainstorm ways to create a respectful classroom. Students could develop a respecting others motto or plan activities for the month that would show respect to others.

## 14. Kindness Tree/Flower Bed

- Sponsor the planting of a Kindness Tree or Kindness Flower Bed. Plant the tree or flowers in a public area of the school grounds, perhaps with the help of a local community group or other volunteers. Display a Kindness Plaque by the display for others to read about Kindness. This could also be done in a public park or walking trail.

## OTHER RESOURCES

(Originally compiled by the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation)

- **Kindness Breeds More Kindness** (Wired Magazine)  
[www.wired.com/2010/03/kindness-spreads](http://www.wired.com/2010/03/kindness-spreads)
- **The Amazing Effect of Witnessing Acts of Kindness** (Psychology Today)  
[www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201311/elation-the-amazing-effect-witnessing-acts-kindness-0](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201311/elation-the-amazing-effect-witnessing-acts-kindness-0)
- **Can kindness movements make a difference?** (BBC)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24548023](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24548023)
- **Can we teach kindness?** (BBC)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24363845](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24363845)
- **Can Emotional Intelligence Be Taught?** (The New York Times)  
[www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/magazine/can-emotional-intelligence-be-taught.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/magazine/can-emotional-intelligence-be-taught.html)
- **Brain can be trained in compassion** (University of Wisconsin-Madison)  
[www.news.wisc.edu/21811](http://www.news.wisc.edu/21811)
- **Acts of Kindness: Key to Happiness for Children & Teens** (Psychology Today)  
[www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-moment-youth/201301/acts-kindness-key-happiness-children-teens](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-moment-youth/201301/acts-kindness-key-happiness-children-teens)
- **Random Acts Of Kindness Can Make Kids More Popular** (National Public Radio)  
[www.npr.org/blogs/health/2012/12/27/168128084/random-acts-of-kindness-can-make-kids-more-popular](http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2012/12/27/168128084/random-acts-of-kindness-can-make-kids-more-popular)
- **Random Acts of Kindness Can Release the Stress in Your Life** (Sys-con media)  
[www.sys-con.com/node/1592701](http://www.sys-con.com/node/1592701)
- **Forget Survival of the Fittest: It Is Kindness That Counts** (Scientific American)  
[www.scientificamerican.com/article/kindness-emotions-psychology](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/kindness-emotions-psychology)





# ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

## Action for Happiness

### ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

[www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Action for Happiness is a movement of people committed to building a happier society by making positive changes in their personal lives, homes, workplaces and communities. We want to see a fundamentally different way of life where people care less about what they can get for themselves and more about the happiness of others. Our movement brings together like-minded people from all walks of life and provides evidence-based ideas and materials to enable practical action.

## Bernadette Russell



[www.366daysofkindness.com](http://www.366daysofkindness.com)

Bernadette Russell is a writer, performer and comedian from London. She has been doing at least one kind thing for a stranger every day since August 2011, and has no plans to stop. Her project, 366 Days of Kindness, which she began in response to the UK riots, has become a website, a theatre show, an interactive installation and the fabulous book [Do Nice, Be Kind, Spread Happy](#). She believes that kindness could change the world, one act at a time. Bernadette recently toured U.S schools with a talk about kindness and is available to visit your school now. To arrange a kindness talk or a workshop at your school please contact [bernadette@thewhiterabbit.org.uk](mailto:bernadette@thewhiterabbit.org.uk)

## Random acts of Kindness Foundation



[www.randomactsofkindness.org](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org)

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation aims to help everyone create a better world by spreading awareness and increasing engagement in kind actions. Their website is a platform where media, education, community, social networking and entertainment connect people with inspiration, tools, resources, organizations and a larger support network to help them take action, get involved, harvest and share the benefits of kind actions in their daily lives and society.

To find out more or request support for your Kindness Project contact: [schools@actionforhappiness.org](mailto:schools@actionforhappiness.org)

if you want to

FEEL  
GOOD



do good



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Do things for others  
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