



Carlsbad Unified School District

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CUSD STUDENTS ACCEPT THE GREAT KINDNESS CHALLENGE K-12 Kids Are Sharing Acts of Kindness This Week

Carlsbad, CA ... Carlsbad Unified School District K-12 students are spending this first week of December sharing acts of kindness as part of the inaugural “school edition” of the Great Kindness Challenge presented by the Carlsbad-based global nonprofit, Kids for Peace.

Using a checklist of 50 good deeds, students are spreading kindness and joy throughout their school by complimenting each other, reaching out to a lonely child, picking up trash, surprising friends with happy notes, thanking their teachers, eating lunch with a new group of friends and carrying out other acts of goodwill.

Some ingenious children are going beyond the checklist by creating their own good deeds. Bodey Payne, a third-grader at Hope Elementary, explains, “It’s easy and it’s fun to tell someone something nice and then you’re a part of it with them. I’ve already done some things from the checklist and now I want to make my own kind deed.”

According to Jill McManigal, Executive Director of Kids For Peace, “Our goal is to ignite a culture of kindness throughout Carlsbad. Ultimately, we hope to encourage school districts world-wide to take the challenge.”

At Carlsbad Unified campuses, the Great Kindness Challenge is being incorporated into the academic curriculum and other activities. Kelly Elementary kicked off the week-long Challenge at a December 2nd assembly celebrating the District’s December trait of “Caring.” Hope Elementary students painted bright “Kindness Matters” banners as Challenge reminders. A Kindness Station on the playground manned by Kids for Peace board member and Hope mom, Jennifer Hardy, offered students a place to care and share at recess. She says, “We truly believe that simple acts of kindness will lead to peace for all.”

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Hope's Kindness Station a Focal Point for Good Deeds

The dozens of students on the playground attracted to Hope's Kindness Station support Hardy's belief. They come to draw pictures and speak of their good deeds, often in words much wiser than might be assumed at their age. Second-grader Daniel Vitkovsky reports, "I am helping people with math and playing with kids who are alone. If people are kind to them, they will feel better."

First-grade teacher Holly Hill says that after just a couple days, she can feel a difference. She explains, "This program improves the atmosphere on campus. The Great Kindness Challenge underscores the kinds of things we daily strive to teach our children: how to be nice, say please and thank you, and smile."

District Superintendent John A. Roach, Ed.D., says he was pleased to welcome the Great Kindness Challenge to all CUSD campuses. He notes, "This free program teaches so much of value to students of all ages; in fact, to adults as well. In addition to random acts of kindness, participants actively seek out purposeful acts of kindness. We hope their efforts have an enduring effect."

Judging from the words of Hope first-grader Michaela Dunn, the Challenge will reap long-term benefits. With determination in her voice and a smile on her face, she says, "After this week ends, I want to keep being kind."

For more information about the program, visit www.kidsforpeaceglobal.org and www.greatkindnesschallenge.org. For details on individual school activities, visit the site's school loop page at www.carlsbadusd.k12.ca.us.