33 Heartfelt Stories of Kindness
Here you will find 33 "Stories of Kindness."
Some of them are just very small, simple kind deeds. But even the smallest, most simple act of kindness can make a difference in someone's life in a very big way. Perhaps by reading about a kindness idea that someone else has done you will be inspired to do the same or come up with an entirely new idea of your own.

We hope you will be truly motivated by these stories and that they will touch your heart.

Enjoy! From My Heart to Yours,
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Random acts of kindness are a wonderful way to reach across time and space to touch the life of another being. Publicizing and raising awareness of the significance of human kindness undoubtedly makes the world a better place. At every step along the path of expanding awareness there is the opportunity to go deeper; to explore more of the potential of our divine humanness. So it is with kindness. Acts of kindness are really not difficult. An intention is formed, and you carry it out. It makes you feel good. Holding kindness and compassion in our hearts, and integrating them into the complexity and stresses of daily life, every day -- now there is a deep challenge! Parents can learn to discipline kindly, remaining firm, yet doing so with love and warmth.

Teachers can learn to remain patient and forgiving, no matter how frustrated they might feel with a particular student. Employees can choose to cooperate and remain positive about employers, rather than going into polarity. They can preserve their integrity, leaving the job if they must. Employers can honor the individuality and dignity of each staff member, placing the significance of the human over the material. Men and women can choose to focus on what is beautiful and special about the opposite sex, rather than battling for superiority. Children can learn to let everyone play, rather than setting up exclusive games. We can all begin to celebrate adolescence and help teens to feel proud of themselves, rather than raising our eyebrows in disgust. Teenagers can learn to be patient with and accepting of adults in spite of our limitations, instead of raising their eyebrows in disgust. Drivers can realize that there is enough road to share, and time to get there. Allowing a spirit of kindness to permeate our collective lives would be a quantum leap, from an evolutionary standpoint. Eliminating meanness, pettiness, gossip, criticism, judgement, polarity, and blame would be a superb act of kindness. It is also a fundamental step along any spiritual path.

Those negative qualities reflect a very dense, heavy energy, vested solidly in ego, and they block the light of the spirit. Random acts of kindness amidst the darker energies are certainly a positive start. We can do more. Much more. We can resolve to be kinder, gentler beings. All day, every day. We can treat those closest to us with the same respect and politeness that we reserve for friends and colleagues. We can refuse to litter the lives of others with negative energy. If we do this, we will be doing our part to create a world in which kindness is never a random act, but rather a way of life.

**From Tricia Crabtree**

Dear Readers:

As a parent, I couldn't help but pass along my daughter's story. My daughter, Taylor Marie Crabtree (age seven) started a business called TayBear Company. She makes...
and sells hand painted hair clips at local stores. When she started her business I assumed that she wanted extra spending money, but then she told me the purpose of her business. Taylor was going to buy teddy bears for children with cancer. She said the kids probably have a lot of sadness in their lives and she wanted them to have something special to hug and to hug them back. Taylor wanted them to know that even strangers care about them.

She set her goal at 500 teddy bears. I thought her too high goal was that of a child that didn't really understand. I was the one that didn't understand. The media picked up on Taylor's project and our community has embraced her efforts. But help has come from far beyond our little community. Taylor has received donations from strangers that live thousands of miles away, just from word of mouth. It has been rather like a chain letter from the heart. With her scribbly second grade handwriting, she wrote each person with her appreciation and an update on her project. She has also expanded her project to include over 100 other children (including special needs kids) as helpers.

Taylor wanted other kids to feel that they too were capable of helping others in their own way. Along the way she also raised her goal to 700 teddy bears. What is truly amazing is that she has sold over 1,000 hair clips. She buys supplies over the Internet, and she has e-mail letters going between herself and the marketing directors of several large companies (they offer advice). She keeps financial records of all donations, supplies, sales, and checking account activity (yes, she even has a business account) and has arranged for some corporate donations. The local supermarket even stuffs grocery bags with her flyers and has donation cans at their registers. I've listened in amazement as she's discussed the hugability of the teddy bears with vendors and later ordered 700 teddy bears after negotiating a lower price.

But she has been very clear that none of this is about her but about helping the kids with cancer. Taylor has been touched by so many people on her journey. While selling hair clips, one woman began questioning her about the project. She was very suspicious about just where the collected money was going. Taylor gladly talked on and on about all the little steps she had taken to that point and about children and cancer. Looking on, I noticed that the woman's suspicions had turned to sadness. She became teary eyed and stopped Taylor in mid sentence. She then leaned down and hugged Taylor from a place deep in her heart. She then told Taylor that her eight year old son had died just five months before from cancer and that he would have been very proud to have had one of her teddy bears. Each day after selling, Taylor and her helpers talk about the people who had touched their hearts. Maybe it was the homeless man that had donated 11 cents and was surprised when he was told that was plenty of money to buy a hair clip.
He and Taylor stood together choosing just the right hair clip for his lady friend. Or maybe it was the young woman who was flying back home the next day to say goodbye for the last time to her father, who was dying from cancer. Perhaps it was the man that drove all the way to his bank and back in order to buy a hair clip for his Mom. He said that his Dad had recently died from cancer. He wanted a child to have a teddy bear in his Dad's memory. With each hair clip or donation has come so many memories and a realization that when working toward a goal from your heart, the journey too is part of the experience. Taylor once told me "how could people not see Angels, they're everywhere." On a recent trip to the Cancer Center, Taylor was giving an art class on making hair clips. She met so many very sick kids.

On the drive home she talked of Breanne, a three year old girl who had one eye removed in order to reach a cancerous tumor in her brain. Taylor enjoyed meeting her and talked about Breanne's beautiful smile and personality. Taylor stopped talking for a moment and then said "I really hope she likes my bear." Taylor will be continuing her work and wants to reach even more children with cancer that could use a hug from a teddy bear. Thank you for your time in reading my little girl's story and I hope you remember to see the angels around us all, even the little ones.

From Beth Fryer
Dear Readers:
Once, many years ago, my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and was scheduled for a mastectomy. That morning I attended a college class in which the husband of a good friend was also a student. Most mornings we said hello to one another and that was about it - he would sit with his guy friends, and I usually sat alone. When he entered class that morning, he came and sat next to me. He never mentioned my mom, never talked about the situation at all...he just sat next to me and chatted a bit. That was the day I learned that sometimes the kindest act is just to BE there...and I always remember this as one of the most touching acts of kindness I've ever received.

From Art
Dear Veronica:
Some time ago I read one of your "Random Acts of Kindness" suggestions on your "Daily Acts of Kindness" page on your web site and it said that I should buy something for someone and just put the gift on their desk...without needing to be acknowledged for it and without expecting any recognition for the gift. As I sat in my office thinking about that idea and how wonderful it would feel to do just that, a friend of mine walked into my office and handed ME a gift. My friend said, "Here, this is for you, just thought you might like to have it." The gift was a great book that I had wanted to buy for myself but was a little too expensive for my wal-
let. I just sat there not knowing what to say. My friend had already walked out of my office, evidently not needing to be thanked. Wow, what a feeling!! And what timing! A random act of kindness... aimed at me.

From Howard Murphy - The Christmas Visit
Dear Readers: I live in a house in Scotland, UK. The bedrooms at the side of the house look out over the Cellardyke harbour with the front entrance and windows directly onto the road facing the Haven Restaurant. I stood at the kitchen window looking out; what houses I could see were brightly lit, families together - husbands, sons, home from the sea. It was in the days between Christmas, that time of goodwill to all men and the New Year, a time when we usually pledge our good intentions of change. The streets were bare, not a soul to be seen. Then, in the lee of the wall by the Haven Restaurant, a figure moved, slowly, and with care, as though to deny he was there, standing cold and hungry at this time of festivity and cheer. It was the wanderer, an old tramp, The Man o' The Road, with no abode. No home.

There he stood! Long straggling hair, and beard so grey. Trousers ripped, patched any old way. I knocked on my kitchen window, startled; he stared, as though scared, ready to take flight. He was caught in the warm glow cast by the fluorescent light as it cut through the darkness of the night. "Will you have a cup of tea?" My hand making the universal action of putting a cup to my lips. He nodded and tentatively smiled, blinking like a startled owl as the door opened, then he shuffled up the flight of stairs. He halted at the door of the flat as if uncertain how far the welcome extended - I gestured with my arm in the direction of the kitchen, standing back as he passed, and, as the acrid-sour smell of the man struck my nostrils. In the kitchen his keen glance had taken in that there was a coffee-percolator on the worktop. A hand quickly shot out of the ragged-coat sleeve, a grimy finger pointing to indicate - not tea - but coffee was his brew, cup after cup, strong and black. Potatoes in their jackets (quickly cooked in the microwave oven), one, two, three and four. Sandwiches of lamb, sardines from the can. And cans that disappeared into his long pockets together with a small tin-opener - he had smiled when that was offered. What a hunger he had! Not just for food of the edible kind, but crumbs of communication he gladly sought, taking his fill. He smiled again muttering words hardly understood, then he left. Moved on. Gone!

The streets were empty and bare! Not a soul to be seen. In the kitchen only the lingering acrid smell, together with the cups and plates, showed that the Christmas visitor had been, and gone. I stood at the kitchen window, looking out, at the bright lights. The streets were empty, desolate and bare! When you live alone this time of year can feel very empty with people taking a rest after the festivities of Christmas. It is a time when most folk are relaxing at home with gifts scattered around the room, mince pies and the turkey remains placed before comatose revelers. Not a
time for making an effort to get out of the chair and going through the routine of dressing. Not a time for leaving the warmth of the house to go visiting. The visit of the old tramp brought a sense of unreality. Although a familiar figure to me over the years as a man who had never asked in any way for the often expected, indeed demanded, pecuniary gifts. I took pleasure dipping deep into pockets, usually fast closed. I'm struggling for words when perhaps I should leave those written to convey the feelings of special significance in the Christmas visit.

**From His wife, Debbie Anderson**

Dear Readers:
Please allow me to tell you about my husband. He has always had a huge affection for older people and has had several elderly friends to help out in the past but this time is different. Mr. Daves has fished the same lake as my husband, John, for over 15 years. A friendship developed but when Mrs. Daves died 5 years ago, it left Mr. Daves alone. They had no children and after 60 years of marriage, he was lost, so John took Mr. Daves fishing with him every time he went, which was often. Mr. Daves was very energetic for 80 years old and never tired of being with John. After a few years of this, Mr. Daves had a stroke which paralyzed his right side, he lost his speech, and was put into a nursing home. Confined to his bed and unable to communicate, Mr. Daves soon suffered from depression which broke John's heart. John finally got permission from the nursing home to take Mr. Daves out for a ride. They were both excited to be together again but it was very painful for Mr. Daves to be lifted into John's truck, as he was paralyzed on one side and that weight pulled heavily on his good side. John worried about this but still took him out about every 10 days. John had gotten his truck a year earlier and it was the truck of his dreams, a real cowboy cadillac.

He came home one day and announced he was selling it so we could buy a van that was equipped for a wheelchair. We researched these vehicles and found one which he bought. He did sell his truck and uses this van for his transportation. It isn't sporty or fast but it sure eases Mr. Daves pain on their outings so they both enjoy them much more. John has rigged up a special fishing rod that Mr. Daves can use so they still go fishing together at a nearby lake. Even though Mr. Daves can't talk, he has led the nursing home staff to believe John is his son. Mr. Daves is getting old now at 86 but is still enjoying life thanks to John. I don't know anyone who would give up their prized possession to help a friend. I hope he can be an example for others to take a step to help those who are in need.

**From Kimberly Harding**

Dear Readers:
I would like to share an act of kindness, which I practice regularly and which gives me great joy. I always carry at least $3 in my car and also in my pocket. I save it
for the first person who asks if I can "spare some change". Smiling and maintaining eye contact, I always respond very cheerfully with a comment like, "Yes, I would love to" or "It would be my pleasure". And I give them the $3. I then replace it with my next $3 for the next person. I never spend this money myself. I honor that it is the possession of the next person who asks for it.

Three dollars is a small amount, yet it means a lot to the person who expected 25 cents, especially, when delivered with joy and respect to them. I also have taken to carrying items that I think the needy may be able to use. I carry hats, socks, and gloves and an umbrella. Recently I put together some care packages for the homeless. It occurred to me that things like band-aids, toothpaste, aspirin, combs, as well as food would be of use. I imagined that they would need things to be non-breakable, so I chose plastic or paper containers. The folks who received them were delighted. But I think it's not just that I give them things that matters. It's that I see them for the beautiful ray of lights that they are.

I know that they are unique expressions of the Divine and that this is how they are at the current time, not who they are. I am glad to also give a hug and a smile, with the money. And I always remember it is they who bless me with an opportunity to be kind. What a joy. In fact, yesterday a young lady to whom I gave the three dollars and a hat, asked if I could use a spare pair of gloves she had! So I accepted them for the next person who needs them. I was touched that she wanted to give me something. She gave me more than she guesses.

From Cheryl Honey
Founder Family Support Network

Dear Editor:
One of our volunteers brought your magazine and web site to my attention. I love it and the potential it provides us to make our world a kinder place to raise our children. Five years ago I was a welfare mom struggling to find work and raise four children on a limited income. I knew I had special abilities, and I had neighbors who were struggling who had something to offer too. So I embarked on connecting families to one another so they could care and share resources with one another. Common sense told me that this would improve the quality of life for many in our communities and provide hope for our children's future. In February, 1993 we jumped through all the hoops to become a non-profit organization so agencies and schools would allow us to use their facilities for neighborhood gatherings and trainings for free. We have been a totally volunteer organization since our inception.

There are over 200 families in our network now and we've received national attention for our effort. Our volunteers have provided over 10,000 volunteer hours helping their neighbors in need (most of them were referred by local agencies who ran out of funds.) With the help of four Microsoft volunteers who developed a state of
the art database, we now are signing up Good Neighbors from all around the world who are committed to caring and sharing resources with their neighbors. We connect them either by phone or email. The Family Support Network is a grassroots movement...not a program. People are attracted to our effort...we do not advertise. We do share our good news on occasion which is why I am writing you.

I was recognized as a Giraffe last year for sticking my neck out to make the world a better place. The Associated Press dawnd us a leader in bringing in a more civil society and John McKnight of Northwest University acknowledged the Family Support Network as an innovative approach to asset-based community development. We welcome you to visit our web site to learn more about us located on the Internet at: www.family network.org/wecare. Together we are making a difference to create a kinder and more caring society for our children's future.

From Jay Fiset - The Child Who Stole My Heart...
Dear Readers:
While on vacation in Mexico over Christmas, I always enjoyed buying the wares of the young Mexican vendors; chicklets, candies, blankets, (actually I don't care what their wares are I just want to buy them!) It never ceases to amaze me that kids the ages of 3 to 5 are actually working, and it may well be the work they will do the rest of their lives because if the family is poor enough to have the kids working at these ages, you know they are not going to school and will very likely get caught in the trap of no education and poverty. One experience stands out in my mind. Cory (my wife) and I went to McDonalds for a hamburger, (yes, we were a little home sick.)

As we went in, there was a woman begging at the door and she had with her a young boy who I would guess was about 2 years old. I sat and watched him from inside McDonalds. He was only about 2 feet tall, very fine build with a head that seemed perfectly round about the size of a cantaloupe, and short black hair. His face was dirty, not so much in a unkempt way, but more like a young boy who had been left to his own devices and his smile shone like none other I have ever seen. The more I watched him the more I was drawn to him. He was playing with a stick (almost as long as he was tall) on the front step and as people left McDonalds, if he was not too enraptured in playing with his stick, he would flash a mischievous smile and hold his hand out for the Peso. You could tell he did not care if he got one or not, he was just trying to help out his Mom who was doing the real begging. I became enraptured with watching him. He was simply the epitome of freedom, joy and childhood innocence.

I decided that I wanted to do something for him (for me really), but I was not sure what. Money...no that would go to the entire family and I wanted to give him a gift. Clothes...where would I find clothes that small and I probably would not be able to
run and get something and make it back before he and his mother moved on to their next spot. It was then that I focused on his toy, this tiny dirty stick that through the imagination of a child at one moment was a sword, then a cane, then a pointer, and then a donkey. It was then that it occurred to me: McDonalds always has toys for kids! That will be the gift I get him, a McHappy meal complete with a toy. So I went and got a McHappy meal and made my way to the door almost feeling guilty as I interrupted his enchantment with his stick. I handed him his pop first which he was hesitant to take but I smiled and he beamed his smile at me, (frankly, this smile alone made it worthwhile).

Then I handed him the bag of food and toys which he really did not think could have been for him. He was so thrilled by a simple pop. In very poor Spanish I sputtered out, "For you, happy New Year." He grabbed the bag and ran across the step to his mother, "Mama, Mama, Mama." I went back inside and finished my meal. I could not see him anywhere and I wondered if he ran off somewhere with his treasure or if his mom took the meal to be shared by the family. I wondered if one small fast-food meal and a cheap plastic toy would really make any difference at all for the little guy who stole my heart. As Cory and I left McDonalds, tucked into the corner of the step with his mother beside him, was a beaming little boy with a pop between his legs, fries hanging out of his mouth and his new plastic treasure clamped in his left hand.

With his right hand he waved furiously at me and then in perfect English said, "Thank you very much!" I had a wonderful holiday and had many amazing experiences, but that little boy and the McHappy meal was the best reminder to me that the point of life and living is to reach out, make a difference and most importantly, that pure acts of giving and receiving are for me, the most powerful experiences of love. To the little Mexican boy who right now is probably asking someone for a Peso, Muchos Gracious for the gift.

From Val Warner

Dear Readers:

Leaving the stress of city living behind, my three year old daughter, Jana, and I strolled along the beach. It was our family's first time on Maui - December 1978. Within minutes we spotted a woman wearing a pareo with a plumeria blossom in her hair, and we were mesmerized by the graceful way she sifted through handfuls of sand. "Niihau shells", she explained. "Sometimes if you're very patient you can find them here". Her name was Taïre and each day thereafter I joined her to search for these precious, tiny shells that looked like freckles in the sand. The few I found were added to hers which she later made into necklaces.

In our tranquil hours together I learned of Tiare's kindly Polynesian ways and her
gentle wisdom had a profound effect on me. With each year's return to Maui I looked for her, only to be disappointed. Until this year...walking on the beach once again with Jana, now nineteen, I stopped transfixed by the vision of Tiare. I was afraid she might not remember me, but her warm embrace told me she had. Shyly she reached into her bag and gave my daughter a Niihau necklace. Time, fate, and generosity blended this moment into pure Aloha.

**From Aviva Cohen**
Dear Readers:
I find that there is nothing more satisfying than doing something nice for someone else. A few weeks ago I was at the corner store, and there was this lady in front of me in line. She seemed very confused when the cashier asked her to pay $38.00. She had about $5.00 in her wallet, and she began to cry. The cashier became very impatient and told her that she cannot buy these items because she did not have enough money. So, I told the cashier not to worry about it, that I would pay the difference. The cashier gave me a funny look, but I really felt for this woman.Anyway, I paid for my groceries and left the store. When I got outside, the lady was standing there. I asked her what was wrong. She said that she could not remember where she lived, and she began to cry. I named off a few streets around the area but she had no clue.

While I was talking to the lady, a car pulled up and a woman jumped out of the car, frantic. It was this lady's daughter. I explained that her mother could not remember where she lived. The daughter told me that she had Alzheimer's Disease and that she had been wandering off a lot lately. Then the daughter noticed that her mother had 3 bags of groceries and wondered where she got the money to pay for them. I was not sure if I should tell her that I paid for them, but I did. The daughter wanted to pay me back, and I said no thank you. I really felt sorry for them because they did not look like a well-to-do family. So, the daughter said thank you and I said good bye. I felt so fulfilled and happy right through the day, because making others feel good makes me feel good. I know that if this situation happened again, I would do the same thing. Happy New Year!

**From Kathy Hall**
Dear Readers:
We started a Random Acts of Kindness Award in my small elementary school. Each week I hold a meeting called, "Family Meeting" with my fifth graders at Giant City School. We have positive remarks to others and personal statements as part of our meeting. But, the most popular part of our family meeting is our Random Acts of Kindness Award. Students share acts they have witnessed around school and our community during the week. We then vote on the most outstanding act(s) and award the person a trophy "The Fifth Grade Random Acts of Kindness Award." The trophy stays with the person for one week and then returns to fifth grade the fol-
lowing Friday. In this way we hope to recognize kindness, focus on the positive, and sow seeds of kindness around our school and community. Hopefully they sprout and grow! I know one thing, the children love to talk about the kindness they see in their world. Too often we center on the negative, so we practice on talking about the good and positive parts!

**From Leslie Smith**

Dear Readers

I was a traveling nurse (just recently stopped) and one of the most wonderful times in my life was when I was driving north for Christmas....I found a $20 bill and decided to put it to use....I paid for tolls for the people behind me and with that act of kindness--many smiles were brought to others faces as well as mine...some people caught up with me and waved thank you, some had cars full of kids and presents and the waves made my day...so random acts of kindness are wonderful and brought smiles to many people that day...the most fun was trying to get the toll takers to do it...they looked at me as if I had lost my mind when I said--I would like to pay the toll for the 3 people behind me...but some of them really got into it...it is a special memory and one I hold in my heart every day.....

From Rachel

Dear Readers:

I run a day care in my home. Most of my parents are single or they are struggling to just pay the bills. So I watch their children for whatever they can pay me. Sometimes that is just ten dollars a week. Sometimes more. There has even been times when they cannot pay at all. But with me watching the kids they can keep their jobs and that means a roof over the children's heads and food on the table for them. In return, I get lots of love from the kids and thanks from the parents. I love all the kids and take care of them like I do my own. That is my part in helping to do small acts of kindness. From my happy home full of kids!

**From Brittany Eckert**

Dear Readers:

This is really little, but it made my day. I am an 18 year old and lately I have been hearing more and more stories on the news about "how awful today's teenagers are." Its always sad to hear what people say about the category of humans that you fit into. I went to pick up some supplies for school one afternoon and I simply held the door open for a frail-looking elderly woman. To my delight she was extremely grateful and said things like "thank you so much!", and "you teenagers are so sweet these days." She quickly put a big smile on my face and I told some friends at school. They thought it was really neat. Isn't it wonderful how sometimes, the littlest things can touch you in the perfect way? It's just a thought, but to me an act of kindness is a gift to you, as well as the person you give it to.

**From Eugene R. Gryniewicz**
Dear Readers:
This story is not really mine; it belongs, in fact, to my sons, Joshua and Christopher, and to several of their friends. On a Saturday, several years ago, the boys were still in junior high school; they are in college now. After a snowfall of several inches, I asked my sons to take care of the walk in front of our house. "Shovel the steps and the sidewalk," I told them. "And the driveway would be nice..." but I really didn't expect them to exert that much effort. It was a Saturday, after all; there was no school, and some of their friends were planning on dropping by so they could all walk to the mall. An hour passed, and it occurred to me to check on their progress. I had been holding their allowance monies ransom until the job was done, and I assumed they would want them for the arcade. Nothing. They were nowhere to be seen. The walk was done, and the steps ... and the driveway ... and, if shovel marks can own distinctive patterns, so were the driveways of our neighbors on either side of us. I was curious, but not curious enough to worry about it. I assumed, simply, that they had wandered off for a bit.

They were 'playing about' somewhere and would return or call in before lunch. After another hour, though, my curiosity got the better of me. I pulled on my jacket and wandered casually down the street. There were footprints. I picked out the tear in Christopher's right boot. I counted at least five pairs of feet, then began following the trail they made down our block .... Three-quarters of the way to the corner, I noticed another driveway sporting some of the same shoveling patterns as my own and my neighbors; the driveway had been shoveled, and the walk, and the steps leading to the front door. There was no indication, however, that the group had approached the door, first, in order to negotiate some sort of recompense. I looked back up the block at the tracks I had followed. I had assumed they were shoveling walks for additional spending money, but the trail led directly from our house to this one. It belonged, I remembered, to an elderly woman who spent all of her free time taking care of her nephew. He was an invalid, bed-ridden; she was a widow with no children of her own. The trail continued from there around the corner. I followed.

Two blocks. Another driveway, walk and steps. Another block. Another house. Another set of footprints had joined their group .... Again, there seemed a certain determination to their stride; they weren't going from door to door, as one might have expected. The group was purposefully selecting certain houses and shoveling them out. And moving on. I surrendered at that point and returned home. I waited. Around one o'clock, Josh and Chris rang the bell. I invited them in and their friends -- there were eight in all -- for hot chocolate and cinnamon rolls. I asked no questions. Made no sign that I had followed them. When I handed them their allowance, one of their friends handed me one of the notes they had been leaving at the scene of each 'crime' they had committed. It read: Your walk has been shoveled by the
From A Mother and Child
Dear Readers:
One day I was shopping with my child after work to pick up supplies needed for an employee celebration. I was exhausted and wanted to get in and out quickly. My child was tired and cranky and wanted out of the shopping cart. She was grabbing for every item we passed. I was losing my patience and temper when an elderly woman came over to us. She took my child's hand, and said "what a lovely child." My little girl was quiet immediately. The woman looked at me. She had an angelic smile and then again said, "they are so wonderful at this age." At once I felt peaceful and in control of the situation. After she walked away, I found a snack that pleased me and my little one and we had a pleasant shopping trip. That one moment of someone reminding me what a treasure I had turned my whole attitude around and made my shopping trip so much easier. #A Story about Susan Mckinney

From Don Mckinney, her husband

Dear Readers:In 1996, my wife Susan was struck with a very rare illness, central nervous system (cerebral) vasculitis.

In the space of one week, she was struck with two major and one minor stroke as a result of the disease. She went comatose and nearly died. For the next three months, we suffered through not knowing whether she would live or die, to watching her struggle with paralysis (neck down) to coping with having to reclaim her body and her life. Despite her handicaps, she has started an active dialog on the Internet with other survivors and interested families and friends of the survivors of this disease. Before the onslaught of the disease she was an accomplished secretary, typing over 80 wpm accurately, and also an accounting technician. Today, she has great difficulty typing, she is stuck in a wheel chair, but everyday, she checks the "e-mail" several times a day and she makes sure that everyone on her list gets a "pick-me-up". As a 30 year veteran of the news media, she remains one of the bravest people I know. We have a web site if it will help you located on the Internet at: <www.zianet.com/mckinney family> and it pretty much tells the story. I hope you will consider her for your publication, if you could see her determination when she types (20 wpm tops), I think you would know why I think her story needs to get out.

From Ritac
Dear Readers:
There is a merry go round in the mall where I go walking for my health. I occasion-ally gave the attendants money and told them to give a ride to a child who really looked like he or she wanted one. They never knew who I was or why I was doing it, but I felt that no child should have to go without if possible. $5.00 bought 4 rides
and it was up to the person running it to continue my act of kindness. Anytime I'm at an amusement park or such, I always try to buy extra tickets and hand them out to kids and encourage older folks to ride too. Some are just too shy and think you have to have a child to go on. I ride whenever I can, and not just the seats, on the up and down horses. It's how I want to live the rest of my life. I so enjoy your magazine and web site and have told numerous people about it. I know that spirituality is alive within me and I embrace it and the joy it brings. Thanks for the uplift.

From Marlene M. Linke
Dear Readers:
I have been a big believer in Random Acts of Kindness. I teach classes on Angels and incorporate Random Acts of Kindness as part of the curriculum in becoming an angel on earth. I try to illustrate for my students that acts of kindness don't have to be inconvenient, costly or time consuming. Making kindness a part of your everyday life can still move mountains. I have picked a very simple story but so wonderfully illustrative of the essence of what a random act of kindness means; what you put forth is returned to you ten fold. At work we have a soda machine and a candy machine. Often as was the case, I would take advantage of the junk food delights these machines had to offer to overcome the afternoon slump that accompanies working at full speed all day. As my random act of kindness, I would always leave behind any change that the machines produced from my purchase.

There are approximately 150 employees on my floor and I would fantasize that the money would always land in the hands of someone who was in need of a smile. It would have been so nice to see the happiness in someone's expression who received a little extra change the next time they used the machine. But anonymity was key; had I been discovered, any good samaritan would have tried to return my change if they knew I had left it behind. I never revealed what I was doing, even to my closest friends because I didn't want to break the enchantment of being the only one who knew. One day, I went to place some coins in the soda machine but they kept dropping out. I repeated the process about 3-4 times until finally I decided something was wrong with the machine. On a whim, I pushed the button for my soda selection. You could have knocked me over with a feather when a soda popped out of the machine! A FREE SODA! My heart jumped inside while I quickly scanned the nearby area to see if there was anyone standing around. The office was so silent, no one passed in the nearby hallways, no one emerged from the rest rooms. Was it another member of this secret kindness society who bestowed such an act in the bliss of anonymity?

Or, was it some small miracle granted by my guardian angel to simply say "at a boy, keep up the good work!" I simply couldn't believe it. I often try to comprehend what it took for my angels to arrange to have me at that very machine at the very
moment with no one else around to interfere with their plans. It was so simple, but it meant the world to me because it was positive and direct proof that miracles can happen, no matter how small, to anyone who has the belief that any act of kindness given from the heart is rewarded with joy! From Lucy and Bill Spencer

Dear Readers:
On the day of our friends wedding anniversary, we invited them and their children to our home for dinner. When they arrived, we whisked the children away to the Pizza Hut for supper and they stayed in our home to enjoy loving music, wine and roses and a romantic, candlelight dinner "alone"... They reported that the surprise made for an even more enjoyable and memorable celebration. And our hearts were full as well, to see the surprise and joy in their eyes and in their hearts!!!!

From Jodi R. Scott

Dear Readers:
This fall my husband quit his job as a teacher to return to school and earn his Principals Licensure. We moved him into an apartment 2 hours away from home where he would be attending classes and working nights to support our family. We have two daughters, Delcina - age 6 and Heather - age 3, who miss him. I miss him a lot as well. Anyway, my mother-in-law knew I was having a hard time and knew that when children are going through an adjustment it can challenge even the best parents patience. One day I received a package from my mother-in-law and sister-in-law full of little things to help me cope.

Each item had a cute note attached. Example: One book with the note, "to escape reality," and another worn book with, "this one has seen it's share of stress," body scrub, "to scrub away the blues," and many more. Enclosed was a little card saying they loved me and were thinking of me. I cried when I opened it. It was a gift from the heart and it made all the difference in the world to know that they understood and were supportive. My mother-in-law, Jo and my sister-in-law, Annie gave me a random act of kindness that still warms my heart today. Although it is easy for some of us to give (and some of us do habitually) some of us forget that a little act of kindness, a tiny moment, can make a big difference.

From Patrick Lavelle

Dear Readers:
I'd like to share with you an on-going act of kindness that I have been involved with. For the past two years, Rob Gilbert and I have been the publishers of a non-commercial, completely free newsletter on the Internet called Success On Line. (SOL) Success On Line distributes motivational material to over 2,500 people around the world 3 times a week and has been doing so for the past two years. One of the interesting aspects of SOL is that Rob and I have never met. Rob is a college
professor and I am a Computer Network Administrator. If you would like to join, simply send an email message to patlav@epix.net and in the body type "subscribe". You can visit our archive site located at: http://www.bae.uga.edu/other/david/HTML/SUCCESS/success.html. There you can read every message we've ever sent out from day one.

From Donna M. Vaughn
Dear Readers:
Two days before Christmas, I was shopping in a local grocery store. My cart was full as I entered into the checkout lane. A little elderly lady was behind me with a full cart as well. I saw her anticipation with the weather outside as it was beginning to snow and she had to drive back home with her goods. I insisted she go before me but she was hesitant due to my having as much groceries in my cart as she had. She relented graciously. We had a nice chat about kindness and how deficient we are as a society in delivering these random acts. I told her that she seemed about my own mother's age and would hope that someone would do the same for her. Her goods were tallied and she was handed a receipt. Her receipt had a message that she would receive a special gift for a child to be picked up at customer services. She was delighted. As I stood there, I felt that there may have been a child that would benefit from that gift in her own family or circle of friends and realized that one act of kindness has a chain reaction. Had I denied myself that opportunity to practice this random act, I would have received the "free gift" receipt, but I know in my heart that she needed it more. My gift was the greatest for I allowed myself the opportunity to show generosity which nurtured my own well-being.

From Laureen Rama - A Temporary Disability
Dear Readers:
Last Fall here in Calgary, Alberta, I asked a woman who had taken my advanced shamanic healing training course if she would be willing to heal my back. I have had scoliosis, or curvature of the spine, since my teen years and it was becoming increasingly problematic--my back would ache from muscle tightness and would often "go out." The healing worked through a combination of shamanic healing and Reiki. My back straightened but then was very unstable and painful as the muscles, nerves, and bones adjusted to a new shape after 25 years of curve. I could lift nothing heavier than a kettle of water. If I tripped or stumbled even minutely, or twisted at all getting in and out of a car, or drove over a pothole, my back would go out--I was visiting my chiropractor daily. At first I could only stand or sit for an hour before needing to lie down. And I was often mentally out-of-it due to the discomfort and lack of sleep. As my back gradually strengthened I ventured out into the world--moving slowly and carefully with mindful deliberation, often wearing my cervical collar.
Many people I encountered thought they were providing me a random act of kindness by offering me interpretations of what back problems meant a la Louise Hay (feeling lack of support, financial issues), or giving me advice on what to do to fix my back (see this healer, or here's a good chiropractor). Very few people asked if I wanted this advice and I think few of them thought of how barraged with this I was every time I went out in public. I found these interpretations and suggestions mostly unhelpful--they were overwhelming to me when I was already not 100% mentally. They also implied that something was wrong with my back, which I found demoralizing. I rehearsed my cheerful "head them off at the pass" speech which was MY truth about my situation--"this is good, my back is healing, it's been crooked 25 years, it takes a bit of time to adjust, and I'm doing fine, I have a healing program that is working for me."Many, many of my friends offered me deliberate daily acts of kindness--lifting and carrying my suitcase when I travelled abroad, making my hideaway bed everyday in our hotel room, standing beside me in crowds so no one could jostle me. I learned to ask for help without feeling less independent about it or that I was imposing.

This was a wonderful lesson—a gift my friends gave me. As one friend said—-you are giving us an opportunity to love, to share with you, to care and everyone feels good about that. Whenever I asked in public for help, it was there. The two random acts of kindness I remember the most though, were when I didn't ask, they were from observant strangers. In the first instance I was at Costco to buy a small, light suitcase and I could not pull apart the shopping carts to get one for myself. I tried to find a loose shopping cart and couldn't and I was becoming flustered and discouraged. An older woman noticed, stepped out of her way to pull me out a cart, and said she noticed how stiffly I was carrying myself and that I needed help. That made my day! And later that day, as I left my chiropractor's office, I had on my cervical collar and was getting into my car very slowly and deliberately. A young black man walked in front of my car and watched me with a huge empathetic grimace of pain on his face—he said "Accident?" "Something like that." "Wow—you look in a lot of pain--I really hope you get better soon." That someone noticed, cared, and wished me well was the best random act of kindness I could ever wish for.

From Terry Cyr
Dear Readers:
One Xmas I wanted to give a stranger a gift but wanted to remain anonymous, so I put $20.00 behind a picture of an angel at Wal-Mart's. I let the angel in the picture decide to inspire whoever (rich or poor) to pick up the picture and thus get the $20.00. I had so much fun just thinking of the surprise that person got that now every year, I place $20.00 behind an angel picture and give myself the gift of enjoy-
ing someone else's good fortune and remain anonymous to them.

From Barbara J. Doyle - Making Dreams Come True
Dear Readers: Many people work at practicing random acts of kindness, but for some people, it is a natural daily expression. This article is about one of the kindest people I have ever known, and how he has helped me to realize some of my dreams.

For many years I have dreamed of making a difference in people's lives. Serving mankind in its positive evolution and ending war, have been key concerns of mine. Towards those ends, I have been studying for the ministry for the past five years with the Church of Religious Science, through the Centre For Positive Living in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. A little more than a year ago, I had a dream of creating a teen group at the Centre, which I was able to quickly turn into a reality. As the group grew, we had a dream of going to a church sponsored summer camp in California during the summer of 1997. We all worked hard together and conducted many fund raisers to earn the money required to get our small group to camp.

When the deadline arrived to submit the funds, we had enough money to pay camp fees for three teens and one advisor, but we still needed the funds for accommodations and the trip there and back. Two of our advisors agreed to pay their own expenses, and although I wanted to go, I lacked the funds needed to get there. A few days prior to departure, one teen advisor, Aaron Shumka, gave me a cash gift in the hopes that it would make it possible for me to join them. This was a wonderful act of kindness in itself.

Before leaving, I told the teen's parents that each one would need enough money to pay for food during the drive there and back, plus any spending money they might like to bring. Another of our teen advisors Colin Becker, offered to charge the gas and accommodations on his credit card, for convenience sake, and the total would be divided equally between the six people travelling and the money would be collected upon our return. So, together with three of our teens, Cam, Aron and Riley, the three advisors Aaron Shumka, Colin Becker, and myself, packed into the mini-van Colin borrowed from Sherry Munroe, and thus our camp adventure began.

During the trip Colin told me that he wanted these young men to experience a first class hotel and fine dining as a gift from him, so when we arrived in San Francisco he booked us into the Tuscan Inn near Fisherman's Wharf, and took us out for a fine dinner. WOW! After spending a marvellous night to remember, the next morning we were off to Camp Loma Mar, a couple hours south. When we returned and tallied up the expenses, they came up to several thousand dollars. Without reservation, Colin spoke up and said that he would like to pay all of these expenses himself, as a gift to everyone. As one of the parents, I wasn't sure what to say. Having been unemployed for all of that year, although I didn't have the money, I would have found a way to repay his kindness. The other parents were in similar situa-
tions. This was a most generous and gracious gift and we were all very grateful. The generosity of this sweet man doesn't begin, nor does it stop there. This is an individual who obviously believes it is greater to give than to receive. While on the trip, he offered me a job. I had been applying everywhere for months with no success, and here I was travelling through the US, without a resume, and a job lands in my lap. WOW again! Aaah, but it gets even better.

Last September I was scheduled to begin my fifth and final year of studies towards the ministry and didn't have the money to register. This was to be my final year and after investing four years into it, I didn't have the $2000.00 fee required to complete my training. About a week before classes were to begin, I was speaking to a friend on the phone while at work. She was inviting me to join a study group she would be hosting in her home, to help six of us prepare for our final exams. I expressed to her that I may not be attending classes as I didn't have the funds required to pay my tuition. Immediately, my dear friend Colin pipes up from the other side of the room and says, "I'll pay it!". I wish I was able to accept his generosity as easily as he was willing to give it. I didn't accept his offer right away, claiming that I had other sources I was counting on to come through for me. Those other sources didn't come through, so I graciously accepted his offer and began classes. Colin's kindness still doesn't stop there. As Christmas approached, it became painfully clear that even though I was now working,

I still wouldn't have enough money for gifts for my children. Seeing that I was stressed out about something Colin asked me about it. After explaining my dilemma to him, he immediately loaned me $500.00 to buy gifts, and suggested that I could repay it whenever it was possible. As time has gone on and I have observed Colin, I realize that his kindness goes far beyond just helping the teens and I. I see him regularly give of his time and resources to everyone he comes in contact with. As a member of the Centre For Positive Living, he has given selflessly of his time and money. Colin practices random acts of kindness wherever he goes. He has been and continues to be a true inspiration and wonderful teacher to both my husband and I on the principles of abundance. He is a gracious gift, not only to me, but to this city and this world. I thank God for my guardian angel Colin Becker.

From Helga Lára Pálsdóttir
Dear Readers:
When I lived in Los Angeles a few years back, the hardest thing for me to get used to was all the homeless people. I come from Iceland and there we are lucky enough not to have the problem of homelessness. There is always help somewhere. It was hard for me to see these people walking around hungry and so poor. So every time I had to go down town I would take some sandwiches with me to give to those that asked me for money or food.
One day I was coming off a freeway and a man came to my car and asked me for money. Not having money with me I had to turn him away. He looked at me with a smile and said "can you say happy birthday Joe?" I sang him happy birthday and drove off. Then I went to the nearest store I could find and bought him a happy birthday card. I wrote him a personal birthday greeting and put $30.00 in it. It took me half an hour but I did find him again. He was helping a man push his car. The car had run out of fuel and they were pushing it to the gas station. One often assumes that homeless people do not give to the community at all. But Joe, given the chance, gave what he could, as I gave to him what I could. A little time of my day and a little card to say I care.

From Frances Taira - Sincere Appreciation
Dear Readers:
Do you often tell coworkers or friends you appreciate them, or do you assume they already know that? Sometimes a tortoise delivers praise, while Federal Express delivers blame.I left my teaching job, and my junior nursing students went on to their senior year. I was surprised to receive a letter from their senior teacher. "In class, your former students credited your support in difficult times as helping them continue in this program. They truly love you." I rushed to show this beautiful letter to my family. They looked puzzled that anyone would think Mother was special. "Who wrote that letter?" they asked. I have hesitated to write down my feelings in case the person receiving the letter misunderstood it. What if she thought I flattered her because I wanted something? However, now I realize it is worth the effort to improve my writing skills, so that I learn to say what I mean. Sincere praise motivated me to do my best, because I knew I made a difference. We all want to matter. When friends or family have a bad day, I want them to be able to take out a letter from me and know that I love and appreciate them.

From Nora Goldstein
Dear Readers:
This is a simple story but then again it is easy to be kind simply by truly being ourselves. A young lady was standing on the corner with a map in her hand and looking somewhat puzzled. Several people passed by, looked at her but did not stop. I wondered why. I think it may have been the way she was dressed. As I crossed the street and came closer to her I asked if she wanted help (as sometimes people like to figure things out themselves). She was quite thankful and relieved. As it turns out she was looking for the hospital. I felt wonderful just reaching out, taking that extra moment to help. Many times in these situations I end up walking a person to where he or she is going when giving directions would be too complicated. I like helping people and recall many years ago when traveling in Japan and needing directions. This man just took our bags and said follow and we did and he got us to where we needed to be. We could not exchange words but we did through the
heart. Sometimes when I do a special favor for a stranger, the person will say I wish I could do something for you one day to return the favor. They already have done something for me by giving me the opportunity to help them. What I say is, you will. You will come across a situation when someone needs your help and you will be there for that person.

From Penny Alsop
Dear Readers:
I would like to tell you about our 6 year old program that gives away complete vegetable gardens to low-income people in an effort to alleviate hunger and food insecurity. We've operated on a shoestring budget all these years; no regularly paid employees until 1997 and have built over 100 gardens that have helped to feed hundreds of people. We have gardens in schools, retirement complexes, runaway shelters and backyards throughout the city. We've relied on volunteer labor almost exclusively and have never had to look for people to take our gardens. We build the gardens and the new gardener cares for it. We offer 2 years of support services and then emergency assistance. Single mothers go to the top of our waiting list and we've had to ask a would be gardener to wait more than one season to get a garden. Of all the gardens installed, 85% are still productive. 99% are productive the first year of use and 87% in the second year. There is never a charge for our service, the garden is a gift. However, the amount of produce grown in one year offsets completely the cost of the garden installation. The name of our project is THE GARDEN PROJECT and the mother organization is DAMAYAN, INC. a non-profit organization whose name means "that it is not enough to simply worry about another's hunger. One must treat the hunger of another as one's own."

From Veronica M. Hay, The Publisher of this Magazine
Dear Readers:
A friend called me recently to tell me that one of her daughter's teachers had committed suicide. Needless to say, everyone involved was extremely upset by this. Many looked upon this as a selfish act on the part of the teacher. I thought to myself how quick we are to judge another after the fact. And how terribly slow we are to recognize the walking wounded all around us. The news of this teacher's suicide reminded me of a story I read about an elderly woman who had decided to take her life one morning, but someone had stopped to feed the pigeons with her in the park and the kindness of that one stranger changed her mind and saved her life. We never know what is in another person's heart. What level of pain they may be going through. And in some cases, the pain may be so great that living no longer seems an option to them. We may never know the sometimes immense consequences upon another, of an unkind word, a thoughtless deed, or a hasty decision made from an unexamined heart.
Each day, everyone of us, has a new opportunity to make a huge difference in this world. I suppose that is why I decided to choose kindness as the theme for this issue, because I felt it was so important. If I had one dream for humanity, it would be that tomorrow morning we would all wake up with amnesia. We would then see the world for the first time, with new eyes, the way a new born baby sees it, except that we would be in a grown up body. We would have no conception of what was considered beautiful or good or important according to society's ridiculous standard of worth. Everything and everyone would be a blessed opportunity for us, just the way they are. Life would be waiting with another possibility to be all that we could be. Another opportunity to practice the gift of kindness in every moment. Another chance to rise above our mere mortal existence and for that one grand moment in time to walk among the gods. Another day to love.

From YOU Dear Readers
This space belongs to YOU!
The world is waiting for your story. Your very own special act of kindness that will touch someone's heart. What will you tell it about you? Please send me your story at: veronicahay@telus.net for a future follow up issue. Please mark "Kindness Follow Up" as the subject line of your message.
Thank you from the bottom of my Heart.
Veronica M. Hay, Publisher

Veronica Hay is the author of “In a Dream, You Can Do Anything, A Collection of Words” and publisher of
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Have a Beautiful Day!  May it be filled with KINDNESS!