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Nate has always loved school. His mother remembers him being the first of her three sons to make it to the bus stop each day and the only one who actually seemed excited about shopping for school supplies come August. But when Nate started fifth grade, something changed. Suddenly he was dragging his feet each morning, uninterested in extracurricular activities, and more frequently asking to stay home because he just “wasn’t feeling up to it.” When Nate’s mother pressed, she finally got him to admit that he didn’t feel like he had friends at school anymore—his best friend had moved away over the summer and the rest of his old friend group was now only interested in sports, which had never been Nate’s strong suit. Waiting around hoping someone would talk to him during recess had become something Nate was starting to dread.

Then one day, Nate’s elementary school installed a “buddy bench.” The idea behind the buddy bench was that kids could sit on it whenever they felt lonely or like they needed a friend, and other kids would know to approach them and invite them into their group for a game or a conversation. The buddy bench was the idea of a Kansas City high school student named Jackson who was inspired to develop a plan to spread kindness as the result of a kindness scholarship award competition hosted by SevenDays. Each year, SevenDays asks Kansas City students to develop a project that will create a “ripple of kindness” in their community and then submit an essay about that project in order to compete for five \$1,000 college scholarships. Jackson remembered feeling lonely sometimes during recess when he was in elementary school and knew that building a buddy bench with his scout troop for his old school would be the perfect way to “start a ripple.” And guess what? It worked. Today, Nate is back at school with more friends than ever—but he always keeps an eye out for anyone sitting on the buddy bench so that he can invite them to play.

Each year, SevenDays provides a variety of programs for children and teens in the Kansas City region and across the country, all designed to promote kindness. In addition to the Kindness Action Scholarship Program, SevenDays has developed a seven-day classroom resource guide for teaching kindness to K-12 students that intersects with grade-level learning outcomes; Kindness Clubs, a model for engaging middle- and high-school students in activities that dissuade bullying and support welcoming and inclusive behavior; and a Kindness Button Competition, which engages students in creating visual images designed to promote kind actions. At SevenDays, a 501c3 organization that was founded in response to the tragic murders

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of Teresa LaManno, Dr. William Corporon, and Reat Underwood at the Kansas City Jewish Community Center in 2014, we believe that such programming has the power to stop animosity and violence before they start so that we never lose innocent lives because of hatred ever again.

Enclosed you will find information about two upcoming fundraising events that SevenDays will be hosting in April of 2024—our annual Kindness Breakfast on Wednesday, April 10th from 7:30-9:30am and a 10th anniversary Community Kindness Festival on Sunday, April 14th from 4-7pm. We would be honored if your organization would stand with us this year—the tenth anniversary of the deaths of Teresa, Bill, and Reat—to be a ripple of kindness in our community. Sponsorships start at just \$1,000 and provide a variety of marketing benefits designed to promote your organization's commitment to kindness. Please know that kids like Nate, Jackson, and the many others you see mentioned in these materials will thank you.

I thank you too.

Sincerely,



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