

Kindness Project (and more) at West Hartford Public Library

Simple Acts - It's The Little Things That Count

By Carol Waxman, Interim Library Director & Children's Services

In late fall 2020, the West Hartford Public Library celebrated the fourth year of the Kindness Project. Inspired by the book and movie *Wonder*, about a boy navigating life with the challenges of facial deformities caused by Treacher Collins syndrome and the subsequent bullying and other unkind acts he endures, my colleague Bailey Berardino and I designed the Kindness Project to offer the West Hartford, Connecticut community an opportunity to participate in acts of kindness. We collect new hygiene items donated by the community and distribute these to local programs including the West Hartford Food Pantry, local churches offering food drives, and a weekend food backpack program for students. Collection bins are provided at our three library buildings. To celebrate this project, we curate and publish lists of books about kindness, create book displays, and invite children to storytimes with kindness as a theme.



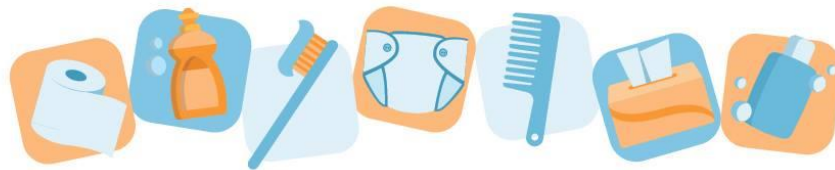
This year, the Kindness Project took place during the pandemic. We placed bins at the curbside pickup locations outside of our buildings and were astounded to receive enough products to fill over 80 large cartons - more than any other year of the project! We delivered these to the West Hartford Food Pantry. As we all know, the pandemic brought the challenges of food insecurity, unemployment, and many other hardships to a level not previously known. Food pantries were faced with unprecedented demands. Families who came to pick up food were overjoyed to receive much-needed hygiene and cleaning products.

Side stories to share! We have learned from the Kindness Project that there are so many other ways to perpetuate acts of kindness. A town employee whose elderly mother enjoys knitting scarves was searching for a place to donate these. She heard about the Kindness Project. We

offered to include the scarves with the Kindness Project deliveries to the food pantry. Imagine the delight of shoppers upon learning they could choose a new beautifully knit colorful scarf to take home. For next year we have identified a donor to purchase the wool for our knitter, as well as a new group of knitters waiting to knit scarves for winter 2022.

Donations needed!

West Hartford Public Library's 4th Annual



During the summer when school buildings are closed, the West Hartford Libraries serve as connection points for families who usually get weekend backpacks of food at their schools. A local church facilitates this project. Why not add hygiene products from the Kindness Project to the backpacks? A tube of toothpaste, a toothbrush and shampoo are always welcome. And to add some fun, a community partner agreed to purchase small games (balls, jacks, UNO, cards) and children's books in include in the backpacks.

Hygiene products, wool scarves, backpack games – it's the little things that count.

Enjoy a [9-minute video presentation about the Kindness Project!](#)