



Press Release



10 neon 'be kind' signs to light up the country on World Kindness Day led by Arts Charity People United

People United has given away ten LED neon '*be kind*' signs to schools, hospitals, community venues and libraries across the UK to celebrate World Kindness Day on Monday 13th November 2017.

This nationally respected organisation, which explores the role the arts can play in growing a more kind and caring society, has put out a call to action to all those who feel the world needs a bit more kindness. There will be ten LED neon '*be kind*' signs and also many other '*be kind*' posters and pictures being displayed by individuals, groups and organisations on World Kindness Day. Look out for them taped to front doors, placed in office windows, attached to fences...

Templates for these are available from the People United website
<http://peopleunited.org.uk/project/be-kind-campaign/>

The ten lucky recipients of the neon signs applied to People United describing how they would use the sign on World Kindness Day and what kindness challenges they would give themselves.

Paintings in Hospitals based on Southwark Street, London applied to the *'be kind'* campaign after the June 2017 terrorist attack at Borough Market.

Their sign, which will be visible both inside and outside, will be suspended in one of the large Southwark Street windows in the landmark Menier Chocolate factory. The street sees between 1,500/2,500 cars pass every hour and approximately 1,500 people per hour walk by. They said:

"We would like to offer a small reminder to the thousands of people who pass our window that this is the kind of place where we look after each other."

Their challenge is to thank all their supporters, care partners, artists and donors and their colleagues for their hard work. They'll also be thanking the community around them who support them every day.

The Olive Tree Community Café in Swindon, a busy, vibrant community cafe which provides meaningful work opportunities for people recovering from mental health illnesses, will display their sign behind the cafe counter reminding staff and customers to *'be kind'*.

Their challenge will be to celebrate kindness with some beautiful art work, specific messages around the café to encourage small acts of kindness and there will be a kindness pot where volunteers can issue an act of kindness such as giving a free coffee. Up to 1,400 customers a week will see the sign.

The ten locations where you can see one of People United's LED neon *'be kind'* signs are; *Paintings in Hospitals* at **London Bridge**; *The Olive Tree Community Café* in **Swindon, Wiltshire**; *2nd Rainford Rainbows* Girlguiding hut in **Merseyside**; *NHS Highlands* on the **Isle of Bute, Scotland**; *New Writing South* an arts organisation in **Brighton, East Sussex**; *Northwick Primary School* in **Canvey Island, Essex**; *Hull Libraries*, **East Yorkshire**; *Rhymney Library* in **South Wales**; artist and author Bernadette Russell, **Deptford, London** and *Kent Children's University* in **Maidstone, Kent**.

To make the *'be kind'* campaign spread far and wide, People United asks those who have made their own sign, or sees one of their special giveaway neon signs, to share it on social media by tagging @people_united #BeKindSigns on Instagram Twitter and Facebook.

Evidence for how the Arts can lead to Kindness

People United has recently published new evidence which shows that participatory arts experiences can lead to kind thoughts, feelings and actions. Their research report, *Changing the World through Arts and Kindness*, combines ten years of data collated and analysed by People United's academic partner the School of Psychology at the University of Kent. This report outlines People United's niche position within an exciting and emerging research landscape that links the arts with psychology and civil society research on wellbeing, resilience, social cohesion and active citizenship. For more information and to download the report go to

<http://peopleunited.org.uk/research/changing-the-world-through-arts-and-kindness/>

ENDS.

Notes to Editors

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People United

People United is a creative laboratory and pioneering charity. They are interested in the role the arts can play in growing a more kind and caring society. They develop innovative projects, undertake research and support new creative work. They are a catalyst for kindness.

www.peopleunited.org.uk

World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day is a day to celebrate and promote kindness in all its forms. It falls on the same day each year - 13 November - and unites people in kindness globally.

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/world-kindness-day>

Summary of the 10 successful applications

1) The Olive Tree Café, Community Café, Swindon

<http://theolivetreecafe.org.uk/>

The aim of the The Olive Tree Café is to help and support people recovering from mental illness or at risk from suffering from mental illness.

It's a busy vibrant community cafe which provides meaningful and happy work opportunities for people recovering from mental health conditions. The Olive Tree Café encourage arts and kindness through creative activities, groups and exhibitions in a supportive and encouraging work environment celebrating and educating about mental health issues.

The 'be kind' sign will be prominently placed behind the main counter. The message will shine out their kind intentions to staff, volunteers and customers reminding everyone to be kind to each other. Approximately 1,400 customers a week will see the sign.

Kindness challenge

The Olive Tree Café will celebrate kindness with an exhibition of beautiful art work with specific messages around the cafe to encourage small acts of kindness. There will be a kindness pot where volunteers can issue an act of kindness such as a free coffee.

2) Paintings in Hospitals, Arts, London Bridge, Central London

<http://www.paintingsinhospitals.org.uk/about-us/about-us>

A charitable organisation working in hospitals across the UK.

Founded in 1959 by Sheridan Russell who was Britain's first male almoner and an exceptionally kind man, who knew that art can support us to live longer better lives. Paintings in Hospitals use art to inspire better health and wellbeing for patients, carers and communities

Paintings in Hospitals believe that good health is more than just not being ill: it's about complete mental and physical wellbeing. In a time when there seems to be a lack of good will, they want to help promote the power of kindness.

Throughout the UK, Paintings in Hospitals want to transform public spaces such as: GP and dental surgeries, hospices, care homes, SEN schools and hospitals into

somewhere warm and human; and to lessen the stress, anxiety and depression that these places can cause.

The ‘be kind’ sign, which will be visible both inside and outside, will be suspended in one of the large Southwark Street windows in the landmark Menier Chocolate factory. The street sees between 1,500/2,500 cars pass every hour and approximately 1,500 people per hour walk by.

Since the June 2017 terror attack at Borough Market the London Bridge community has rallied and they would like to offer a small reminder to the thousands of people who pass their window that this is the kind of place where they look after each other.

Kindness Challenge

Paintings in Hospitals aim to thank all their supporters, care partners, artists and donors and their colleagues for their hard work. They’ll also thank the community around them who support them every day.

3) Bernadette Russell / White Rabbit, Artist, Deptford, South London

<http://www.thewhiterabbit.org.uk/bernadette-russell/>

<https://www.bernadetterussell.com/>

White Rabbit creates: live lit, films, podcasts, cabaret, installations and books. All their work is driven by stories and focuses on compassion and community. Bernadette writes a monthly column about kindness for Balance Magazine and recently published *The Little Book of Kindness*.

Bernadette said:

“To receive the sign from People United would be a welcome acknowledgement of our work and efforts in practising kindness. It would be both hugely encouraging and affirming.”

The ‘be kind’ sign will first be seen at a fundraising event for Crisis on World Kindness Day. Afterwards it will be put in Bernadette’s window in Deptford, the building is on the 8 mile mark of the London Marathon. Per day the road is used on average by 2,600 vehicles, plus 652 primary school pupils and 500 pedestrians.

Kindness Challenge

Bernadette is hosting a ‘stories of kindness’ fundraising event at Artsadmin, raising money for Crisis on World Kindness Day. The whole event has a kindness theme and

she will be to asking everyone attending to post a story about kindness on social media. It will involve an audience, ten writers/performers plus many digital contributors.

4) Northwick Primary School, Canvey Island, Essex

<http://www.northwickpark.essex.sch.uk/>

Northwick Primary School is a large primary school in a Multi Academy Trust in an area of social deprivation. They offer extended school services and encourage local residents to be actively involved with the school and promote strong connections with the community.

They want to improve and encourage relationships within the school with kindness and understanding. Kindness is at the top of the school charter, actively using it in their approach to pupils and staff and in the local community.

The 'be kind' sign will be in a link corridor accessed by most of the children and visible from the end of the driveway. It will be a visual reminder to all staff and pupils that kindness matters and it will represent a celebration of their core values. It will be seen by more than 750 people per week.

Kindness Challenge

All children and staff will write positive messages with a sweet attached, these will be shared with everyone in the school. They will also include messages to Sweetbriar Lodge, the care home across the road.

5) Hull Libraries (Hull Culture and Leisure Ltd), Hull, East Yorkshire

http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/portal/page-_pageid=221,628133&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Hull Central Library is a vibrant innovative public venue now part of the UK City of Culture programme for 2017 offering library, government and arts services.

The '*be kind*' sign will further enhance the wide range of arts activities linked to people in the community. They will be working with artist Debi Keable who will facilitate '*be kind*' creative workshops with children aged 8-12 years old to inspire more engagement in kindness within the wider community. These workshops will happen throughout October half term at 5 branch libraries in Hull.

They believe in the power of language and images used in public campaigns. They believe that the sign will encourage more people including school teachers, faith leaders

and community workers to explore what actively being kind might achieve in the workplace and the community.

The 'be kind' sign will be displayed in a full length window next to the entrance of the Hull Central Library as a beacon highlighting their philosophy of delivering services to everybody with respect and kindness which facilitates people's ability to get the most from what is on offer there. The 'be kind' sign will be seen by around 1,000 people during the 'be kind' workshops at 5 branch libraries (Bransholme, Holderness, Gipsyville, Ings & Greenwood). When the sign is at its permanent home, Hull Central Library, it will be seen by about 10,000 visitors per week.

Kindness Challenge

They will be hosting a '*be kind*' art making event at Bransholme Library which is situated close to a large housing estate. It will feature local artists Debi Keable and Luke Pink creating and inspiring new work; people will be able to post their experiences of acts of kindness on a kindness board.

6) NHS Highland, Isle of Bute, Scotland

<http://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Pages/welcome.aspx>

An NHS Board working across Highland Scotland and Argyll and Bute.

The '*be kind*' sign would be used to begin conversations about kindness across the organisation. It will be used in a psychiatric ward as well as adult wards to assess the impact on staff and patients.

The '*be kind*' sign will challenge people to think about what kindness means within a hospital setting. To see if they thought it applied to them or other people. Staff might be prompted to consider how they are with both patients, visitors and colleagues. People might wonder if it was a new instruction to them or a reminder of what they could be like.

The sign may be moved around the hospital building to see what comments it produces - perhaps with a box to collect ideas. It will be seen by 30 to 50 people per day.

Kindness Challenge

Staff and visitors in an admission ward will be asked for their comments about the kindest thing ever done to or for them. It will involve senior hospital staff and the local paper.

7) New Writing South, Arts Organisation, Brighton, East Sussex

<https://www.newwritingsouth.com/>

New Writing South is a writing development agency for the South East that strives to reach, support and encourage diverse writers from across the region, and find new ways for under- represented people to share their stories and creativity.

The *'be kind'* sign will be displayed as a life prompt to remind them and all those around them that acts of kindness can change people's lives. Their building is situated at the bottom of an alleyway next to wasteland amongst scuzzy bins; sadly, recently a young homeless man died near the premises. Would he have survived if he had witnessed more kindness?

Every day New Writing South try to help people be better at what they love. They try to create free opportunities for those that need them and work to inspire and support all the writers that come through the door to be successful.

The *'be kind'* sign will be placed in a window facing the street; it will be clearly visible as there are no other lit signs on or around the building on Jew Street. People from all walks of life pass by or enter our building, a *'be kind'* sign will make them think, make them happier, lighter in spirit, prompt conversation, new ideas and new writing. It will be seen by an estimated 400-600 people per week, higher in the summer, and during Brighton Festival Week the building becomes a festival venue.

Kindness Challenge

People will be invited to write short poems on the theme of kindness which will be tweeted during the day; many will be displayed outside the building. A new Instagram account will be launched with images of the poems.

8) Rhymney Library, Caerphilly, South Wales

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Libraries/Library-locations-and-opening-times/Rhymney-library.aspx

Rhymney is an ex mining community and although there is diversity in the public there are always opportunities for greater diversity in attitudes. Having the message *'be kind'* in a busy area of the town will hopefully subliminally or consciously make people stop, think and act differently.

On hearing they were to receive a sign, Damon Christopher of Rhymney Library said:

“This will be a great opportunity to affect local cultural attitudes and inspire a holistic approach to kindness in the community.”

The council's motto is ‘Equality for all’. They strive to challenge prejudice and bigotry. Ensuring the youth of communities understand the WHY and not just the etiquette. They would like every customer to consider an act of kindness the effect will be paid forward in daily lives.

The ‘be kind’ sign will be placed in a window with good sight lines and where it can be left on overnight. There is an approximate footfall into the building of 200 per day. As it is on a main road and near a bus stop there is passing traffic, people walking by and a number of schools close by.

Kindness Challenge

Rhymney Library will invite local schools to attend the library on that day, to create mixed media kindness themed art, to inspire them to then champion kindness with the community and their families.

9) Kent Children’s University, Local authority, Maidstone

<http://www.kentchildrensuniversity.co.uk/cukent/home/>

Kent Children’s University (KCU) is part of a critically acclaimed charity network encouraging children from 5 - 14 to use creative learning activities, try out new experiences, develop new interests and acquire new skills.

KCU believe they have a moral responsibility to lead by example, promote kindness as well as sharing inspiring examples. As a KCU centre they would like to be seen as a hub of kindness. The ‘be kind’ sign will demonstrate their ethos built on genuine kindness, warmth, friendship, acceptance and love.

KCU currently promote kindness through activities and social media challenges. Anti-bullying pieces (with Learning partner Sky TV), they work with vulnerable children including children in care.

The ‘be kind’ sign will be based at County Hall, Maidstone and taken to university settings for graduations. It will inspire the KCU office and be used as part of internal/external social media campaigns to show that they have been recognised as a centre where kindness is valued and promoted. On an annual basis it is anticipated that around 1000+ people will see the sign and then 5,000 on social media.

Kindness Challenge

Partly the culmination of KCU #bekind project from the summer holidays, 7 acts of kindness challenges will be completed by children within their families. KCU will also be putting together a kindness recipe book for people to share/enjoy.

10) 2nd Rainford Rainbows, Rainford, Merseyside

A Girlguiding group of 20 girls aged 5-7 years in a small semi-rural village. They engage with their community through arts and crafts activities and spend time walking around and exploring the environment.

The 'be kind' sign will be a visual reminder to the group and their community of all the acts of kindness they have carried out this year and that young people can grow into kind, considerate members of the community.

The Rainbows are committed through their beliefs and their actions to be kind to people at home, school and in the community. Each week the girls share their experiences of kindness.

The 'be kind' sign will be proudly hung in the window of the Girlguiding hut which is situated on a main road of Rainford village. It will encourage more volunteers to support and grow the group and therefore grow more acts of kindness. Images of the sign will be shared on social media including the global Girlguide organisations so - potentially billions!

Kindness Challenge

The Rainbows have chosen to decorate small stones with kind words along popular walking paths in the village for all to see.