

# USING SCIENCE TO BUILD A KINDER WORLD

2019 ANNUAL REPORT - [KINDNESS.ORG](https://www.kindness.org)

# LETTER FROM THE CEO



**Jaclyn Lindsay**  
Co-Founder & CEO

Hello,

I am writing this letter in the middle of a global pandemic, which puts a unique lens on my reflection of 2019. What we are living through now, I did not know then would come to bear. But this lens has given me a new appreciation for our work and what we achieved in 2019 – almost as if the world was paving the path for what was to come. To dream about a kinder world is to dream about endless possibilities to get there. Where we remain steadfast is being the bridge between science and real-world outputs.

In 2019 we brought that bridge to life in a way that excites me both as a mom and as a believer that a better world requires us to engage children. Over the last year, we began building our new social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, Learn Kind. The way we work is by listening first. We surveyed hundreds of educators, interviewed parents, and heard from social workers and guidance counselors on what they needed to cultivate kindness in their classroom. These learnings gave us the foundation we needed to build a first-of-its-kind, inquiry-based learning curriculum that will serve K-8 students around the world and give them the tools they need to choose kindness.

Last year we also welcomed one of our research advisors to join our team as our Research Director. Dr. Oliver Scott Curry has been with us since the beginning and led our first-ever research project exploring the link between well-being and happiness. To now have him at the research helm, helping us more quickly and strategically achieve our vision, is both humbling and inspiring. We also began bringing our research to life through exciting new partnerships. Companies like 23andMe and NIVEA joined us in packaging kindness into tools that could help people build kinder communities and companies around the world.

And, finally, we wrote a book! Be Kind is set to publish in 2020. The manuscript was submitted on December 31, 2019 and I can think of no better way to end the year than seeing our mission come to life in such a tangible way. 2019 was a year spent laying the foundation for growth and meaningful impact. Everything maintained a focus on answering our leading question: how do we best equip people to choose kindness, no matter where they are in the world? I am excited to share exactly how that manifested for us and to hear how you'll choose kindness for yourself in the years ahead.

We believe the most pervasive problems  
in our world are solvable.

**And kindness is the catalyst.**

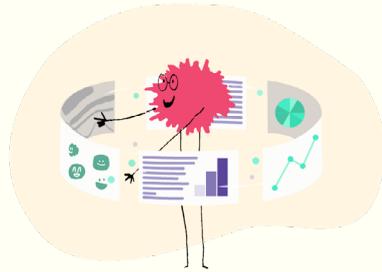
## **OUR MISSION**

To educate and inspire people  
to **choose kindness**

## **OUR VISION**

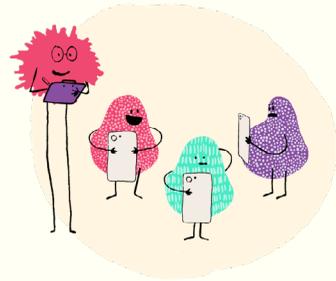
A world where all people  
**choose kindness** more often

# HOW WE DO IT



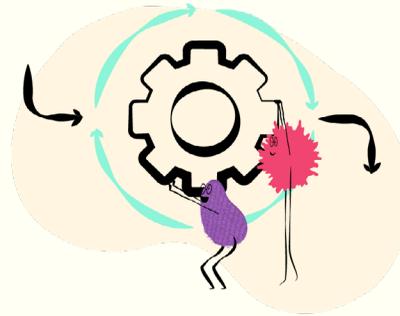
## STEP 01

We start with academic research



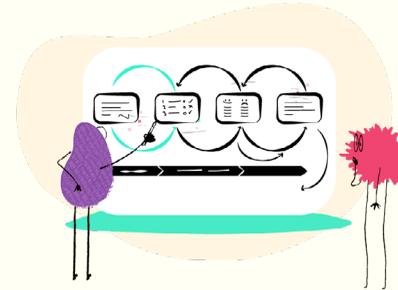
## STEP 02

Test findings in real-world situations



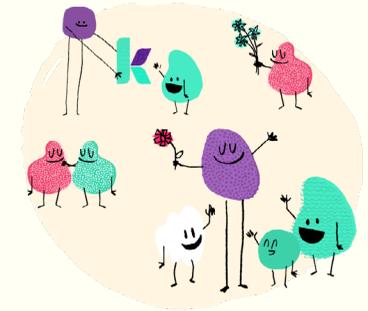
## STEP 03

Create content and action-based programs



## STEP 04

Evaluate and iterate for maximum impact



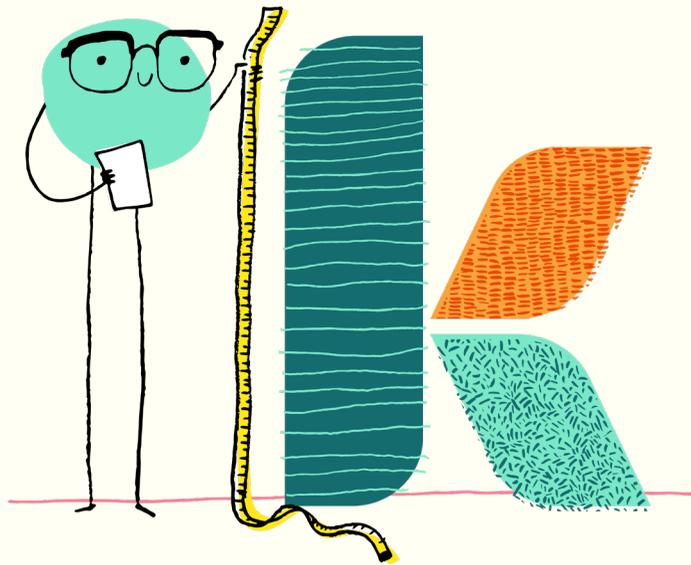
## STEP 05

Activate kindness at scale

# PROGRAMS



Through our research hub, **Kindlab**, we are using science to build kinder classrooms, companies, and communities



# KINDLAB

I was delighted to begin as Research Director for Kindness.org in May. I have always been interested in 'why people do nice things'. My PhD at the London School of Economics was on the evolution of morality. My more recent research at the University of Oxford has investigated the nature, content, and structure of human morality, tackling such questions as: What is morality? How did morality evolve? What psychological mechanisms underpin moral judgments? How are moral values best measured? And how does morality vary across cultures? I also taught courses covering evolutionary behavior, theory, and psychology, among others.

In my new position as director of Kindlab, I am turning these insights into impact. Our goal at Kindlab is to better understand the causes and consequences of kindness, answering such questions as: Why are people kind? How kind are people, really? Why aren't people kinder? What are the most effective kind acts you can do? And, how can we make the world a kinder place? Answering these questions involves a mix of pure and applied research. We use all our learnings to inform our recommendations for various programs and products with a single goal of helping more people choose kindness more often.

*Oliver*

**Dr. Oliver Scott Curry**

Research Director



## KINDLAB HIGHLIGHTS

### Kindbase

When tasked with thinking about an effective, research-backed way to build a kinder world, we identified a glaring gap in the kindness space. There is no systematic way of understanding the impact our kind acts have. Thus, we are creating a database of '1,000 acts of kindness' and will have them rated for cost and benefit and categorized by type of act, donor, and recipient. This data will be used to inform 'pure' research on the underlying psychology of kindness,

making connections to existing research on 'welfare-trade-off ratios' (Tooby et al., 2008). Once complete, this data will help us move from *random* acts to *recommended* acts of kindness and inform our applied programs, Live Kind, Learn Kind and Work Kind. To get the process started, our research interns Gabriel Lima and Eva Jahan collated popular and professional lists of random acts of kindness. We then piloted the process using a popular list of acts (Lima & Curry, 2019).

### Kindfund

We also launched a small grant fund to support other people's research in kindness. We are a small team, and we do not have a monopoly on good ideas. For these reasons, and in order to achieve our objectives of better understanding kindness, it makes sense to support larger established labs, with expertise, for whom the marginal costs of a given study is relatively low, but who often lack resources for small, especially student-led, projects. We hope to make our first awards in the new year.

### Molloy College

Early in the year, we completed the evaluation of the Work Kind pilot at Molloy College (Curry et al., 2019). Overall, we found that participants (n=79) reported significant increases in Mental Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement.

### NIVEA

We designed and executed a study on the relationship between 'softness' and kindness for Nivea (Hudson & Curry, 2019). The study found that people (n=802) described as 'soft' were most often thought of as 'kind', and that 'kindness' was seen as a character strength. So in this sense at least, softness was a strength.

### Harvard University

We solidified our collaborations with scientist Dr. Max Krasnow (Psychology, Harvard), and his student Rhea Howard, both experts on Welfare Tradeoff Ratios. Their experience will be integral to the work we are doing on developing Kindbase next year.

# OUR TEAM

Kindlab's work this year has been helped by many people

## OUR INTERNS



Gabriel Lima



Marlon Sherman



Eva Jahan

## OUR ADVISORS



**Dr. Max Krasnow**  
Developmental &  
Evolutionary psychologist  
Harvard University



**Tara Cousineau**  
Behavioral research  
scientist & psychologist  
Harvard University



**James Wilkinson**  
MSc Cognitive Neuroscience  
Maastricht University,  
Netherlands



**Gabriel Hudson**  
Social Evolution and  
Behaviour Lab  
University College London

## OUR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

# PRESS

Better  
Homes  
and Gardens

The  
Sydney Morning  
Herald

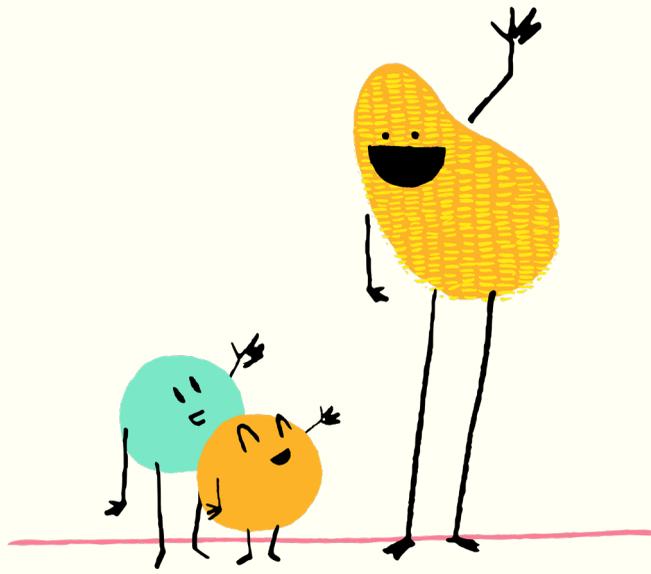
YOUR MARK ON THE  
WORLD  
CENTER

VOICE OF  
ISLAM  
RADIO

# IN OTHER NEWS

- In collaboration with 23andMe, our research showing that kindness is in our genes was featured on a billboard in Times Square over New Year's Eve.
- Our research paper on kind acts was printed in the Journal of Social Psychology (Rowland & Curry, 2019).
- Our meta-analysis showing that 'helping makes you happy' (Curry et al., 2018) has now been cited 42 times.

# If we nurture kinder children, we just might change the world



## LEARN KIND



**of educators surveyed  
said more work needed  
to cultivate kindness  
in classrooms**

One of our greatest levers to build a kinder world is found in what we teach our children. This year we set out to do just that with the development of our first applied program, Learn Kind. As with everything we do, we started with research, both academic as well as grassroots conversations with educators. We asked them what they hoped for, what they needed, and what they wished curriculum developers knew. Their answers directly impacted the way we built Learn Kind. Teachers pointed to cost and lack of flexibility as pain points, but more than anything they wished for curricular resources that understood the diverse, and often challenging, lived experience of their students. And so, with the generous support of our partner NIVEA, we developed Learn Kind to meet each child right where they are. By introducing kindness through inquiry, we leverage students' innate curiosity and invite them to experience for themselves the impact kindness can have on them and those around them.

# WE STARTED WITH RESEARCH...

## BIG QUESTIONS

- Do teachers feel kindness matters?
- What, if any, unmet needs still exist among available resources?
- What kindness supports do students need?

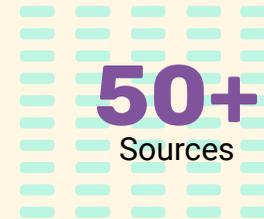
*"I am super excited about this. Right now we are working on 'bucket fillers' and random acts of kindness. Our population at our school is 92% poverty...Students come from some very sad situations, as you can imagine. Empathy is a skill we work on each day. Having additional resources to help in this area would be great."*

- Educator from Springfield, OR

*"It is exciting to see what you are doing. Kindness is contagious and matters so much."*

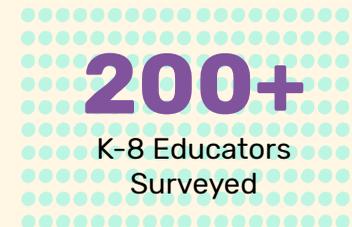
- Educator from Hamilton, NJ

## Academic Research



Extant studies included leading research on social-emotional learning and development, kindness in children and classrooms, developmental psychology, trauma-informed education, and prosocial behavior.

## Market Research



Focus Group Discussions

## Learn Kind is a free K-8 kindness and social-emotional learning curriculum

It follows a 5 module, inquiry-based learning progression that introduces kindness in the context of scientific inquiry, putting students in the driver's seat as student scientists and allowing them to discover and experience kindness for themselves. Learn Kind is aligned to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) core competencies, as well as Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

### HOW WE DEVELOPED LEARN KIND

- Foundational research and best practice in social-emotional learning (SEL) and open-ended instructional practice
- Designed using the Understanding by Design framework and process (Wiggins et al., 2005)
- Developed with an inquiry-based learning progression
- Includes action-framework scaffolding for experiential learning
- Leans on student reflection for depth of learning

## LEARN KIND TEAM & PRESS



**Rebecca Reed**

Program Director,  
Principal Design,  
Development.

I was so honored to join the kindness.org team to lead the development of the Learn Kind program this year. As a former K-5 teacher, leader of teacher professional development, and education consultant, the opportunity to empower students to choose kindness more often has been one of the most energizing experiences of my career. Ask any educator and they will tell you the significant impact that kindness - or a lack of kindness - has in a classroom and on the lives of students. If I were to ask you to think of a time when you remember kindness or unkindness showing up in your school experience, you're likely to have something poignant come to mind very quickly. What we know intuitively and from experience has been further affirmed by research: kindness in classrooms matters. We're so excited to see the impact that Learn Kind makes this spring, and to cultivate as kinder classrooms everywhere in the future.

*Becca*

**PRESS**



## OUR ADVISORS



**Keesa Addison**  
Teacher  
Cornerstone Charter Academy  
Orlando, FL



**Riley Bauling**  
Regional Superintendent  
Achievements First Schools  
Brooklyn, NY



**Dipali Bhatt**  
Teacher  
Stanford School  
Fremont, CA

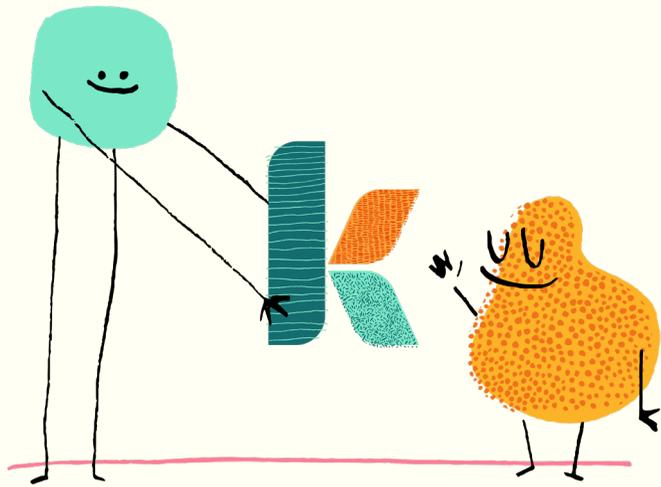


**Lydia Phillips**  
Director of Partnerships  
and Org Learning  
BUILD  
San Francisco, CA



**Stephanie Valli**  
STEM Interdisciplinary  
Coordinator  
Parkway Schools  
St Louis, MO



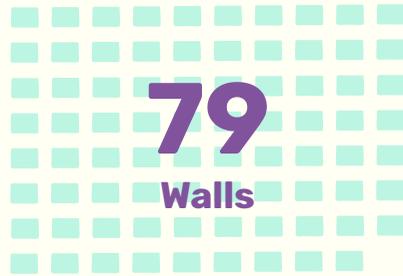


# LIVE KIND & WORK KIND

## Activating kindness through community, companies and collaborations.

Our mission can only be achieved by activating people everywhere to choose kindness and sharing their stories with the world. Through story, we showcase the power of kindness in action. Through collaboration with like-minded companies, we extend our reach. And through evidence-based recommendations and resources, we help the people in our community spread more kindness where they live and work.

**KINDNESS WALLS**



*since the launch of our toolkit in 2018*

**KIND ACTS**



**Kind acts logged**



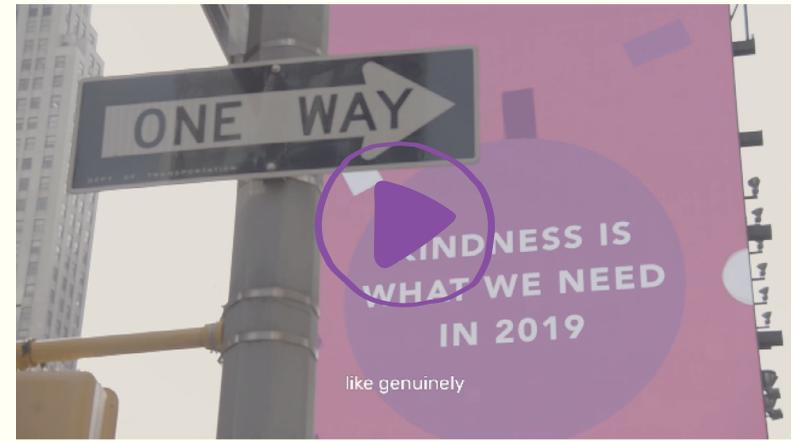
# SPREADING KINDNESS THROUGH STORYTELLING

## APPRECIATION STATION

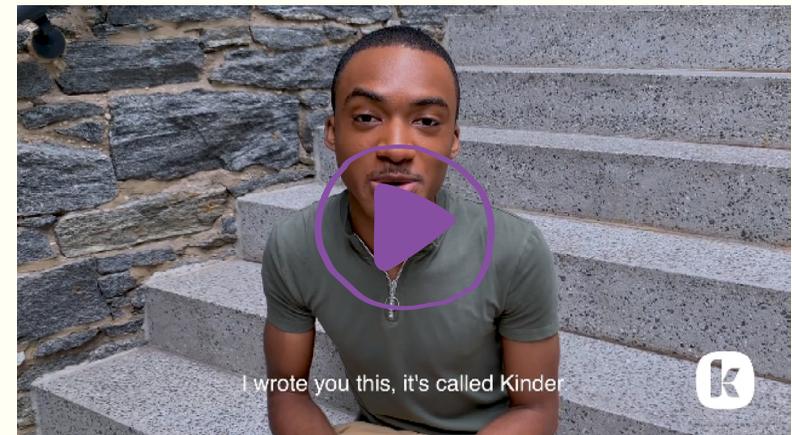


What happens when you send our Creative interns out to the streets to encourage people to say what they appreciate about the person next to them?

**2.5M**  
views



We took to the streets of Times Square on New Year's Day 2019 to hear what people thought about choosing kindness.



Working with our community member Malick Mercier, he reminds us why kindness starts from within.

## COLLABORATIONS



We partnered with **NIVEA** to develop a soft skills curriculum that would activate thousands of students around the US to **choose kindness**.

[LEARN MORE](#)



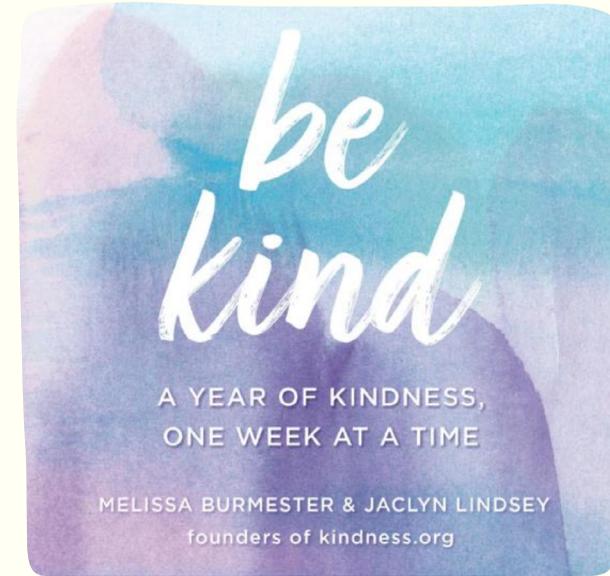
Through our partnership with **23andMe**, we amplified the research that kindness is in our genes. And to ring the New Year, we activated people to choose kindness for their 2019 resolution.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## LIVE KIND & WORK KIND

### WE WROTE A BOOK!

When we were asked to bring our mission to life in the form of a book, it was a dream realized. We invited more than a hundred people from around the world to contribute, and on December 31, 2019, we submitted the final manuscript set to be published in April 2020. We can't wait to share it with you.



### WORK KIND WORKSHOPS

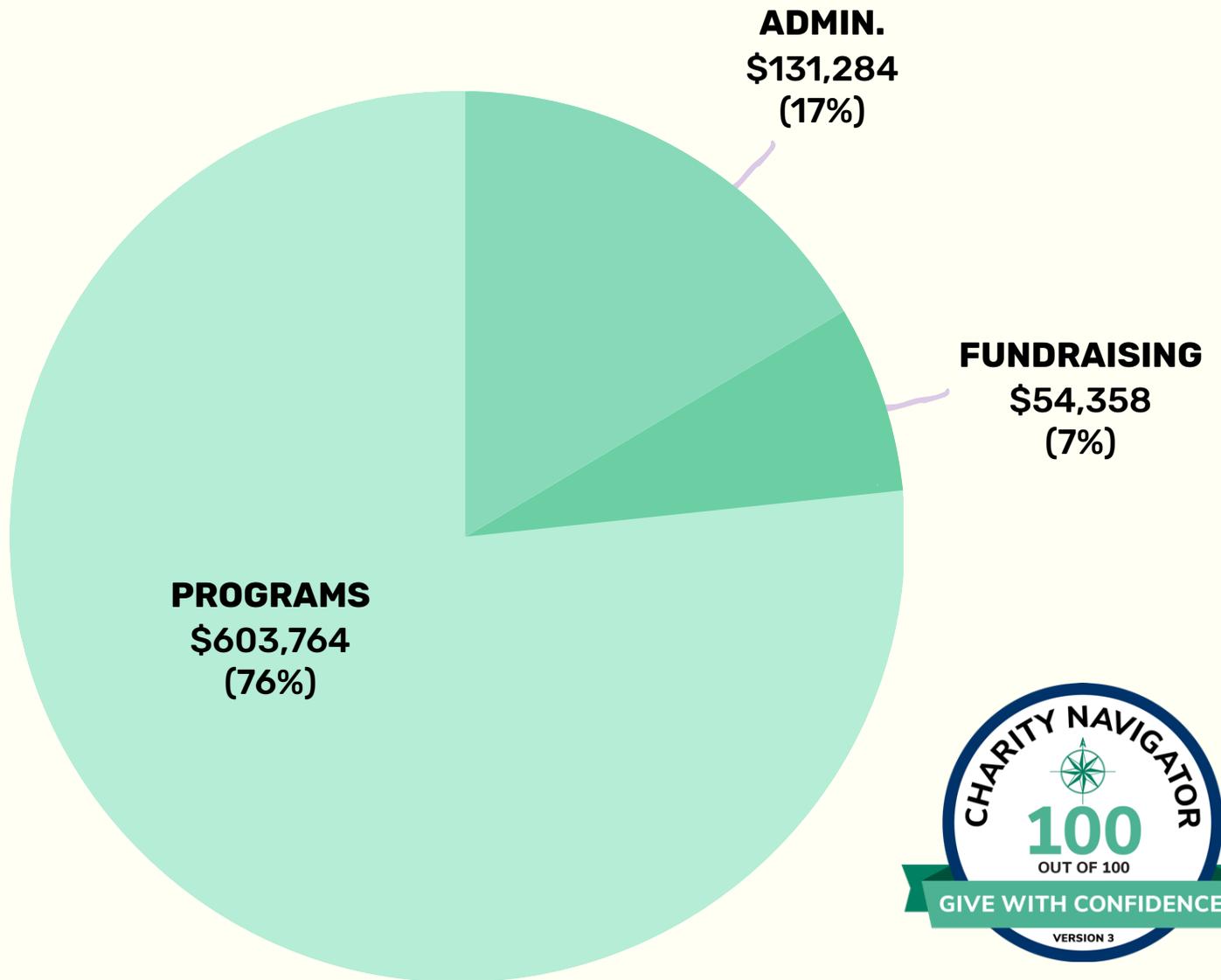
Our research shows that kindness can have a positive impact on engagement and well-being. These are a few of the companies we worked with to activate kindness this year.



# OUR FINANCIALS

We work with a small group of donors and strategic partners to sustain our work. These generous supporters allow us to not have a donate button on our site or ever have to ask the general public for donations.

## EXPENDITURES



# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We asked our board how they would define kindness. Here's what they said:



**Mike Savatovsky**  
Board Chair

"An act considering a specific person's needs and performed to raise their feelings of confidence and comfort, and to support their growth."



**Neil Hutchinson**  
Co-founder, Director

"An act of service without the expectation of reward, recognition or reciprocation. Kindness is everything."



**Yukari Pass**  
Treasurer

"Kindness is doing something nice for someone, no matter what you are feeling at the moment. It is universal and should not discriminate. It builds communities and strengthens humanity. Kindness is love."



**Aditya Alurkar**  
Director

"Being my true self, without putting up the walls of insecurity and succumbing to fear."



**Sergio Navarro**  
Director

"Kindness is showing generosity of spirit; the choice to treat everyone with dignity and respect."

## FUTURE LOOK

As we look ahead at what's to come, we are excited to build more evidence-based tools for people to bring kindness into their classrooms, communities, and workplaces. One of our most exciting initiatives is a reframing around how people engage with kindness: a transition from feeling random to feeling intentional, and from feeling one-off to feeling habitual. We will be drawing from the best research and contributing our own in order to develop streamlined recommendations to help people cultivate their kindness muscle. We are prioritizing a more collaborative approach to our work and are excited to expand our strategic partnerships to amplify this groundbreaking work. Our hope is always to activate kindness, but it is ultimately up to each of you to choose kindness (or not). We hope you will join us in bringing kindness to whatever area of your life you want to see it manifested - your child's school, your workplace, or simply your own life and the way you show up in your relationships and community. **Every kind act matters.**