

**KINDNESS
WHEN OUR WORLD
NEEDED IT MOST**

2020 Annual Report | [kindness.org](https://www.kindness.org)

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Like everyone, this hasn't been the year we imagined. But a global pandemic alongside a country reeling from police brutality are the circumstances that demand kindness more urgently than ever before. In the midst of this challenge, we have been honored to show up as a leader.

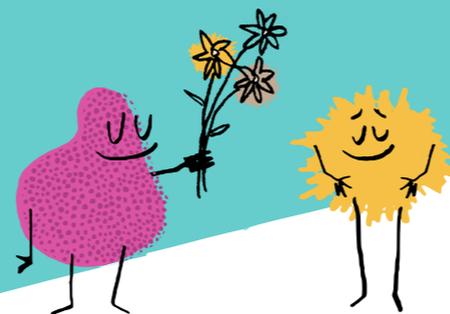
Although our plans were upended in March, we pivoted to respond to the shifting needs of teachers and students, and the needs of people everywhere, desperate to see goodness in a time of strife.

It was our partners, supporters, and community who helped us lead through this time. You helped us provide access to kindness programming for thousands of students around the world. You supported research into kindness under Covid, and civic acts of kindness in response to racism and police brutality. You chose kindness, even if it felt hard.

That is what we needed most this year.

In Gratitude,

Jaelyn



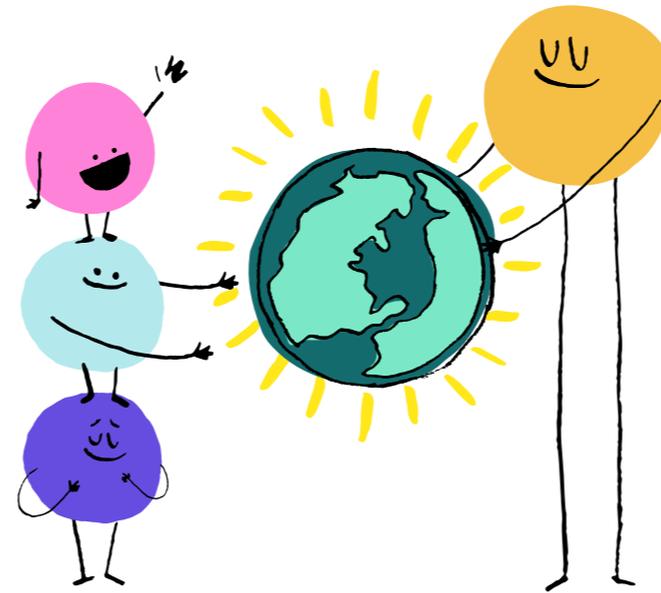
Jaelyn Lindsey
Co-Founder & CEO

In 2020, our world experienced a collective crisis unlike any we've seen in our lifetime.

When crisis hit, kindness was ready.

MISSION

We're on a mission to educate and inspire people to choose kindness



VISION

Our vision is a kinder world

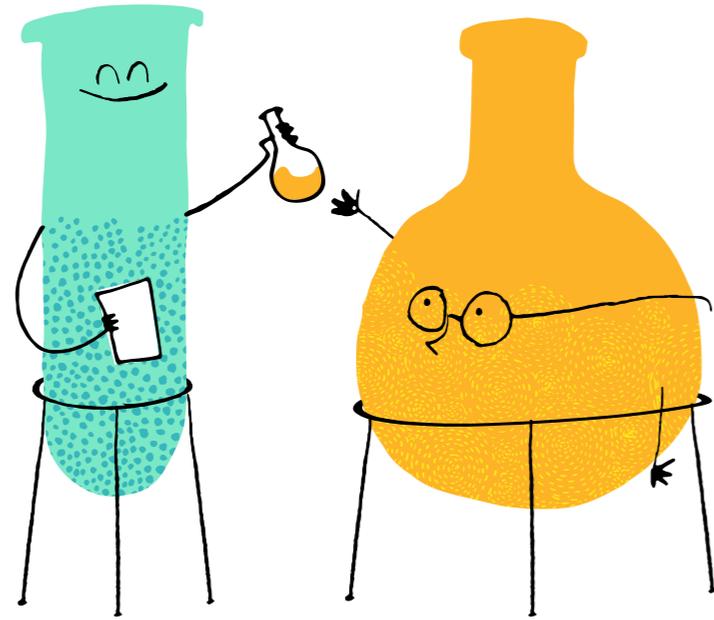


Our work is three-fold.

- 1 We use scientific research to understand the causes, costs, and benefits of kindness.
- 2 Then we use that understanding to develop evidence-based solutions to build a kinder world.
- 3 We scale our impact by collaborating with change-makers who want to spread kindness where they work and live.



KINDLAB



Our work understanding the science of kindness starts with Kindlab, where our goal is to ensure that everything we do at kindness.org is based on the latest and best scientific understanding of kindness. To that end, KindLab conducts pure and applied research on the causes and consequences of kindness, establishing collaborations with researchers at leading universities, recruiting and training interns, and drawing on insights from across the social, behavioral, and life sciences. This year, our plan to build the world's largest database of kind acts was upended by the pandemic. Instead, we investigated the role of kindness in real-world crises, to help people choose the most effective kind acts. These smaller projects were a great success, and we learned a lot. I am very proud of what we were able to achieve during this difficult time, and am excited to think about the progress will we make in the coming year.



Dr. Oliver Scott Curry
Research Director

1

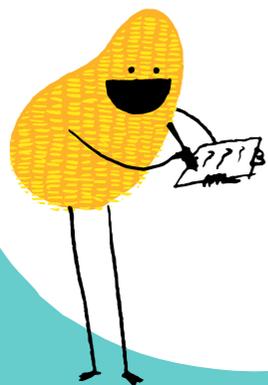
Kindfund

Kindlab does not have a monopoly on good ideas. In order to support the good ideas of others, and make connections in the field, we launched Kindfund, providing small grants (<\$5k) for kindness-related research. This year our first Kindfund supported study was submitted for publication: *Love Thy (Partisan) Neighbor: Brief Befriending Meditation Reduces Affective Polarization*.

KEY FINDINGS

“Practices (especially practices focused on kindness) might be an effective and scalable intervention to reduce affective polarization in American society.”

*~Dr. Otto Siminsson,
Lead Researcher
University of Oxford*



The challenges of 2020 touched every person around the world. More than ever, we leaned into research to show us how kindness could make the most effective impact in the face of crisis.

2

Kindbase

A database of over 1,000 acts of kindness

What are the kindest things you can do for others? What makes an act kind? And how kind are people? To answer these questions we started the year with a plan to create a database of over 1,000 acts of kindness, and have these acts rated for perceived costs and benefit by a large sample of the public. The results would allow us to identify the most cost-effective acts of kindness, investigate which kinds of acts are perceived as the most kind, and why, and develop a new act-based measure of kindness for use in future research. We got as far as gathering together hundreds acts of kindness that could be done for family, friends, colleagues, and strangers. The pandemic, however, forced us to hit the pause button, and pivot to two more urgent projects.

3

Kindness in a Crisis

Which kind acts matter most when crisis hits?

In response to the pandemic, we piloted our Kindbase method in a smaller study looking at how to be kind in a crisis (Curry & Krasnow, 2020a). We used the results of these surveys to refresh the Kindness.org acts platform, and we are now gathering data on people's actual experience of performing these acts (Kasser & Curry, in prep).

[Read more about the study](#)

“Every time I go to the grocery store, or [a restaurant], I thank them for working that day. The smiles are awesome. I even brought one girl to (happy) tears.”

~ Lori R.

“Today I provided pizza for Veterans and healthcare heroes at Adventhealth in Tampa, Florida. Thank you for your service!”

~Patrick R.

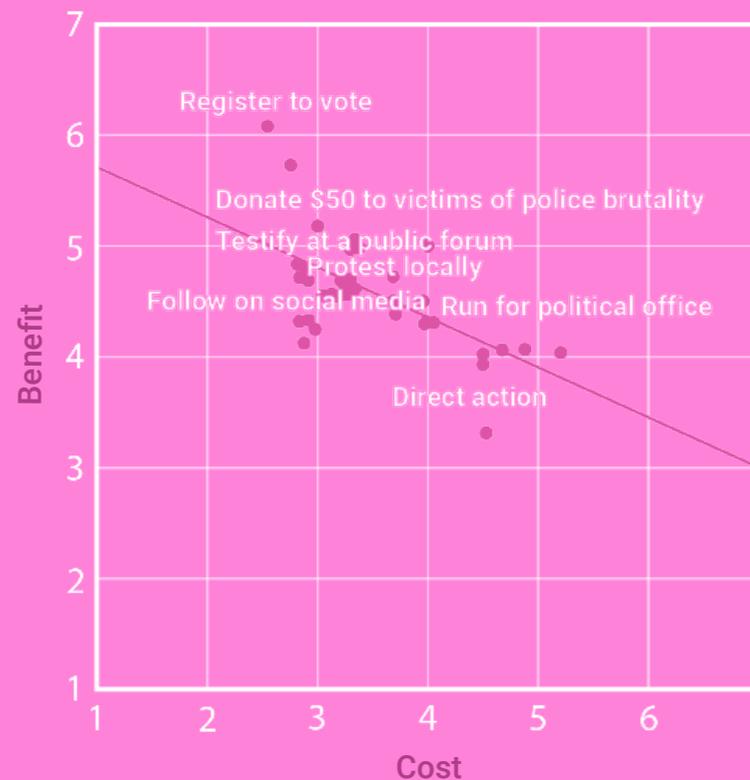


Civic Acts of Kindness

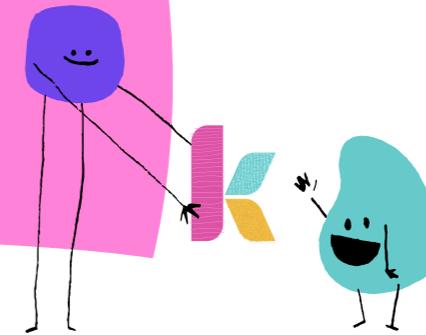
Can kindness help solve the problems of police brutality and racism?

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, we wanted to investigate the role 'civic' acts of kindness could play in helping to solve the problems of police brutality and racism. And so we employed the Kindbase methodology to identify the most cost-effective civic acts of kindness (Curry & Krasnow, 2020b). Again, we used our results to inform and reinvigorate our online kind acts platform.

CIVIC ACTS OF KINDNESS: COST & BENEFIT



[Read more about the study](#)



I wanted to help out with the election this year, since I knew that it would be hard for many people to volunteer due to Covid. So, not only did I register, but I worked the polls. I made new friends and learned a lot about the election process and my neighborhood. A win-win!

~Patricia M.

What if kids were empowered with the internal muscles to develop habits of kindness and choose kindness more often? We believe kids are the future leaders in kindness and we're doing everything we can to set them up for success.

This year we launched Learn Kind, our K-8 kindness and social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum that gives kids the resources they need to choose kindness now, and always. As a former classroom teacher, it was so important to me to build Learn Kind in a way that meets each student exactly where they are, sparking their curiosity, and giving them the opportunity to discover for themselves the impact that kindness can have.

We're only getting started, but already the impact that Learn Kind is having on students, on educators, on classrooms - and even extending naturally into homes - is powerful and I am so honored to be a part of it.



Rebecca Reed
Program Director,
Curriculum Design &
Development

LEARN KIND



In 2020, our team came to refer to the education landscape as “the wild west”. Educators, parents, and students were forced to navigate a complex crisis with no script, no precedent to lean on, and very high stakes. Never before has kindness education, social-emotional learning, or social support been so urgent.

1

Pandemic Response

When educators, parents, and students pivoted to remote learning, so did we.

In February 2020, we launched the Learn Kind Spring Pilot with a small group of K-8 educators across the U.S. By mid-March, all of our pilot schools were shut down, as the pandemic ripped across the globe. When educators, parents, and students transitioned to remote-learning, so did we. We pressed “pause” on the pilot, launched a Covid-19 Resource page with tools to help parents and educators transition to virtual learning and support student needs, and created weekly bespoke learning activities in response to specific needs arising throughout the early stages of the pandemic.

2

Fall 2020 Learn Kind Pilot

Kindness and social-emotional learning when kids and educators needed it most.

Learn Kind, our free K-8 kindness curriculum powered by scientific inquiry and social-emotional learning, was designed to engage students through action and discovery, allowing them to experience the benefits of kindness and social-emotional skills firsthand. Pandemic-created needs required us to go back to the table and develop new features that would fully support students and teachers in the new and uncertain school year. So we adapted Learn Kind to include additional resources focused on social connection and relationship building, support for both in-person and virtual learning environments, and resources for teacher well-being. We revised the curriculum to be as flexible and accessible as possible, and opened the pilot to any educator hoping to bring greater kindness and social-emotional learning to their students.

Learn Kind arrived in the moment it was needed most. And in perhaps the most challenging year the education landscape has ever seen, its impact exceeded expectations.

LEARN KIND PILOT IMPACT



Teachers



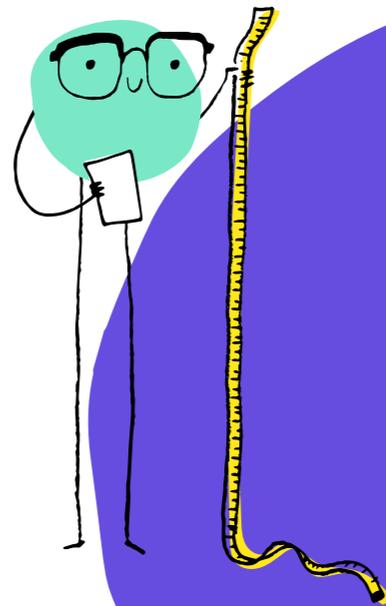
Students



States



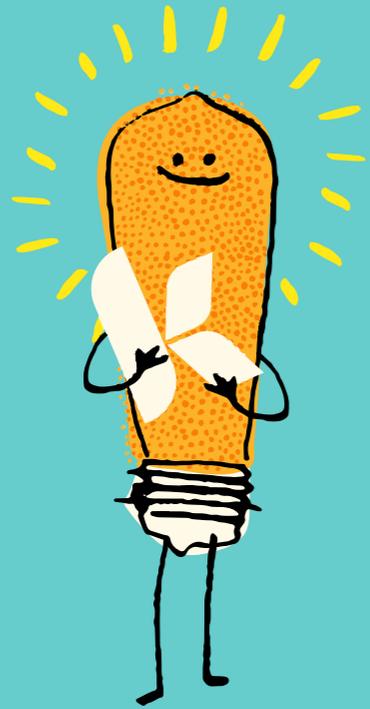
Countries



By the Numbers

- Average Class Kindness Grade improved from C to B
- 100% teachers reported positive outcomes
- All 6 self-efficacy domains increased

FROM THE TEACHERS



“ I loved the curriculum...my students were openly responsive to discussing kindness and were stretched by the reflection questions. I loved having a guide and activities to lead these discussions and encourage active participation. ”

~ Doretta M.,
8th Grade Special Education Teacher

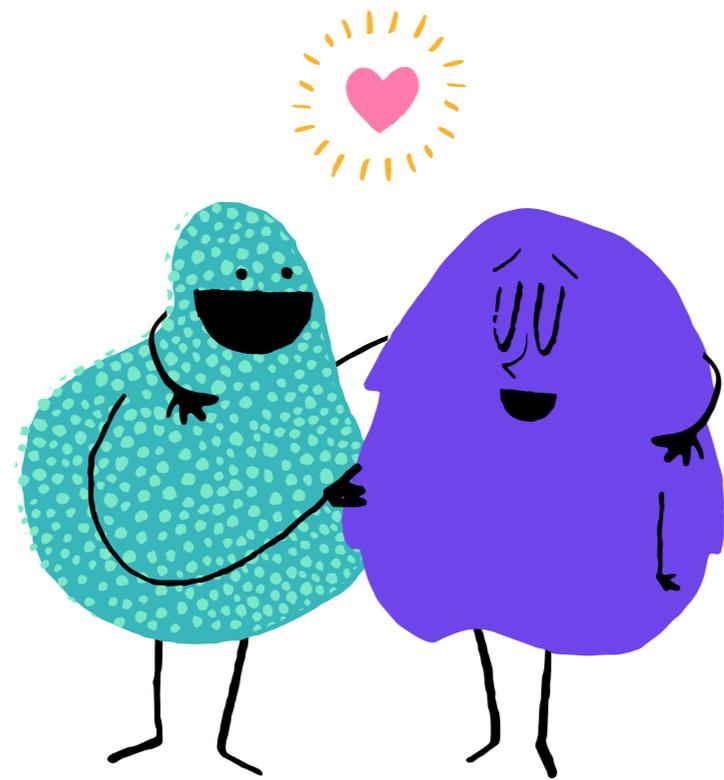
“On my hardest days, when I want to quit teaching, [Learn Kind] is where I go.”
~Middle School Special Education Teacher

“[My favorite student moment was when] my class could make specific connections to examples of students who needed a bit of compassion and empathy in their day.”
~ 3rd Grade Teacher

“During one morning routine the students supported a student having a difficult time without my initiating.”
~ Elementary School Teacher

I've used a lot of [SEL] curriculums, but this one is the most student-centered.
~ Guidance Counselor

Live Kind



“ I was thinking of older members of my church who live in senior residences and are confined to their apartments, so I call each every week to give love & support. That made me think of others who live alone, so I started a weekly email of local news, uplifting stories, news of covid locally, and links to uplifting music. Now it is sent to over 100 recipients each week. ”

~ Anonymous

“ For 1 minute everyone filled themselves with Loving Kindness thoughts focusing on the meaning of the words: “May I be happy, May I be healthy, May I be safe, May I live with ease. ”

~ Sofia Caseiro



“At our elementary school we had an inspiring book author name Amie Dean come to our school I got the idea from her book “Your Happy Heart.” I got my students participation by letting them design and decorate what makes their heart happy on a piece of paper, at which I cut the paper out in the shape of a heart to spread some love, not only in our room, but we displayed it in the hall to share love throughout the school.”

~ Brenda Scott

“I run a retirement home and when things started to get bad, I began making masks. At first it was just for my staff, then for their families, eventually it was for the children’s hospital near me, for the protesters I wanted to join but couldn’t, for homeless shelters... so far I’ve made over 400 masks and counting.”

~ Sara Skinner



KINDNESS X THE U.N.

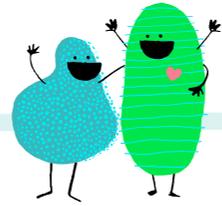
When the United Nations put out a call to action to people to spread different messages about kindness around covid, we knew it was something we had to contribute to. The video we submitted played on the idea of kindness being contagious. When the world was in collective turmoil, we knew that kindness as an answer was a message we needed to put out there.



BE KIND: A YEAR OF KINDNESS

In 2020, we launched our first book, *Be Kind: A Year of Kindness One Week at a Time*. *Be Kind* takes the three elements of our mission, to educate and inspire people to choose kindness, and lays out a guide for you to experience a year of kindness, week by week. Each of the fifty-two weeks includes a relevant research finding (learn), a reflection on the impact of kindness (reflect), and a kind act suggestion (do). We are grateful to see the book out in the world, helping to inspire more kindness everywhere.

Jan



- First Kind Fund project underway: **Love Thy (Partisan) Neighbor: Brief Befriending Meditation Reduces Affective Polarization**

Feb

- Launched the initial Learn Kind Pilot in **120 classrooms across 26 states**

Mar

- All Learn Kind Pilot schools close amidst the pandemic and transition to virtual learning
- We responded with our [Covid-19 Resource Page](#) for families and educators teaching kids at home
- Research Director Dr. Oliver Scott Curry featured in the [TEDx Talk: How to be Good](#)

Apr

- Partnered with **Harvard University** to research and report [what kind acts are most effective during a pandemic](#)
- **Published** our first book, [Be Kind](#), written by our co-founders

Aug



- Launched the **Learn Kind Pilot** for 2020-2021 school year with enhanced, pandemic-ready supports and increased built-in flexibility
- First Kind Fund project [submitted for publication](#)

Jul

- Featured as guest speakers at the [International Happiness Festival](#)
- Submitted grant proposal "How Kind: The development and validation of The Kindness Index" to Mind and Life Institute

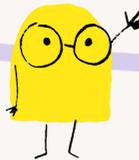
Jun

- Partnered with **Harvard University** to research and [report](#) the **most effective civic acts of kindness** in the wake of racism and police brutality
- School year ends and we conclude our Covid-19 school response, having produced 8 weekly custom kindness activities **servicing thousands of students around the world**
- Released collection of resources **to support conversations with kids about race** in light of the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor

May

- Developed strategy to relaunch enhanced [Learn Kind](#) curriculum for Fall Pilot
- Began curriculum revisions to ensure pandemic-specific supports for all

Sep



- Learn Kind Teacher Support Plan implemented
- More than **400 classroom serving 9,000+ students** active in Learn Kind Pilot

Oct

- Piloted Live Kind: [A road test of kind acts in the real world](#)

Nov



- **Launched the Make Kindness Visible** campaign in celebration of **World Kindness Day** and in partnership with **Nivea**

Dec

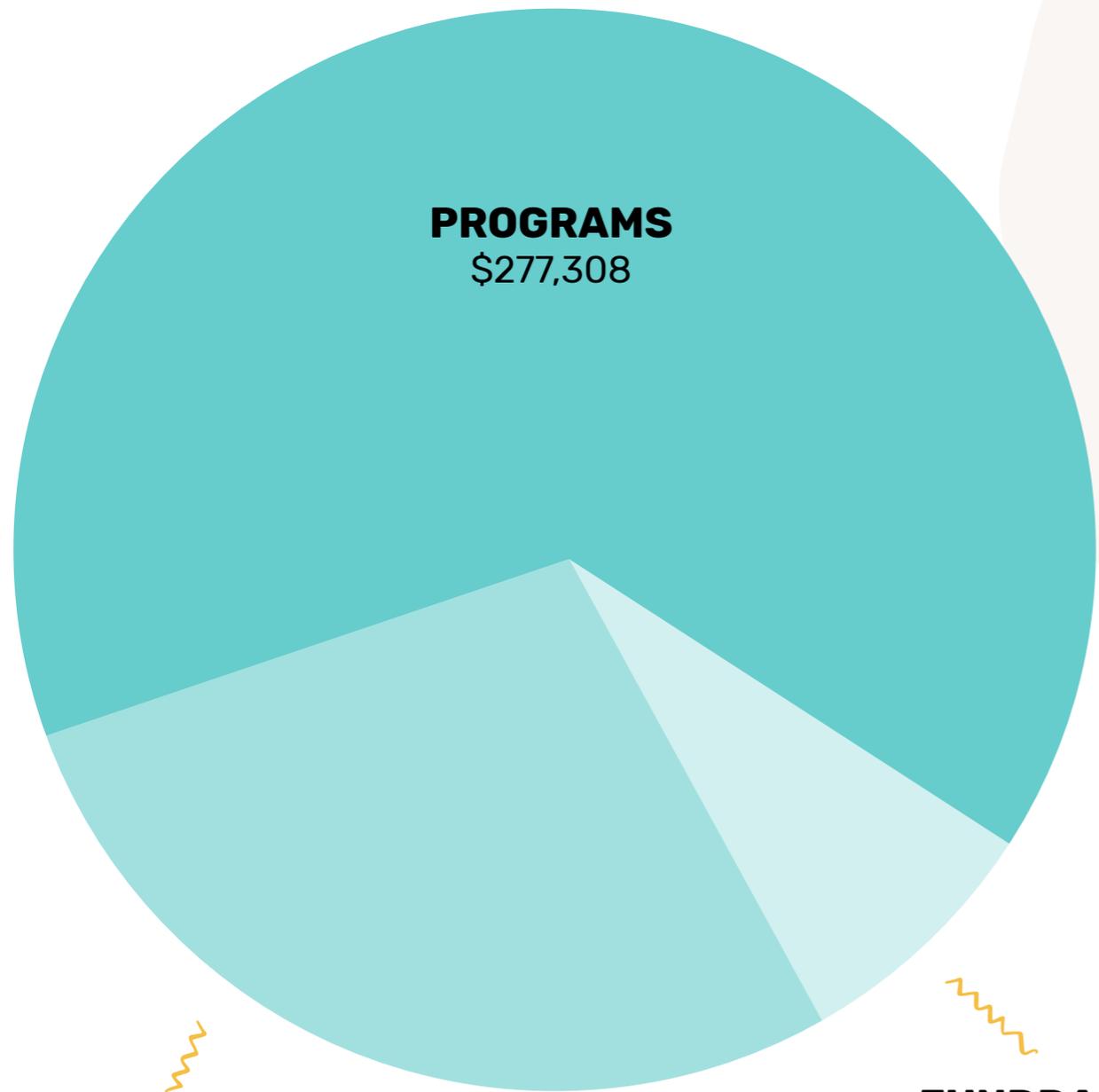


- Learn Kind Fall Pilot concludes with more than **16,000 students in 27 US states and 9 countries** engaged with curriculum
- Learn Kind Pilot evaluation blows us away with kindness classroom scores improving from C+ to B, 100% of reporting teachers reporting positive outcomes, and increases in all 6 measured SEL domains
- Learn Kind featured in [TIME for Kids](#) magazine



FINANCIALS

As it did for so many, last year forced us to take a close look at ourselves, and make some difficult decisions. But it was also a season that revealed our team's incredible agility, strength, and commitment to this mission. We are grateful to our donors and partners who continued to support our work and energized that, in the midst of a very lean year, we were able to establish foundational partnerships that set us up to thrive in the coming year.



ADMIN.
\$79,273

FUNDRAISING
\$23,911

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHAT IS YOUR
FAVORITE KIND ACT?



Mike Savatovsky
Board Chair

"My favourite act is to make eye contact and thank anyone in a service position (store clerk, crossing guard, someone holding a door) for their help. If I know their name, I also say it. It humanizes the interaction rather than making it transactional. Something simple anyone can do to appreciate others."



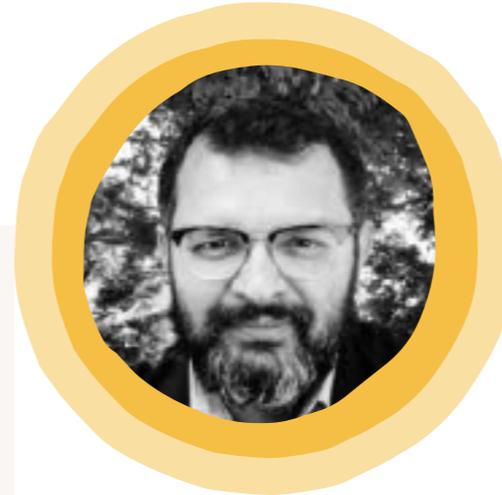
Neil Hutchinson
Co-founder, Director

"My favorite act is to put small bills into an envelope with a positive note and leave it for someone to find."



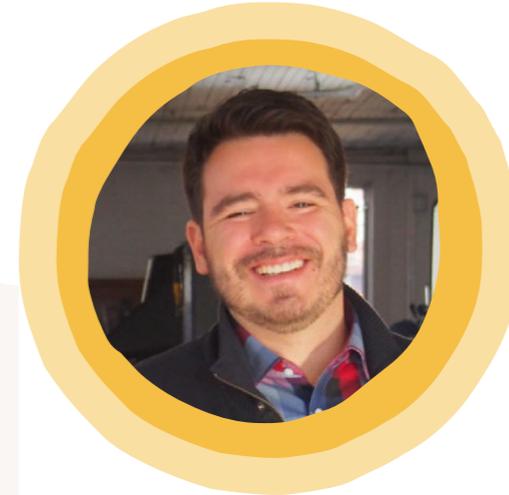
Yukari Pass
Treasurer

"My favorite act is giving an unexpected gift to someone."



Aditya Alurkar
Director

"My favorite kind act is to feed someone."

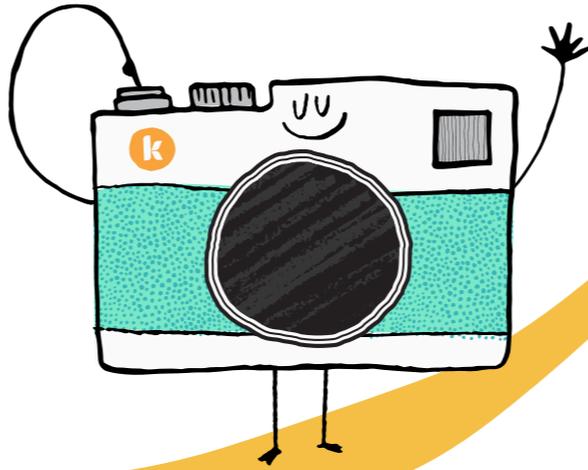


Sergio Navarro
Director

"My favorite kind act is to surprise people with an experience. It might be an amazing meal or a great concert. Something that they wouldn't have done on their own either due to a lack of knowledge or funds."

We're so grateful for a Board who helped the organization navigate a challenging time and come out even stronger.

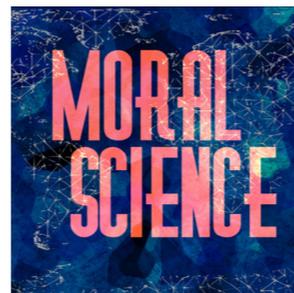
SPOTLIGHTING KINDNESS



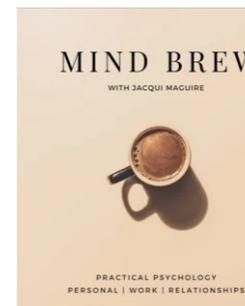
The Telegraph



TIME *for* **KiDS**



TEDx



FUTURE LOOK

We're leveraging data and collaborating with partners to scale kindness in schools and communities.

As we look ahead, we are encouraged by the engagement and impact Learn Kind is already making in the lives of students. We are inspired by the many partners we've begun working with to collaborate on campaigns that are grounded in research and drive more meaningful change. Throughout all we're doing, we continue to prioritize using learnings, findings, and evidence to inform our programs and recommendations. We iterate based on feedback. We take the science and apply the findings to better know if it still works outside of a lab. And by focusing in and prioritizing our energy on serving students, we are seeing our big vision of a kinder world take place in measurable ways in classrooms around the world. We aim to serve 20,000 students in our first Pilot year for Learn Kind and complete phase one of our Kindbase research and work with like-minded brands to bring the findings to people everywhere. We can't wait to work with you to build a kinder world.