

The Counselor's Corner

Tailor-made Calendar

Someone sent me one of the best ideas I have seen in a long time. I introduced it to the National Junior Honor Society, and they are going to pass it on to the teachers and try to get many of the students involved. The article I received talked about building a "Random Acts of Christmas Kindness Calendar". You can call it the "December Kindness Calendar" or even the "Advent Kindness Calendar". Call it anything you want, but make one!

A woman who goes by Wondermom Wannabe posted this idea. Before I read the article, I knew I was going to love it. (Who can resist anyone that goes by Wannabe?) I encourage you to google this article and read it in full. It has many ideas, links, sample calendars, and even blank calendars we can all fill in.

It is my firm belief that if I do not write things down, they will not happen. I think the calendar will keep us aware of things we can do to have a positive impact on those in our little spheres of influence. The calendar can be made by adults or children. If a child is developing the calendar, give her/him minimal guidance (within reason), and watch the creativity emerge. Adults and children can also work together. Keep it simple, unless you want to add more complex things on a weekend.

Wondermom Wannabe shared her own calendar, along with 60 ideas for random acts of kindness listed by Proverbial Homemaker. Here are some of my favorites for both adults and children. Children can do someone else's chores for a day; collect coats and blankets for the homeless or supplies for the local dog shelter; visit a nursing home or work at a soup kitchen with Mom or Dad; make a gift, card, or treat for an elderly neighbor; leave a kind note in a library book; put encouraging sticky notes around school; go with a parent and tape a popcorn bag and note to a Red Box machine; send a note of appreciation to a teacher. Adults can do some of these on their own, but they can choose to make monetary donations to organizations; surprise a wait staff person or others in the field of service with a larger than 20% tip; leave change in a vending machine; hide a dollar or so under a box in a grocery store with a note; send an email or card to someone you failed to appreciate (it is never too late); go through closets and get rid of anything that has not been worn in two years; surprise out of the area people with calls.

The calendar is a measureable way of witnessing the good that can come from a plan. Not only will we get things done within a month, but we will gain an awareness of what others need, emotionally and physically. There will always be someone out there who has less than we do. **Turning our attention away from gifts and other wants** while we are bombarded by ads that encourage us to buy or ask, is a very good thing. We will discover the true meaning of the season, and we will foster within ourselves and our children a sense of gratitude and a desire to give again.

Diane L. Rivard