

SignalViewpoints

‘Kindness wins’ at Pacific Ridge Elementary School

By **KATHERINE LACAZE**
For Seaside Signal

Students at Pacific Ridge Elementary School were challenged in a unique way. It didn't involve reading, science or mathematics. Instead, they participated in The Great Kindness Challenge, a nationwide initiative from Kids for Peace that took place from Jan. 24 to 28.

“Throughout the week, their focus was to be completing the different kind acts,” said counselor Kaile Jones, who introduced the campaign at Gearhart Elementary School a couple of years ago. The goal is to boost morale and positive connections between students and their peers, teachers, family and community.

After not being able to host a Kindness Challenge during the 2020-21 school year, Jones was excited to bring it back this year, although she changed it from a monthlong event to a weeklong campaign.

This year, each grade level was presented with a different kindness goal, and then individual teachers and classrooms could determine what they wanted to do to focus on their particular goal.

Kindergarteners and first graders were tasked with demonstrating kindness to others, which they did by drawing pictures and writing kind notes for teachers, staff members and bus drivers. Pacific Ridge preschoolers also created cards.

Second graders were presented the goal of showing kindness to the environment and coming up with ideas to keep it healthy and clean. The goal for third graders was to demonstrate kindness to the school community. Together, they created a large poster, which is covered in hearts and a heartbeat line and reads “Health and Kindness: The Heartbeat of Pacific Ridge,” to hang outside the front of the school.

Lastly, fourth and fifth graders were encouraged to show kindness to self. They created positive affirmation bookmarks with sayings like, “I am smart,” “I am kind,” or “I am strong.” Jones also shared a character strength survey with teachers to do with their students if they wanted. The survey helps highlight a person’s top five strengths. Students who completed the survey were encouraged to put one of their strengths on a nametag sticker and wear it throughout the day.

“We thought that would be a positive activity for them,” she said, adding students often start to feel less confident and positive about themselves as they get older, which can affect how they treat others. “We’re really just trying to focus on their kindness and love to themselves.”

On a schoolwide level, teachers were encouraged to take note of students completing a kind act. The student was then given a paper link — with different colors of paper corresponding to different grade levels — to write down their act of



Kindness and positivity took over Pacific Ridge Elementary School at the end of January, as the school participated in The Great Kindness Challenge, with different kindness goals for each grade level.

kindness, and the link was added to a large chain in the cafeteria.

The idea, Jones said, was “to see how many kind acts, as a school, we can complete.”

Her goal was 500 links, and they had reached 501 by the end of the week, with students continuing to turn in links the following week.

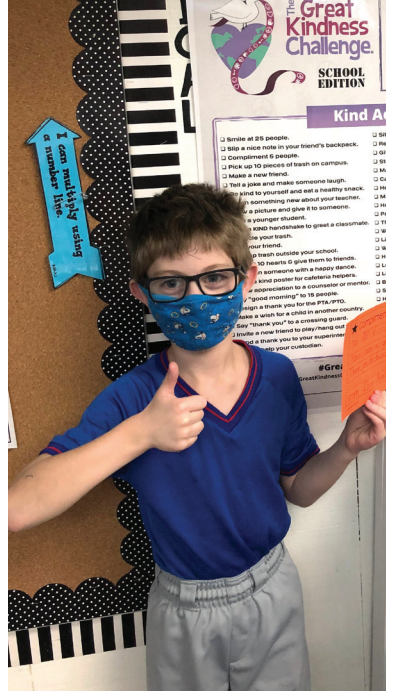
The Kindness Challenge was accompanied by a Spirit Week, featuring simple clothing options centered on a daily theme. For example, last Monday’s theme was “Hats Off to Kindness,” and students were encouraged to wear their favorite hat. Last Thursday’s theme was “Kindness Wins,” accompanied by sports attire or team apparel.

“I tried to stick with things that weren’t too difficult,” Jones said.

Meanwhile, she also tasked herself with doing different acts of kindness to bring positivity and boost morale among staff members as well.

Although the Kindness Challenge lasted only a week, the school focused on spreading the message that this is more than just a temporary challenge.

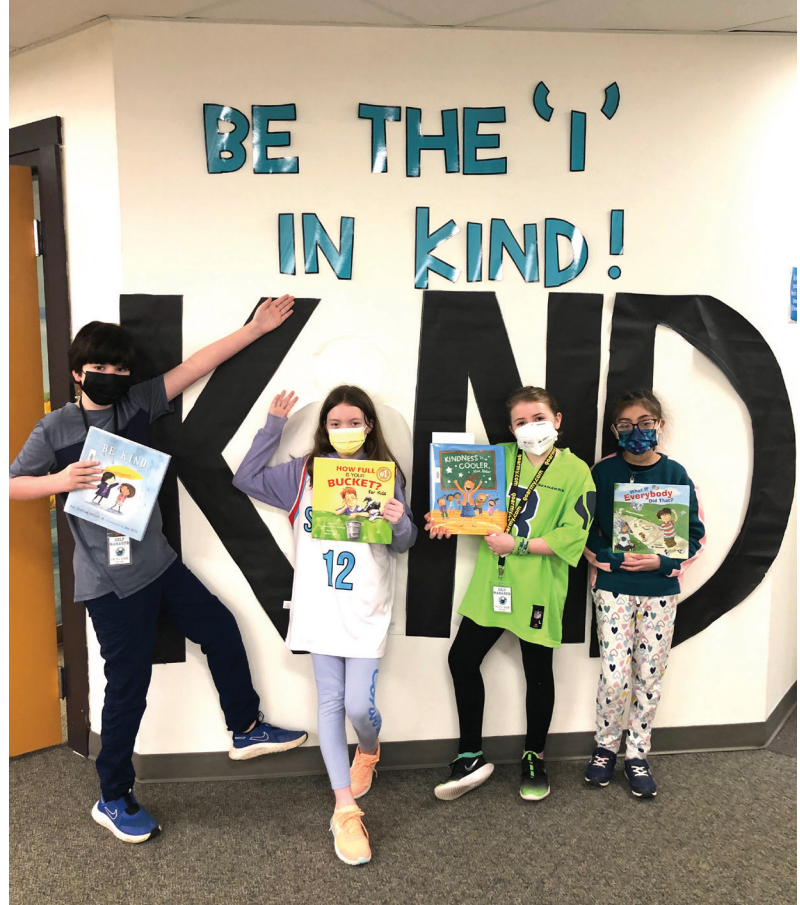
“Kindness is something that needs to continue throughout their whole life,” Jones said.



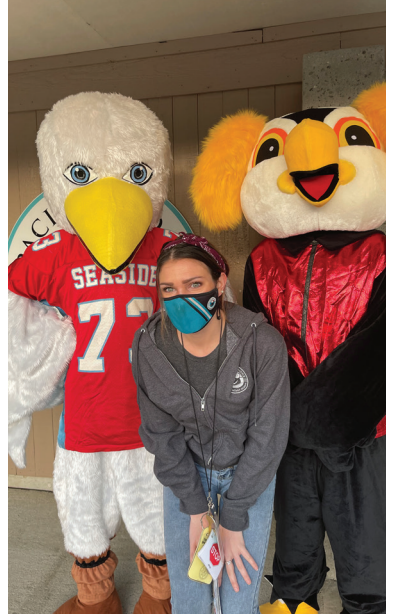
Pacific Ridge Elementary School Oscar, a student at Pacific Ridge Elementary School, shares a Compliment Card he wrote for his teacher during The Great Kindness Challenge, which took place from Jan. 24 to 28.



Pacific Ridge Elementary School Students at Pacific Ridge Elementary School created cards for their teachers as an act of kindness during The Great Kindness Challenge, a nationwide initiative.



Pacific Ridge Elementary School Pacific Ridge Elementary School students Winston (from left), Savannah, Isla and Chelsea share a message of kindness during the school’s Kindness Challenge.



Pacific Ridge Elementary School Pacific Ridge Elementary School counselor Kaile Jones introduced The Great Kindness Challenge, a nationwide initiative, at Gearhart Elementary School a few years back. She’s now implementing it at Pacific Ridge.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Seaside Public Works employee ‘got the job done’

I wanted to thank Jeremy Strimple from Seaside Public Works for fixing the road I pointed out to them within a week of my email.

We don’t often praise our public officials or even know what they do to help our day-to-day lives. I don’t know or care about his party affiliation, just happy he got the job done.

Brenda Burch
Seaside

Now is the time to act on new firehouse

I’ve been a Gearhart taxpayer since 1987, with 20-plus years of going to City Council and Planning Commission meetings.

In 2015, Gearhart assembled a fire station committee to find the best location for a new fire and police station, going by state and federal codes for tsunamis and earthquakes. There were three-plus years of public meetings before we presented our findings to the City Council.

Our top choice: Leslie Miller Dunes Meadow Park. Not because it’s a park or

has an ocean view, but because it’s close to city center, was the highest point (at the time), and was already Gearhart property costing about \$5 million.

It wasn’t about feelings, but about the safety of our citizens and costs.

It was rejected. There was outcry by some, because it’s a park, even though it was to take up only a small portion of Gearhart-owned park property.

The High Point property came up for sale, at \$3 million to \$4 million just for the property. After the city spent thousands testing the ground, the owner decided not to sell to Gearhart.

Now, we’re at the Highlands Lane station, a higher point, further inland and with a higher cost. The longer we wait, the more it’ll cost ... substantially!

I certainly hope those fighting against a new fire station all this time realize the substantial amount they’ve cost Gearhart taxpayers, whether it passes or not. Five million dollars at the park then, and now almost \$15 million. Next year?

All City Council and Planning Commission meetings are open to the public. Get the facts!

Tom Thies
Gearhart

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

MONDAY, FEB. 14
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, FEB. 15
Seaside Planning Commission, work session, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 16
Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., <https://www.seaside.k12.or.us/>.

THURSDAY, FEB. 17
Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, FEB. 22
Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Ave. A.

MONDAY, FEB. 28
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, MARCH 1
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2
Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., www.cityof-gearhart.com.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415 First Ave., Seaside.

MONDAY, MARCH 14
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, MARCH 15
Seaside Planning Commission, work session, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, MARCH 22
Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

MONDAY, MARCH 28
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29
Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Ave. A.



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