

# be kind.

In the school’s halls and beyond, the powerful influence of the campaign has spread to impact people across the nation by encouraging positive change, giving thanks, and helping those in need.

By Alani Casiano and Sophie Blank

## 768 shirts sold. \$3,063 raised. 13 states.

It all began on Valentine’s Day, Feb. 14, 2018. On a day meant to celebrate love and kindness, student leadership launched the Be Kind campaign, releasing shirts bearing the message and encouraging students to spread kindness to their peers through acts big and small.

In a nation in which people have become divided by their ideological differences, evident in the split along partisan lines, student leadership wanted to create a campaign intended to combat the effects of contention and encourage unity, kindness, and understanding.

“Just with the political and social climate that we face today, we wanted to really reinforce the idea of community in CT,” student leadership member Esther Eikins (12) said. “...Here in Cherokee Trail, we’re a community and we are a family...and it’s important that we be kind to each other.”

Coincidentally launching the campaign on the same day of a national tragedy in the form of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fl., student leadership saw an opportunity to make the message of Be Kind resonate even more amongst the student body, reminding them of the power of small acts of kindness.

“...After the Parkland shooting, we wanted to kind of unite as a school,” student leadership member Sarah Wood (11) said. “A really important thing is to just be

kind to one another and it’s a great way to stop a lot of the conflict that can happen in the school.”

The Be Kind shirts and their empowering message quickly began to spread beyond CT’s walls, piquing the interest of people across the community and showcasing the potential of Be Kind to become a national campaign.

“...Everywhere we go in the community and in the halls, when

**“...We really felt like we were truly spreading kindness across the country.”**

*- student leadership teacher Mrs. Tamara Johnson*

we have those shirts on, people want to get one. Regardless of whether we’re at Target, or at the mall, or whatever, ‘Where’d you get that shirt?’, and so that’s where the idea of spreading it past the halls of Cherokee Trail came from,” student leadership teacher Mrs. Tamara Johnson explained.

A webstore selling Be Kind merchandise, including tank tops, shirts and hoodies, launched on Oct. 26 and remained open until Nov. 11 at midnight.

In that time, 768 items were sold to people across 13 states

nationwide, raising \$3,063.

“...It’s cool that across the nation, people will be wearing our shirts,” Johnson said. “...We really felt like we were truly spreading kindness across the country.”

Exemplifying the core messages and intent of the campaign, student leadership donated all proceeds raised from the webstore to charities and organizations local and nationwide.

“We found an organization called Impact Locally...that allows for the homeless people...to pick out the clothes that they want to wear...so we really liked that idea of it. I just like the overall message of bringing dignity back to the homeless,” student leadership member Ritika Chopra (12) said.

“We knew that with this campaign we didn’t want to keep any of the money to ourselves because we are just spreading kindness by being able to support an organization that does mean a lot to us,” Chopra continued.

Student leadership also plans on donating part of the proceeds to support the firefighters who have fought to protect lives and contain the wildfires raging in California since mid-July.

Along with donating to Impact Locally, student leadership plans on impacting the lives of the homeless directly by donating Be Kind shirts to a local homeless shelter, further spreading positivity across the community and benefitting those in need.



Student leadership, along with their teacher Mrs. Johnson, stand united with gratitude towards the firefighters risking their lives to protect Northern Californian wildfire victims and happy to donate part of the Be Kind merchandise proceeds to them.  
*Photo by Zoe Vescera*

“On December first, we’re going down to a homeless shelter and we’re taking 100 shirts to give to the homeless, so our homeless in Denver will [also] be wearing them,” Johnson said.

Even as its influence spreads, the impact of the Be Kind campaign at CT continues to ring across the student body, inspiring students to recognize and appreciate their peers’ acts of kindness and motivating them to continue to spread kindness.

“One of the biggest days that I remember last year especially, was the day where...you would be able to come and get a shirt for someone who impacted you and [write] on a sticky note the name of the person who was kind to you and the kindness that they showed,” Ishika Patel (12) said. “I think being given the moment to be able to talk about even the smallest act of kindness that you’ve been shown was something that was really impactful last year,” she continued.

Since the first school day back from fall break this year, “be kind” posters have been featured throughout the school. With each glance at the posters bearing such a simple phrase, as students go to lunch or scurry to their next class during passing period, they can be reminded of CT’s enduring culture of kindness and the power of everyday acts to change lives for the better.

Mrs. Johnson gifts Be Kind shirts to the cross country team on Feb.1 after they spent practice that day raising money to donate to CT’s Wish Kid, Jeremiah. “It was the best thing we’ve done as a team,” said Alyssa Kimes (10).  
*Photo by Alani Casiano*



Mikayla Gallant (10), left, and Emma Reichert (10), right, enjoy lunch together while wearing their own piece of Be Kind apparel. “It makes me want to wear [the shirt] even more,” said Gallant of how she feels knowing the proceeds from her purchase went towards helping people in need.  
*Photo by Zoe Vescera*

