



KINDNESS MATTERS

How to Begin

123 ANYWHERE STREET, YOUR CITY



Outreach to those unhoused in your community is a wonderful way to give back, as you see those often invisible to others. Each community is unique, and one size does not fit all. Below is a template for you to grow and build on, as you begin your own Kindness Matters walks.

FIRST STEPS

- Start simple and small. Allow it to grow over time.
- Identify an area where you are aware that unhoused people frequent. Perhaps a public park, but make sure it is a safe area.
- Walking to those served, instead of having them come to one location, serves several purposes, including individual outreach, as well as less potential pushback from communities.
- Returning to the same area on the same day of the week at approximately the same time will allow your new friends to connect with you.
- The most important thing is to establish a relationship with those you encounter. Take time to talk with and get to know by name the people you encounter. Conversation and caring lets your friends know that you see and hear them.
- Offering coffee is a non-threatening groundbreaker for starting conversations.
- Always approach with another person. If someone is sleeping, leave your “gifts” at their feet, taking care not to startle them.
- Collapsible wagon carts or backpacks are an easy way to carry items.



SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BRING

- Begin with a few items; over time this can grow into larger amounts with more diversity.
- Ask about, and listen to, specific needs of those in your area
- Food that is hard to chew may be difficult for your new friends. Consider bringing bananas, tangerines, or cubed watermelon rather than apples and soft bars rather than crunchy.
- Muffins, soft bars, cheese crackers, and protein items such as tuna or chicken are popular.
- Only give food that will not spoil in the heat without refrigeration. If you have cans, make sure they are pop tops without the need for an opener.
- Avoid giving over-the-counter meds
- Try to use paper not plastic when possible as you distribute items
- If you want to begin taking clothing, it is very helpful to label each item with the size before you go with a simple and visible (S, M, L, XL, 2XL) to make it easier to identify when requested. Gently used clothes work well. Socks are always needed. Dark colors are usually preferred for items.

GROWING YOUR VOLUNTEERS

- Let others know your experiences, share the impact on you, and those you serve.
- Consider writing posts to describe your experiences.
- To protect your friends privacy, take pictures without faces and use the first letter in their name rather than full names.
- In-kind donations are a great way to include those who might not be able to walk with you.



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ALWAYS.



www.villagepartnersinternational.org
<https://facebook.com/VillagePartnersInternational>



Tampa, Florida



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