

# Community Impact Project

By Ellen, Raquel, Den & Tristan



Kindness



Project

End the Stigma: Kindness for Our Unhoused  
Community

# Project Description

We created our project with the goal of spreading awareness, starting positive conversations about the stigma faced by the unhoused community, specifically in Castlegar, BC, and highlighting the importance of kindness in our community.

For our project we created pins with the phrase “We love Kindness” and educational pamphlets that outlined what kindness is, why it matters, and simple ways to show kindness towards the unhoused community. They also shared common misconceptions about unhoused individuals, the impacts of stigma, and resources for anyone struggling.

*On Saturday November 16th we set up tables at Safeway and Canadian Tire where we handed out our pamphlets and pins, and engaged in open conversations about the unhoused community and kindness.*



# Context

This project is relevant because it helps raise awareness about the unhoused community in Castlegar, a group that often faces stigma and isolation.

By spreading **KINDNESS** and providing information, we aim to foster understanding and positive action from the public.

We complemented existing services for the unhoused community by raising awareness and providing direct outreach and contact information to the services.

This includes local organizations such as the Out of the Cold Shelter, the Castlegar Connection Centre, and the Community Harvest Food Bank & Drop-In Centre, which already provide vital support to those in need.

# Context

- One potential gap we identified is the lack of visible community engagement. While services for the unhoused exist, many people may not know about them or may have misconceptions.
- We also noticed that many individuals believe that kindness towards the unhoused community must be some large act, instead of acts as small as sharing a smile.

Our goal is to help close this gap by sharing with the public and encouraging a more compassionate view.





# Impact

The KINDNESS project helped improve community health and well-being by:

- Raising awareness and encouraging kindness
- Helping reduce stigma and advocating for a more supportive, compassionate environment.
- providing important information and resources, making it easier for people to access the services they need and serving as a guide for those willing to offer help.
- Fostered connection in the community through conversation, and simple greetings.
- Starting open conversations with the community.



# Accessibility

- To ensure the greatest degree of community participation we set up our tables in especially high traffic areas to guarantee we reached and conversated with as many individuals as possible.
- We also split up into two groups, one at Safeway and the other at Canadian Tire so we could interact with more members of the community than if we were in one group.
- To ensure our projects were accessible we set up our table at Safeway beside a ramp, and on a flat surface beside the exit at Canadian Tire.
- We ensured both spots had lots of room for both us and other individuals to move around and brought tables that were high enough for someone in a wheelchair to access.
- We also kept our pamphlets “sweet and simple” so they were easy for individuals of all ages and abilities to read.

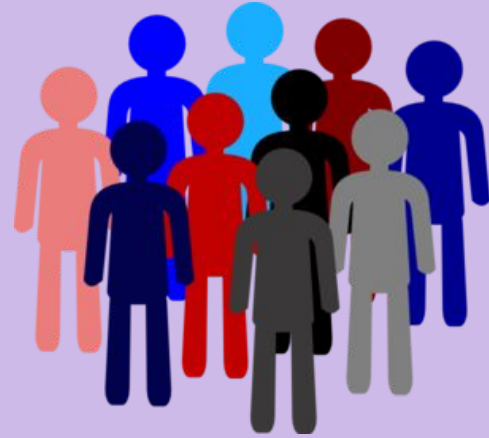


# Target Audience

Our target audience for this project was mostly just the general public, but also individuals without much knowledge about the challenges faced by the unhoused community.

We believe we reached our target audience as we had lots of people interacting and having open conversations with us, sharing personal stories, and asking questions about why we were doing our project, the resources we had listed, and why kindness matters.

*It wasn't exactly our target audience but we thought it was really cool that we handed out a pamphlet to a member of the Castlegar city council.*



# Inclusiveness

- Our project considered the needs and resources of people of all ages and economic classes by providing simple ways to show kindness, for example something as simple as a smile.
- Our project also considered different beliefs and perspectives individuals may have, even if people didn't completely agree with our project most people at least agree that kindness is important.
- Children were excited to receive a pin, feeling a sense of inclusion in the mission to spread kindness.





# What Worked Well?

1. We've engaged in lots of meaningful conversations with lots of people with diverse beliefs, thoughts, and backgrounds. The way we approached people and the use of the pins worked well and allowed us to engage with and spread awareness to lots of different people in the community.
2. Another success was our pin making. We communicated with Katie Cleary and set up a time that worked. We had a good system for pin making and finished over 100 pins in just over an hour.
3. Next, we handed out all 100 pamphlets in our two hour window. This was a large success because it meant that we were successful in spreading awareness about kindness towards the unhoused population. It also meant that we started conversations with 100 members of the community which is the first step in spreading kindness.



# Challenges

1. Our first challenge was getting Safeway to agree to let us set up our table there. They initially agreed but went a bit back and forth as the date approached.

To overcome this challenge we made sure to keep in contact with them and clearly communicate who we were and what our project was about, we also provided them a copy of our pamphlet so they could get a better idea of our project.

2. Our second challenge was getting people to engage with us at the start as it was initially difficult and slightly scary.

To overcome this challenge we adjusted the way we approached people. We decided to use a more laid back approach asking people if they were interested in this cause, or if they would like a kindness pin and building from that.

3. Our third challenge was communicating with everyone involved with the project as its scope went beyond just the four of us.

To overcome this we divided the contacts among us Ellen communicated with Rhonda lots, Raquel communicated with Jamye, and Tristan communicated with Katie. This made the communication less overwhelming.

## What is Kindness?

- It is an act of showing empathy, generosity, and caring.
- It means treating everyone with respect, understanding, and compassion.
- It is important regardless of a person's situation or circumstance.

## Why it matters?

- It Builds Community - kind acts create connections and strengthen relationships.
- Boosts Mental Well-Being - practicing kindness can elevate mood and reduce stress for both the giver and the receiver.
- Encourages positive change - kind deeds motivate positivity and generate a ripple effect throughout the community.

### Common Misconception of the Unhoused Community:

- **They choose to be unhoused.** Being unhoused is often caused by factors like economic conditions, health issues, and family crisis.
- **They just need to find a job.** Without a permanent address and proper resources job-hunting is difficult, and even employed individuals may struggle to find affordable housing.
- **Only those sleeping on the streets are homeless.** Many avoid shelters due to safety concerns and may couch surf instead.
- **All unhoused people misuse substances.** Only a portion struggle with addiction, and homelessness can also contribute to substance use.
- **All unhoused individuals are criminals.** They are often victims of violence and are more likely to face legal issues for survival-related actions.

### Impact of Stigma:

- **Isolation.** Shame prevents people from asking for help.
- **Mental Health.** Discrimination hurts self-esteem and mental well-being.
- **Access to Resources.** Fear of being judged stops individuals from using shelters and services.

## How to Make a Difference?

### Show KINDNESS towards the unhoused by:

- 1) *Begin with a Smile.* Greet them and treat them with dignity and respect.
- 2) *Listen actively to someone who needs to talk.* Take time to listen to their stories without judgment.
- 3) *Offer words of encouragement.*
- 4) *Volunteer your time.* Find time to help at local shelters or food banks.
- 5) *Make a donation.* Provide warm clothing, blankets and shoes. Share non-perishable items or bottled water.
- 6) *Share resources and advocate.* Give information about available services and shelters. Support policies that help our unhoused community and raise awareness.



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**Contact info/details of any Shelters and agencies helping the Unhoused People..**

- **Out of the Cold Shelter Castlegar** - 1660 Columbia Ave,  
(250) 608-5019
- **Castlegar Connection Centre** - 1660 Columbia Ave, (778) 460-1421
- **Community Harvest Food Bank & Drop-in Centre** - 614 Christina Place,  
(250) 687-1105

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."  
-Aesop



