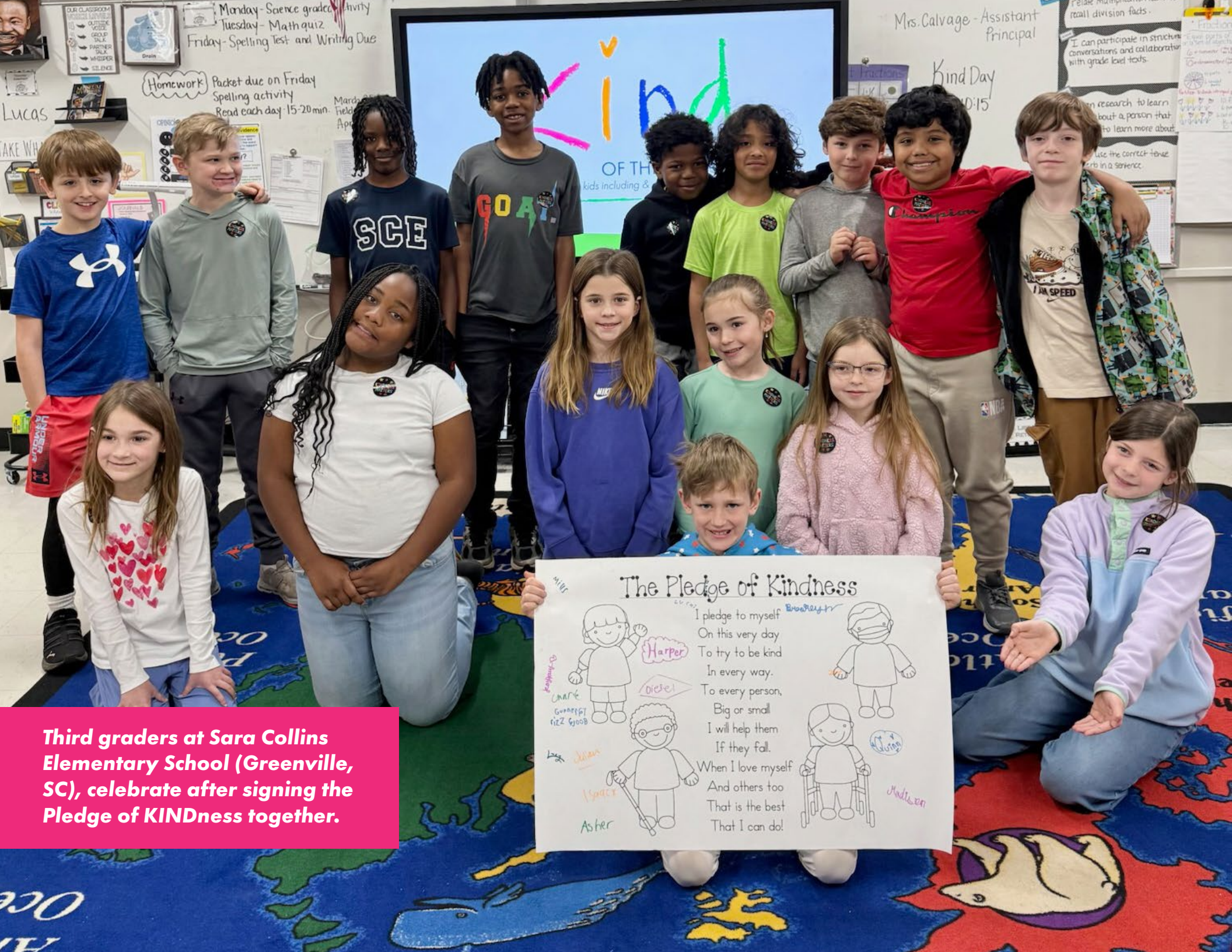




Kind
OF THE UPSTATE
kids including & nurturing disabilities

5 years of impact
2021–2026

www.kindoftheupstate.org



Third graders at Sara Collins Elementary School (Greenville, SC), celebrate after signing the Pledge of KINDness together.

The Pledge of Kindness

I pledge to myself
On this very day
To try to be kind
In every way.
To every person,
Big or small
I will help them
If they fall.
When I love myself
And others too
That is the best
That I can do!

Harper
Diesel
Aster
Madison



Dear KIND Friends,

Five years ago, we had a simple but powerful belief: that kindness and disability inclusion can be taught, practiced, and passed on. As we celebrate our fifth anniversary, we are moved by what this community has built together. From our very first KIND Day to the hundreds of classrooms we have now touched, every step of this journey has been made possible by our dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and school partners who believed in this mission from the start.

This year, we reached even more students with our KIND Day programs, spreading lessons of kindness, compassion, and disability inclusion throughout our community. We expanded into new schools, welcomed new volunteers, and deepened our partnerships with educators who share our conviction that social-emotional learning is just as essential as any academic subject.

Reflecting on five years, we are struck by the ripple effect of small acts. A child who learns to show empathy in early elementary school carries that skill into middle school, high school, and beyond. The culture of kindness we are planting today will continue to grow long after our programs end.

As we look ahead, we are excited to expand our impact even further. With your help, we plan to bring KIND Days to additional schools, engage more volunteers, and donate more books to students, teachers, and school libraries. This school year alone, we donated 5,507 books, a huge milestone we could not have reached without your generosity.

Thank you for five remarkable years. Thank you for showing up, giving generously, and believing that a kinder world starts in the classroom. We could not do this without you.

Kindly,

Caroline Giguere
Co-Founder

Francie Todd
Co-Founder



OUR MISSION

KIND of the Upstate is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that educates about people with disabilities to create a kinder and more inclusive community.

OUR VISION

A world where people with disabilities are celebrated and included just as they are.

OUR BELIEFS

- KIND believes that one person's choice to include individuals with disabilities can transform families, communities, and the world.
- We believe that disability education, when introduced in elementary school, cultivates the foundation for lifelong acceptance, inclusion, and understanding.
- We believe books are a powerful tool for deepening understanding of disabilities and teaching empathy while breaking down barriers.

OUR GOALS

- KIND's #1 goal is to make our community a more inclusive place, where every individual is seen, valued, and included.
- KIND educates individuals of all ages about disabilities, beginning in the classroom.
- KIND provides educational lessons and materials, designed to spark meaningful discussions among students, teachers, and parents about disabilities and the importance of kindness.

“ It was such a wonderful way to start the day! Thank you for bringing this program and awareness to our kids. Please come back next year!”

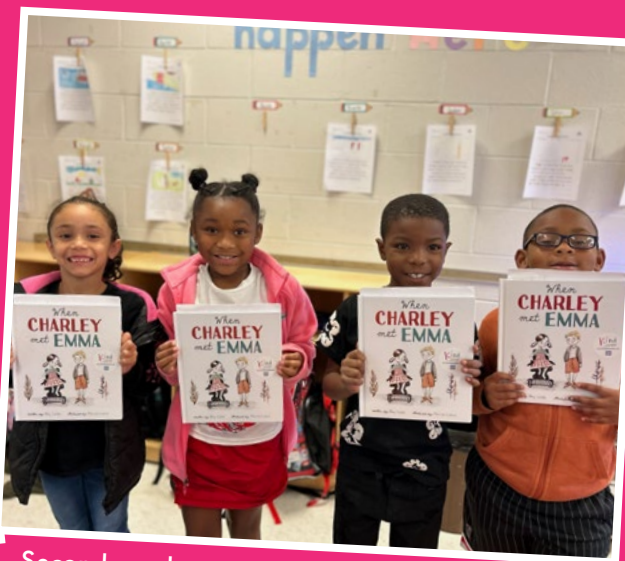
– Casi Esqueda, Teacher, Sara Collins Elementary School



First-grade students at Midway Elementary School (Anderson, SC) celebrate their KIND Day with brand new copies of *Everyone Belongs*, by Heather Avis.



First-grade student and a parent volunteer at East Link Academy (Greenville, SC).



Second-graders at Cherrydale Elementary School (Greenville, SC) enjoying their personal copies of *When Charley Met Emma*, by Amy Webb.



A first-grade student at Lake Forest Elementary School (Greenville, SC) enjoying a writing activity titled 'Same, Same, But Different' – a lesson in finding common ground.



www.kindoftheupstate.org

What is a KIND Day?

A KIND Day is a fun and interactive 45-minute program that teaches first, second, and third graders about kindness, inclusion, and disabilities in a meaningful way. At the end of the program, each child receives their very own copy of the featured book to take home, encouraging continued conversations about kindness and inclusion.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Class Size: Preferably 25 students or fewer
- Location: Classroom with smart board and internet access is preferred
- Supervision: A teacher or staff member must be present for the entire session

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Read-aloud session of one of KIND's favorite books about disabilities
- PowerPoint presentation introducing new friends with disabilities
- Reciting and signing a KINDness pledge
- Coloring or writing activity correlating with the lesson
- Each student receives a personal copy of the featured book and educational materials

PROGRAM LOGISTICS

- Cost: No financial obligation for schools
- Materials: All books and supplies are provided by KIND; schools should ensure smart board and internet access
- Eligible Grades: First, second, and third grade students
- Duration: 45 minutes (9:30–10:15 am)
- Facilitators: 2-4 KIND volunteers per classroom

HOW SCHOOLS CAN SUPPORT KIND

KIND provides a SignUpGenius link to recruit volunteers. Schools must distribute this link to help secure volunteers in each classroom.

GUIDANCE FOR NEW SCHOOLS

For first-time participating schools, KIND recommends beginning with first grade classes. To view a list of current participating schools, please visit our website.

MATERIAL REVIEW PROCESS

Schools may review all lesson plans and materials before hosting a KIND Day.

BOOKS BY GRADE LEVEL

- 1st Grade: *Everyone Belongs* by Heather Avis
- 2nd Grade: *When Charley Met Emma* by Amy Webb
- 3rd Grade: *Just Ask!* by Sonia Sotomayor

CANCELLATION POLICY

We are committed to delivering high-quality education and lessons. To ensure smooth scheduling and accommodate all schools, we require a minimum of six weeks notice for any session cancellations or rescheduling.

IN  SCHOOL YEARS, WE HAVE →

 **Seen
13,619
Students**



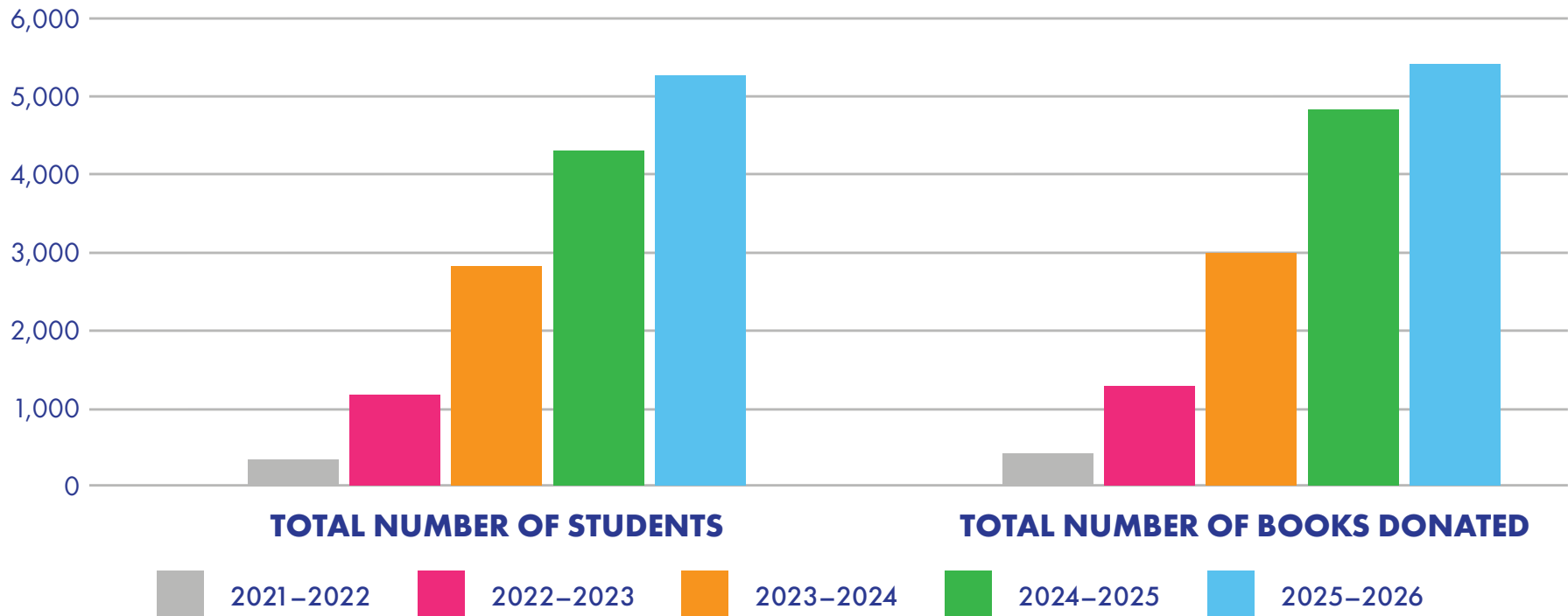
**Given Away
14,721
Books**



**Had More Than
1,500
Volunteers**

5 Years of KINDness, Growth, and Impact

2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2025-26	
354	367	1,058	1,128	2,700	3,000	4,325	4,719	5,182	5,507
students	books donated	students	books donated	students	books donated	students	books donated	students	books donated



participating schools

2021–2026

Advent Methodist Church (Greenville)
Augusta Circle Elementary (Greenville)
Berea Elementary* (Greenville)
Bethel Elementary (Greenville)
Blythe Academy (Greenville)
Buena Vista Elementary* (Greenville)
Camperdown Academy (Greenville)
Centerville Elementary* (Anderson)
Cherrydale Elementary* (Greenville)
Christ Church Episcopal School (Greenville)
Concord Elementary* (Anderson)
East Link Academy (Greenville)
Ellen Woodside Elementary* (Greenville)
Fairforest Elementary* (Spartanburg)
Faith Montessori (Greenville)
First Presbyterian Academy (Greenville)
First Presbyterian Church Weekday School (Spartanburg)
Fountain Inn Elementary (Greenville)
GREEN Charter School Simpsonville* (Greenville)
Hollis Academy* (Greenville)
King's Classical School (Greenville)
Lake Forest Elementary* (Greenville)
Midway Elementary* (Anderson)
Mitchell Road Christian Academy* (Greenville)
New Prospect Elementary* (Anderson)

Pelham Road Elementary (Greenville)
Pine Street Elementary (Spartanburg)
Primrose School of Greenville (Greenville)
Reedy Laurel Elementary (Greenville)
Roebuck Elementary* (Spartanburg)
Roots and Wings Nature School* (Greenville)
Sara Collins Elementary (Greenville)
Simpsonville Elementary* (Greenville)
Spartanburg Day School (Spartanburg)
Spearman Elementary* (Anderson)
Springbrook Behavioral Health (Greenville)
St. Paul's School (Greenville)
Stone Academy (Greenville)
Summit Drive Elementary (Greenville)
Thomas E. Kerns* (Greenville)
West View Elementary* (Spartanburg)
Westminster Weekday School (Greenville)
YMCA Program Center (Simpsonville)

**Title I Schools*



Kind

2026-2027

board members

KIND of the Upstate is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is composed of an all-volunteer Board of Directors who oversee all operations.



Caroline Giguere
Co-Founder/Director



Francie Todd
Co-Founder/Director



Becca Fowler
Education Chair



Carmen Hancock
Operations Manager



Candice Hipp
Grant and Analytics Chair



Rebecca Huntington
KIND Day Chair



Laura Johnson
Treasurer



Meredith Johnson
Secretary



Melissa Chandler Murphy
Fundraising Chair

A **K**ind thank you

to our past and present
Board Members for their
service and dedication!



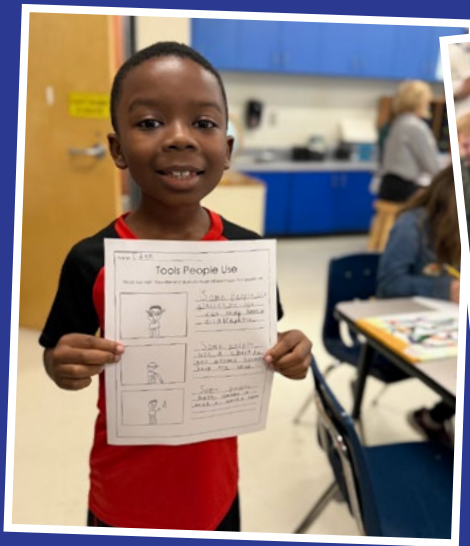
L-R: Laura Johnson, Ellen Wilson, Candice Hipp, Caroline Giguere,
Francie Todd, Rebecca Huntington, Melissa Murphy,
Julia Mowlajko, Carmen Hancock



L-R: Kaitlyn Bradshaw, Ellen Wilson, Candice Hipp, Caroline Giguere,
Francie Todd, Julia Mowlajko, Anna Kate Brown, Leah Lawson



L-R: Ellen Wilson, Tinsley Maness, Francie Todd, Julia Mowlajko,
Katherine Mattice, Caroline Giguere, Candice Hipp



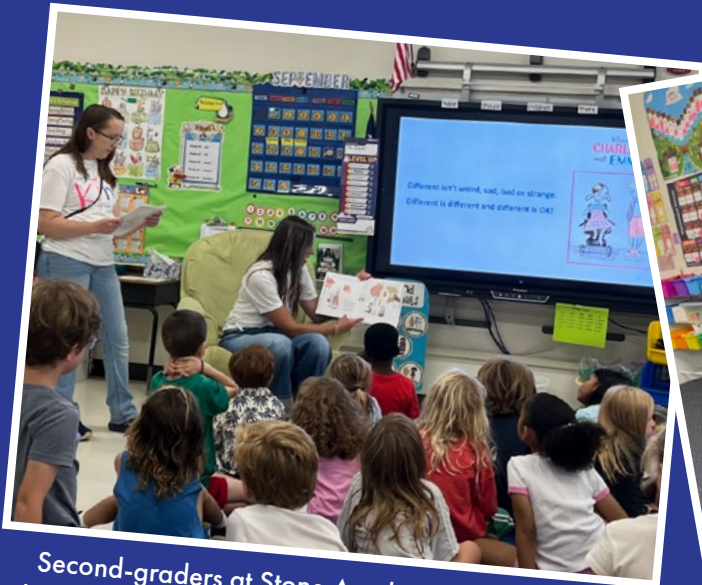
Third-grade students at Stone Academy (Greenville, SC) participating in a 'Tools People Use' worksheet.



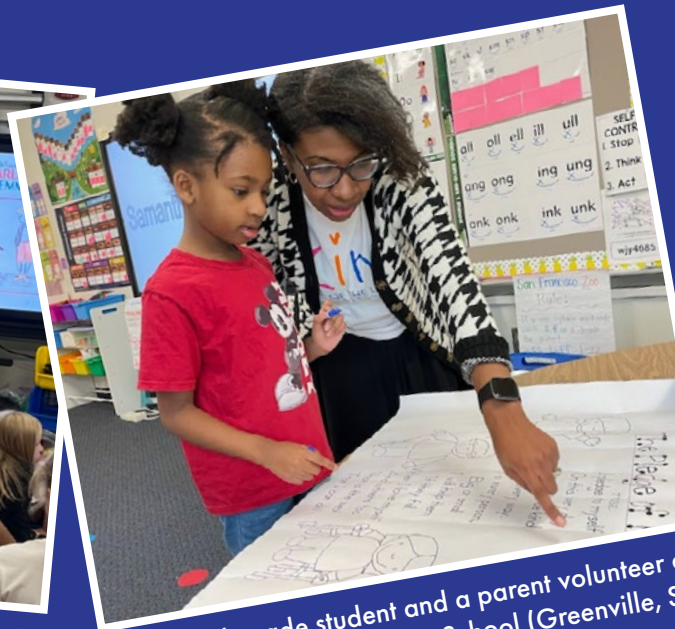
First-grade student at Buena Vista Elementary (Greenville, SC) with her personal copy of Everyone Belongs.

“It was the perfect day! Through and through! You all are such a gift to our community with your vision to start KIND and empower precious kiddos: and adults too! It was so positive in every way!”

– Jane Harrison Fisher, KIND Volunteer



Second-graders at Stone Academy (Greenville, SC) learning the phrase “Different isn’t weird, sad, bad, or strange. Different is different and different is OK.”



A second-grade student and a parent volunteer at Ellen Woodside Elementary School (Greenville, SC) reading the Pledge of KINDness together.



First-grade students at Centerville Elementary (Anderson, SC) are excited about their new books.

board member spotlight

A Board Member Reflection on Five Years

by Ellen Wilson (Board Member 2021–2025)

Being involved in KIND of the Upstate has been such an honor and has truly been one of the most rewarding parts of my adult life. I have had the privilege of being on the board from the very beginning, where we only dreamed of the impact we'd have today. I remember six years ago-with our board, having a great discussion on the difference between being "nice" and being "kind." It was so important to us to realize that anyone could be nice, but what's truly special is when someone is kind to you. What is the difference? I can be nice and tell someone I like their outfit, but to be kind to them means I see their heart and value them for their true selves. Being nice means waving to someone new, but being kind means asking that person to play on the playground. Together, our board discussed the importance of the words "inclusive" and "nurture" and founded our principles on helping young children learn how to do this at an early age.

I am an elementary school teacher and have seen firsthand the impact that our instruction has had on students that are typically abled. I see students walking around my school in their KIND of the Upstate t-shirts and they wear them with pride. It's a symbol to others that they want to include everyone, no matter their abilities. Likewise, I get teary eyed when I think about the number of our books floating around Greenville, SC that have not only inspired children and adults alike to be more inclusive, but have sparked meaningful conversation between multigenerations to love one another. Kids, parents, people of all ages around our community have learned from our lessons to love other human beings because of the color of their hearts, not because of their abilities.

To me, nothing in this world is more rewarding to teach. It has truly been an honor to help spread this mission in our community and I'm forever grateful for the impact that KIND of the Upstate has had on my life.



Ellen Wilson and her student, Row Giguere.

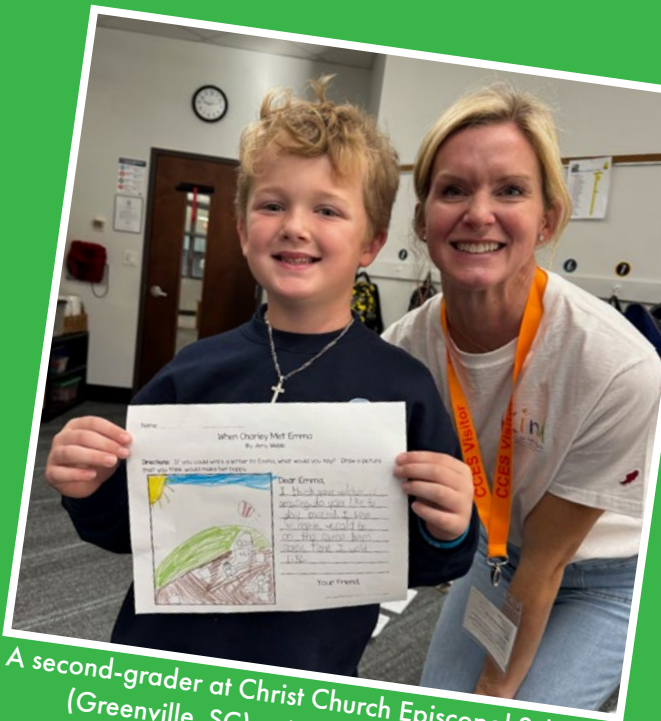


“This was such an honor! Getting to teach students about disabilities is a gift and every single time, I walk away having learned something amazing from them too. So special.”

– Langdon Morris, KIND Volunteer



Woodmont High School volunteers leading a KIND Day at Ellen Woodside Elementary School (Greenville, SC).



A second-grader at Christ Church Episcopal School (Greenville, SC) writes a letter to Emma, a character from *When Charley Met Emma*



A student and a parent volunteer share a smile while reading *Just Ask!* by Justice Sonia Sotomayor at East Link Academy (Greenville, SC).



First-graders at Sara Collins Elementary School (Greenville, SC) sign the Pledge of KINDness, promising to choose KINDness.

family spotlight

A Family Reflection on Five Years: The Mowlajko Family

by Julia Mowlajko (Board Member 2021–2025) and her daughters, Emory (9) and Palmer (6)

Serving on the KIND of the Upstate board these past five years has been one of the greatest gifts of my adult life. I consider it a “family board” experience because it has impacted not only me, but my entire family in such a positive way.

Both Emory and Palmer have seen what it looks like to serve a greater purpose and be part of something that makes a meaningful impact on the world around them. That lesson matters deeply to me. Growing up, I was blessed to have a close friend with a disability. At the time, I did not fully understand what a gift that friendship was, but as I got older, I came to appreciate the strength, perspective, and sense of community it created for all of us. Within our group, we never let differences define our relationship, and that is exactly the mindset I have wanted to pass on to my girls and our community. Being part of KIND has given me the opportunity, and the language, to show my family that people are far more alike than they are different.

I recently asked Palmer and Emory a few questions about KIND, and their responses spoke volumes. In that moment, it became clear that serving on this board has shaped our family in ways I will always be grateful for.

Emory (9): “Being part of KIND has meant a lot to me. It’s helped me talk to my friends about being kind, including others, and understanding people with disabilities. Even if my mom wasn’t on the board, I would still want to be part of KIND. People with disabilities can sometimes feel different or get stared at, and it’s really important for people to understand that everyone is different, and that’s okay. Everyone deserves to be included. My favorite memory was going to Hall’s school and helping the younger kids paint a tree. I got to be in their environment and see how they learn, which made the experience feel more real and meaningful. One of the biggest things for me is seeing my mom be part of KIND. It shows that she really cares about how people are treated and is willing to be part of something that makes a difference. I definitely want to keep being part of KIND, and I think it would be great if there were even more ways for kids to get involved, like going into schools and helping teach lessons about kindness and inclusion.”

Palmer (6): “Being a part of KIND has made me feel really happy. I learned that if you have a disability, it’s okay. I don’t think I would have learned that in the same way if my mom wasn’t on the board. Because she was, I got to see more, do more, and understand more. My favorite memory is going to the baseball stadium for Fall for Kindness, and I’ve made new friends through KIND too. KIND is a program where people with disabilities can be included and be themselves, but it’s also for people without disabilities. Anyone can be part of it. What people learn is that even if someone has a disability, we’re all really more alike than different.”



*Andy, Julia, Emory,
and Palmer Mowlajko*



Fall for Kindness



DRIVING Kindness AT FLUOR FIELD

Fall for KINDness is KIND of the Upstate's signature annual event, designed to bring together individuals of all ages and abilities for an inclusive, family-friendly afternoon of connection, creativity, and celebration at Greenville Drive's Fluor Field.



ATTENDANCE
500+



FUNDS RAISED
\$28,000+



FUNDS SERVE
2,800+ STUDENTS



SPONSORS
50+

Thank you to our 2025 Sponsors!



GE VERNOVA



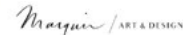
The Duncan Family



Dr. and Mrs. Scott A Davis



Bugay, Watson & Associates
Ambulatory Pediatric Health Laboratory Practice



The Kester Family



The Hoffman Family



The Johnson Family

Visit bit.ly/ffk26 for 2026 Opportunities

**Join us for the 6th Annual
Fall for KINDness
Sunday, October 25, 2026
3-5 pm at Fluor Field**

Ways to support Kind

DONATE / SPONSOR

\$1,500 **Entire Grade Level**
Sponsor an entire Grade's KIND Day
(6 Classes)

\$750 **Half Grade Level**
Sponsor a half Grade's KIND Day
(3 Classes)

\$250 **Classroom Level**
Sponsor a Classroom's KIND Day
(1 Class)

\$125 **Half Classroom Level**
Sponsor a half Classroom's KIND Day

\$10 **Child Level**
Sponsor a Child's KIND Day



SCAN TO DONATE!

VOLUNTEER WITH US

KIND of the Upstate relies on its volunteers so there are plenty of opportunities to become involved.
Visit www.kindoftheupstate.org/get-involved

HOST A KIND DAY

We would love to host a KIND day at your school.
Please email us: info@kindoftheupstate.org

carry
Kindness
with you

KIND of the Upstate is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, EIN 85-3754249.
Donations can be made by mailing a check to PO Box 8242, Greenville, SC 29604,
venmo @kindoftheupstate, or by credit card on our website kindoftheupstate.org



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Thank you for helping us build *Kinder* schools and communities.



Third-graders at Augusta Circle Elementary (Greenville, SC) with their personal copies of *Just Ask!*

