

Pelahatchie Elementary practices kindness



By Guest Columnist
Robin Sanders,
Principal, Pelahatchie
Elementary

Pelahatchie Elementary School (PES) participated in the 11th annual GREAT KINDNESS CHALLENGE January 24-28. Our students joined nearly 17 million youth in 115 countries to create a kinder world. Our world can certainly use some extra kindness right now.

This Challenge, presented by the global nonprofit Kids for Peace, was launched with three Carlsbad, California schools in 2012 to address bullying and to foster connection, inclusion and compassion. The annual program has multiplied in enrollment each year, having grown to nearly 17 million students in 33,000 schools, reaching across all 50 states and 115 countries. Jill McManigal, co-founder and executive director of Kids for Peace, explains, "We are living through a global pandemic which is hugely impacting our families, students, communities and the world. We are truly grateful for all educators who not only ensure safe school environments but are also committed to creating school cultures that promote equity, community, empathy and social-emotional wellness. The Great Kindness Challenge provides educators and students the tools, oppor-

tunity and encouragement to actively create a positive, respectful and inclusive school culture for all."

Schools and students are drawn to the program for its positive and proactive approach to creating kinder school climates through a simple checklist of intentional acts of kindness. The checklist was distributed to students at the beginning of The Great Kindness Challenge week. While the excitement of The Great Kindness Challenge is enormous, it is the simple acts of kindness that prove to be the biggest hit. Some of the items on the checklist are: wave at 25 people, help your teacher with a needed



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task, read a book to a younger student and safely sit with a new group of kids at lunch.

Big or small, every act of kindness makes a difference. We can all help make a positive difference. Let's join together, lift each other up, cheer each other on and do our part to create a kinder Pelahatchie and a more compassionate world. For more information about the Great Kindness Challenge visit www.greatkindnesschallenge.org.



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