



*Thank you for your kindness.*

## Acknowledging Acts of Kindness Club Newsletter – January 2026

*“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” — Aesop*

Happy New Year to all! As a “dyed in the wool” optimist I am predicting that our club will have its greatest year yet in 2026. We have some wonderful members, the greatest Board of Directors ever, some powerful kindness initiatives like the Educational Focus Group, kindness incentives like our Giving Clubs Showcases, Feed My Starving Children, Project SOS, Flags for Fallen Veterans, and more.

Come to our January meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 12:30 at the Bacall Recreation Center to help kick off our year. **Our speaker will be Mary Ellen Shea, Life Transitions Support.** She calls herself ‘The Widow Mentor’ and does an amazing job in supporting widows, widowers, and caretakers who are dealing with loss. If you know someone who is dealing with loss bring them along. They will thank you for it.

We will also look at 2026’s upcoming activities, share some stories of kindness (bring some to share if you can), and let you know about some exciting upcoming activities for you to trigger your kindness. And, who knows, maybe a couple of surprises.

## December Activities

Last month our club donated \$500 to Project SOS (Support Our Soldiers) and our members added generously to this. I had the pleasure of attending their 6<sup>th</sup> Christmas party which was heart-warming as usual. Here is a brief message from Gary Kadow, founder of Project SOS:

“This year was our 6th year for making the Christmas season brighter and happier for our Military children, and other children who are in need. For many of these children it is the first “real” Christmas they have ever had with gifts, food, joy, and most of all an abundance of LOVE from friends and neighbors in our community. It was a very special day, and you have helped make all this happen for 229 children this year.

Not all children could be at the party for various reasons, as some are still struggling with hopelessness and other issues, but they were not forgotten, and toys and food were delivered to them and their families for several days after the gathering at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Ocala”.

Click on this link for a YouTube video of this heartwarming event,

<https://youtu.be/VtAzhGTtsaQ>

## Wreaths Across America

Two of our club members, Francoise Hansen and Bob Wilson, went to lay wreaths at the headstones of our local fallen heroes as part of Wreaths Across America at the Lone Oak and Shiloh Cemeteries. Each of them said they really enjoyed the experience of honoring our fallen troops.

## Flags for Fallen Vets - Memorial Day

Along the same lines of Wreaths Across America, mark your calendar now for Flags for Fallen Vets which will take place on Sunday May 24<sup>th</sup> at 9am at the Bushnell National Cemetery. Click here for more info. [Flags for Florida's Fallen - Joint Veterans Support Committee For Florida National Cemetery](https://jvsc.us/flags-for-floridas-fallen.com)

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## Giving Clubs Showcase

Our winter showcase will be on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> from 10-2 at the Lake Miona Recreation Center. Put this on your calendar – it's one of the best events of the year and the best way to get a first-hand look at the many groups that are spreading kindness in our community.

We usually have 2 members each hour to welcome people at our table and tell them a little about our club. Let me know if you would like to do this. We will also have a sign-up at our meeting.



## Some Volunteer Kindness Activities

The Wildwood Soup Kitchen provides food for a whopping 200-300 people in need in our community PER DAY! They are looking for new volunteers to help in some areas. If you are interested, go to this site: [https://wildwoodsoupkitchen.org/current\\_openings](https://wildwoodsoupkitchen.org/current_openings)

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**Abundance of Love** is sponsoring a Comedy Hypnosis Show to raise funds for a local 18-yr old woman, Layla Dehart. She had a brain lesion and suffers from seizures that only happen while sleeping. This fundraiser will help pay for the training of a Seizure Alert Dog (\$12,000 - \$15,000). Attached is a flyer for this event. If you cannot attend, you can donate to her Go Fund Me page at:

[www.gofundme.com/f/help-layla-get-a-lifesaving-seizure-alert-dog](http://www.gofundme.com/f/help-layla-get-a-lifesaving-seizure-alert-dog)

## Future Meetings

In April we will move our meeting to a new Recreation Center, Big Cypress located in The Village of Pinellas at 3110 Hendry Dr. This location is a bit closer to The Villages center but not too much farther from our northern sector members. I think it will work well for us.



Your ideas for meeting speakers and activities are always welcome.

## MAK - Monthly Acknowledgements of Kindness

Each month we acknowledge an extra special person for their acts of kindness. This month the 10 minute event will happen on Monday Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> at 11am. If you would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you. We will have a sign-up sheet at the meeting. These acknowledgments consume little time and will make you feel good all

over. If you cannot sign up at the meeting, please call/text Cathi Coy, our VP and MAK Coordinator for more details.

To see all the people we have honored, go to our website, [aaokclub.org](https://aaokclub.org), and click Acknowledgements. Believe me, you will be impressed!

Do you know someone who is exceptionally kind? You can nominate them by clicking Nominate on our website.

## Club Sites to Visit

- Our website - <https://aaokclub.org>
- Our Facebook page
- AAOK Store for logo'ed shirts, hats, bags, and more!

Grateful living is big part of being kind. I'd like to close by sharing the end-of-year statement in the Grateful Living Practice calendar which I think you might like:

"Sit quietly and reflect on all that has transpired for you this past year. What are you grateful to have learned? What challenging experiences helped you grow? What insights would you like to carry forward, and what are you ready to let go gratefully?"

Stay Healthy, Happy, and Kind,

Lindsay Collier, President, [lindsaycollier@comcast.net](mailto:lindsaycollier@comcast.net)

