



BROWN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Kindness Rocks Erin Schwab – Health Educator

Be kind. It's often a lesson that people are taught from their earliest moments in life. Parents and teachers instill those words in their children and students and give them tools to do so. Perhaps you remember hearing share your toys, hold the door, mind your matters. These are all easy ways to practice kindness.

Being kind and spreading kindness is quite beneficial for our health, in our youth and into adulthood. In fact, a study done in 2018 by Lee Rowland and Oliver Scott Curry found that individual happiness increased as people performed acts of kindness. They also found that increases in happiness correlates to the number of kindness acts that were performed. So, the more you are kind, the happier you are. Chemicals like oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin increase during acts of kindness, which helps regulate mood.

In an effort to spread kindness throughout Brown County, staff at the Brown County Community Services Building in New Ulm have started a Kindness Rocks Garden. The garden will be right outside of the main doors alongside the building. Inside this rock garden will be rocks with messages of kindness, appreciation, and encouragement. Community members are encouraged to take a rock for themselves



or for someone they know who needs a little extra support. The garden will grow by people leaving rocks for someone to pick up.

The holiday season can be a difficult time for many people, and the hope of the Kindness Rocks Garden is that this initiative can be just one small way that our community can spread kindness to each other.