

Hello, my name is\_\_\_\_\_. Thanks so much for having me here today, to tell you about SedonaKind, a new organization, and first of all, to thank you and your organization for all you do for our community. Let me tell you a little bit about how we got started.

In 2011, a group of women hiker pals, discouraged by the contentious state of the world, country and our own state, decided that they had to "do something". Inspired by Ben's Bells, a project started in Tucson by Ben's Mom (Ben died very young, and she wanted to spread kindness in his memory) we decided to find a way to spread kindness here in Sedona. We began crafting what we called "kindness charms", made from old and unwanted donated jewelry. Each charm had, in addition to the chain and the jewelry, a beautiful glass heart, and a tag that said "Take me Home and Spread Kindness". Today, over 4,000 charms have been distributed in every state in the US, and in over 3 dozen countries around the world. Even on the Great Wall of China! The charms can appear anywhere - in a tree, on a bench, in a hospital waiting room... all just waiting for the person who really needs to find it. We had a blogspot, and heard from so many people whose lives were touched by the charm they felt was "just for them".

Then in the fall of 2015, our group felt that perhaps there was more that we could do to help spread the message of kindness, how every act, large or small, can truly make a difference. So SedonaKind was born as an organization. Our mission statement is simple: "To encourage acts of kindness, large and small, locally and around the world." We developed a logo, and website - SedonaKind.org with articles, stories about our projects, links to other groups, and suggestions of easy ways to spread kindness. We are under the financial umbrella of Cornucopia Community Advocates a 501c(3), a nonprofit many of us had worked with, and whose mission supports our own.

In the first few months of 2016, we've gotten several meaningful projects underway, with many more to come. Our first was Operation Special Delivery, where we designed 250 handmade thank you "Kindness cards" and hand delivered them along with pottery hearts to unsung heroes in our community. We have a Kindness in Schools committee (KIS), which is working on developing ways to support our schools, teachers, parents, and of course, children in the classrooms and on the playgrounds. We're partnering with the Yavapai Food Council's After School Backpack program, and have committed to knitting at least 200 warm, colorful hats to be included in the backpacks in the fall. We're also working with the Community Center to provide lap robes as a small gift to all their new clients. Our gang has gotten so "hooked" on knitting that we're looking for other organizations that might have the same needs, such as the new Homeless Alliance. We were very involved in the Veterans Celebration that just took place at the end of March, providing all the food and treats for the Veteran volunteers, and arranging for massage therapists to give free massages to the Vets. Those 4 days were an amazing honor for us to be involved with. We're busy planning many activities for the fall, and we have a group of "Kindness Ambassadors" going out into our community to thank groups for what they are doing, to tell our story, and to find ways to join hands and hearts in efforts with them. That's why we're here today.

Kindness can come in so many forms - maybe as simple an act as helping an elderly person get their groceries into their car, making a dinner for a sick or overwhelmed friend, or maybe just a big smile for someone who looks a bit down. The possibilities are endless, and endlessly rewarding. What each of us do to make another's life just a little bit better... that's SedonaKind. Were all so lucky to live her amidst the beauty of our red rocks, and the wonderful spirit of giving that makes Sedona so special.

Help us pay that forward and show that simple acts of kindness can make a huge difference, and will stay with both the giver and receiver for a very long time. We have a few examples of our charms and

Kindness bracelets to leave with you today, with so many thanks for giving us the time to share our story with you. And please go to our website and let us know about all the acts of kindness your wonderful group is doing.