



Kindness Radiates at Kent State University

For nearly 15 years, alumni and friends have come together to uplift their local communities and those in our Golden Flash family during a day of service. Kent State has since transformed that one-day tradition into a weeklong initiative called Flashes Give Back Week.

From April 17-22, 2023, Golden Flashes volunteered where it mattered most—in their communities around the globe and at home with Kent State University. Through partnerships with campus organizations and local nonprofits, the university offered 36 in-person volunteer opportunities and 12 virtual options throughout the week. Also, volunteers could create their own service project or show how they are already volunteering in their communities through Share Your Project.

More than 800 Golden Flashes in 37 states across the nation volunteered for 3,000+ hours. They helped combat food insecurity, improve literacy among K-12 students, craft materials benefitting community organizations, clean up outdoor spaces and support Kent State students.

1. Akron Zoo

Kent State University alumni and friends helped the Akron Zoo horticulture team with plant bed maintenance to prep and beautify the zoo for spring.

2. Backpacks for Kids

Volunteers packed bags full of accessible and nutritious meals for children across Stark County. The Stark County Hunger Task Force's Backpack for Kids program is the largest backpack program in Stark County, serving more than 1,400 children each week.

3. Cleveland Kids' Book Bank

The Cleveland Kids' Book Bank fosters literacy and a love of reading by distributing free books to children in need through collaboration with community partners. Kent State volunteers helped sort and prepare used books for distribution.

4. International Students Care Packages

With the help of Kent State alumni and friends, the Office of Global Education collected notes of encouragement and donations of healthy snacks to create care packages for international students preparing for finals.

5. Mat Making

Volunteers created mats out of plastic grocery bags that will be donated by Streetsboro United Methodist Church to the homeless in Cleveland, providing them a dry and more comfortable surface to sleep on.

6. Read With a Student-Athlete

From April 17-21, Kent State alumni and current student-athletes took turns reading to a classroom of second grade students at Davey Elementary School in Kent.

7. LGBTQ+ Encouragement Notes

Together, the Kent State LGBTQ+ Center and LGBTQ+ Alumni Chapter collected notes of encouragement to help LGBTQ+ students feel appreciated and supported.

Check out all the images from Flashes Give Back Week to see more of the many ways our university community made an impact at www.kent.edu/FlashesGiveBackWeek.

—Melanie Secre