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Every day at 6:15 pm, an alarm goes off on my phone. The alarm is labeled, What are you thankful for today? Here's how I came to participate in this daily ritual.

During my senior year of high school, my best friend and I developed a strong relationship with a teacher and together created a Random Acts of Kindness Club. This club was committed to engaging others in various activities that promote spontaneous acts of kindness in the daily lives of students and faculty. High school can be very tough for students, due to exclusivity and bullying, so the goal of this club was to create a safe space for students to interact with one another, be kind, and most importantly, encourage others to be the best version of themselves. Some of the ways we spread kindness that year were to create kindness rocks, build a kindness garden of positive messages, give Twitter shout outs, and collect bottle caps to help those in need get free dialysis treatments. In addition, we sold yellow ribbons to raise money for a student in our school who was diagnosed with bone cancer. As a result of our work, the club was featured on the local news.

Our club was also called to action following the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, where seventeen deaths and several injuries occurred. This event affected peoples' lives everywhere and was especially felt by students in other high schools. During this time, it became very popular for students to organize "walk-outs," where all students left their school at a predetermined time in memory of the lives lost in Parkland and other school shootings. However, this meaningful tribute eventually turned into students using walkouts as excuses to skip school and participate in activities with negative consequences that would not normally occur if they had stayed in school for the full day.

In my school, many students wanted to plan such a "walk-out," however, members of the Kindness Club, proposed an alternative idea, that invited students to pledge to do seventeen random acts of kindness to honor each of the victims whose lives were taken in the Parkland shooting. This idea was not popular with all students, as it didn't include an opportunity to skip out on school.

While it would have been easier to stick with the crowd and do the walk-out, I was not at all comfortable doing that because it meant using the tragedy for selfish reasons. I knew the right thing to do was to honor the seventeen victims and contribute to their legacy in a positive way. The faculty agreed that a walk-out was not appropriate and planned a ceremony that incorporated the Kindness Club's seventeen acts of kindness idea.

Thanks to Kindness Club, today my alarm will sound at 6:15 pm and I will thank my family for raising me to be my true self. A person who doesn't value popularity over making good choices. A person who can distinguish right from wrong and is kind to others when they need a friend.