Welcome to 2021! In this issue, we’ll look at the fascinating world of mice and read what makes these social little animals tick. We’ll read about a boy who worked towards something bigger than himself, hear the tales tails can tell, and see a cool rescue story from one of Kind News’ very own staff members!

To access an interactive version of this issue online, visit KindNews.org.

Check out our recommended book list at RedRover.org/books.

Looking for more ways to help your students build connection?
Check out our empathy app, The Restricted Adventures of Raja. It is a bilingual, interactive series of book and game apps that includes questions and play-based learning that parents and educators can use to help children understand animal behavior and practice empathy.

Visit RedRover.org/empathyapp for more information.

Kind News may be gifted to classrooms through the generosity of sponsors. We are grateful for their support and the work they do in local communities. If a sponsor is from your community, please take a moment to recognize their generosity when communicating to parents. Thank you!

To learn about our educational program for students or groups ages K-6 visit our website at FWACC.ORG.

Prince William SPCA is celebrating 13 years of sponsoring Kind News for classrooms in Prince William County, Manassas Park, and Manassas, Virginia.

To learn more about sponsoring classrooms with Kind News, email KindNews@RedRover.org.

FLIP OVER!
COMMON CORE, NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS (NGSS), AND CASEL-ALIGNED ACTIVITIES

Third grade: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2. Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. CASEL Core Competency: Social Awareness.

To go with, “Mice Make Faces!”: After reading the article once, ask students to re-read it and highlight or underline at least four fun or interesting facts about mice, and share them with a partner. Which facts told them about how mice might show emotions or feelings? Then ask students to research an animal of their choice and find five to ten fun or interesting facts to share with the class. In their presentation, ask them to include:

• at least two facts that explain how that animal shows their emotions
• one fact that surprised them
• one fact they found the most interesting

Fourth grade: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.A. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension/CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. CASEL Core Competency: Responsible Decision-Making.

To go with Pet Corner, “Healthy, happy pets have healthy coats!”: After reading the article, ask students to notice how the article was structured, with an introduction to the topic of pet grooming, list of benefits, and tips. Ask students to think of something they know how to do very well that helps others, such as bathing a pet, or assisting a younger sibling or friend with doing a chore or task. (Students doing distance learning could demonstrate how to use the platform in video format to show a parent or new student.) Ask them to write a how-to guide on that topic in a similar format to the article and pretend that the reader doesn’t know anything about the topic. They should make sure to include headings and define vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to their peers. Then ask students to swap their guides with a writing partner. After students read each other’s guides, ask for volunteers willing to try to summarize for the class what their partner wrote.

Fifth grade: NGSS 3-5-ETS1-2. Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem. CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, Social awareness.

To go with, “Mice Make Faces!”: Discuss the paragraph about the use of mice for animal testing with students and how alternatives such as computer models are sometimes used instead. Ask students to choose one of the below animal testing alternatives and research how successful it is at testing the safety and effectiveness of household products and medicines, and what the advantages and disadvantages are. Allow students to choose between multiple methods of reporting their research, such as a visual display, written report, or video.

• Use of computer models/algorithms
• Testing on humans
• Use of organoids (human organs grown in a lab)

Helpful resources:
aavs.org, Alternatives tab
leapingbunny.org
livescience.com, search “animal testing alternatives”

Sixth grade: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. CASEL Core Competencies: Social Awareness, Self-Awareness.

To go with “Mice Make Faces!”: If possible, before reading the article, ask students to write down three words they think of when they hear the word “mice.” After reading the article, ask students if their opinion of mice has changed at all. Did the article confirm any of their previous ideas about mice? Did it go against any of them? Discuss why they think people sometimes fear mice. Ask students to choose a different animal that people often fear, such as snakes or wolves, and research that animal’s habitat, diet, and behavior, as well as some interesting facts. Ask students to write an informational piece about their chosen animal, similar to the mouse article, and then swap articles with a writing partner who researched a different animal. What new things did they learn about their partner’s animal? Did the new facts change how they felt about that animal? Why or why not?
Our mystery critter is the groundhog. Although they are best known for the superstition that they can predict the coming of springtime, these furry creatures are unique for many other reasons!

Groundhogs can be found all over North America. They are omnivores but eat mainly vegetables. Aside from raising their babies, groundhogs are mostly solitary creatures. Despite this, groundhogs do communicate to warn each other of danger. They emit a high-pitched, shrill sound to do so, earning them the nickname “whistle-pig!”

Groundhogs are “true” hibernators. They rely on body fat to make it through the winter! A groundhog’s heartbeat and body temperature drop dramatically during hibernation. If the weather is colder, they will wait longer to emerge in the spring. It’s possible that this contributed to the tradition of celebrating Groundhog Day, but it can also be traced back to German settlers who believed that animals like groundhogs or badgers could predict the weather, and other European settlers who thought that if the sun was shining on February 2, there would be six more weeks of winter.

Although they spend most of their time alone, groundhogs still build extensive burrows for their families. Their burrows can be over 60 feet long and have many different chambers and entrances. Groundhogs are not considered a threatened species, but farmers and gardeners often see them as pests because they eat crops. Farmers also worry about the impact of groundhog burrows on farms: machines can break when they run over the mounds, and horses can trip over them. There are many humane ways of resolving conflicts with groundhogs, however, such as building high fences. For more information, visit humanesociety.org/resources/what-do-about-woodchucks.
Kind News helps students learn about animals and think critically about their responsibilities towards the wellbeing of others. The magazine encourages empathy and motivates students to take action to improve the lives of animals. *Kind News* uses articles and short features to introduce issues affecting animals and helps kids understand animal behavior, and how to care for pets.

**Teacher Guide**

**RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 3-6**

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KindNewsSupport@RedRover.org  
1-877-902-9757 (toll free)

RedRover.org/KindNewsFAQ  
Find answers to your questions about subscribing to *Kind News*.

Your local or school library can get a **FREE** single-copy subscription simply by visiting KindNews.org, selecting the individual subscription option, and entering promo code **LIB2020**.

Did you know? Did you know that RedRover offers virtual readings of animal-themed stories for classrooms? Through a story, discussion, and extension activity, students learn about empathy, friendship, and kindness to animals and people. The virtual readings are 45 minutes to an hour long and are aligned with social and emotional learning standards. Learn more at RedRover.org/virtualreadings.

KindNews.org  
Find lesson plans, games, and more activities for your students. Find ideas for how students can help animals in your community. Subscribe to the magazine at home, or learn how you can bring *Kind News* to more classrooms.

RedRover.org/Readers  
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