Dear Educator:

I hope this letter finds you well. Thank you for your interest in Children's Craniofacial Association's (CCA) #ChooseKind Initiative Program. CCA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that exists to empower and give hope to individuals and families affected by facial differences. We envision a world where individuals are accepted for who they are, not how they look.

To support this vision, we are asking educators to integrate the #ChooseKind Initiative Program as a part of their annual curriculum. The initiative develops kindness education and prevents bullying, intolerance, and isolation that so many children face at school each day.

Within this compilation are two curricula based off of memoirs of two individuals and their journey and experiences.

- **Diary of a Beautiful Disaster** by Kristin Bartzokis
  - Normal: A Mother and Her Beautiful Son by Newman

The two books are beautiful stories that teach students to embrace diversity and uniqueness, rather than fear differences and disabilities. It also encourages students to take the initiative to stand up against injustice and give a voice to those who find it hard to find their own. It also brings attention to violence that can be caused by isolation and bullying and encourages students to think critically on their role if any to help prevent such situations. These themes often require critical thinking and maturity, therefore work best with a High School+ audience.

We encourage you to go through the activities and discussion questions with your students. To take the kindness education to the next level we suggest inviting a CCA Speaker. CCA has formed a Speakers' Bureau to provide training and resources to our own CCA Kids & Adults who want to share their personal stories with you all. We encourage you to reach out to us to book one of our speakers in your classrooms to help bring the concepts to life.

Many have reported that these short 20-60min interactions truly leave a lasting impact. Teachers have responded that such an interaction combined with the curriculum has helped combat bullying and unkindness that they may have had in their classrooms prior to the experience.

The #ChooseKind initiative can be implemented using a variety of strategies. CCA has developed educator packets that include: our WonderKids newsletter; CCA Pen Pal program, where classrooms are matched with our CCA students and/or adults; a school visit program, where a CCA student or adult shares their personal story with a craniofacial differences and talks about acceptance/kindness during an in-class visit or Skype session; and lastly our full-scale Wonder & Normal lesson plans.

Please call (214.5 70.9099) or email me (kmoten@ccakids.com) if you have any questions or concerns.

With kindness,

Khadija Moten
Outreach Director
Children's Craniofacial Association

P.S. If you wish to hold a fundraiser for CCA, wristbands, buttons and bookmarks are available at CCA by calling 214-570-9099. We are also able to provide bulk discount pricing for #ChooseKind gear for your school.
DIARY OF A BEAUTIFUL DISASTER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Three lessons based off the book
Diary of a Beautiful Disaster
by Kristen Bartzokis
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DISCUSSION GUIDE GOAL:

Students will deepen their understanding of what it means to respect another person. Students will learn to appreciate individual differences, grasp the dangers of bullying, and create strategies for preventing bullying before it starts by intervening to help others.
LESSON 1: RESPECTING OTHERS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
These could be presented as:

- A worksheet, with room for short written responses
- A whole-class discussion session
- Questions to be broken up and assigned to small groups, with answers presented to the class

Watch Kristin Bartzokis’s promotional video for her memoir, *Diary of a Beautiful Disaster*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2MBrRwDOrI

1. What are some obstacles faced by people who have physical differences, such as a facial anomaly like Treacher Collins syndrome?

2. What qualities would someone need to overcome those challenges?

3. Referring to the book, explain why you believe Kristin describes her life as having a “disastrous beginning”?

4. What do you think it means to call oneself a “beautiful disaster”?

5. What does “beautiful” mean to you? Where do you find beauty?

6. If you’re curious about someone, how can you learn about his or her story without being rude or participating in gossip? What are some questions you can ask that are polite and respectful?

7. Having read Kristin’s memoir, what do you respect about her experiences and her approach to life?

8. What do you think about Kristin’s parents’ approach to their daughter’s condition? What would you do differently, if anything?

VOCABULARY
Research and write the dictionary definitions of the following words:

1. BEAUTY
2. DISASTER
3. ANOMALY
4. RESPECT
5. INCLUSION

Discuss which words were new to you and which words, if any, were defined differently than you expected.

**This could be used as an independent assignment or opened up to a group discussion.**
ROLE-PLAYING ACTIVITY

Invite two students to volunteer for this exercise. Allow Student A to create a brief backstory in which he or she has a unique physical appearance (examples: a facial anomaly, limb difference, need for a wheelchair or crutches, etc.).

Invite Student B to present polite, gentle ways to ask Student A about his or her condition and lifestyle. Encourage Student B to think beyond just the whys and hows of Student A’s condition and dig more deeply into what makes Student A unique: likes, dislikes, hobbies, goals, etc.

Repeat this process with as many as two to three more groups to highlight different approaches.

Then, have the class evaluate which types of questions seemed most respectful, caring, and appropriate.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Recall a time when you felt different from the people around you. What made you feel or appear different? What emotions did you experience in that situation? Describe the positives and the negatives of feeling, or being, different. How were you changed by the experience you’ve just described?

ENRICHMENT

Either as an additional exercise or for an extra-credit project, assign students to research a rare condition and write a report on it. What are the symptoms and effects? What is the treatment, if any? What types of doctors treat that condition, and what are the related terms or medical jargon? Find and reference blogs or personal websites of people living with that rare condition.
LESSON 2:
EMPATHY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These could be presented as:

- A worksheet, with room for short written responses
- A whole-class discussion session
- Questions to be broken up and assigned to small groups, with answers presented to the class

1. When and why have you felt sympathy for someone? When and why have you felt empathy for someone?

2. As you read Diary of a Beautiful Disaster, when did you feel sympathy for Kristin?

3. Which parts of Kristin’s story made you feel empathy?

4. How do you define bullying?

5. How do you relate exclusion/isolation to bullying? Are they the same thing, or is there a difference? Is one worse than the other?

6. Referring to the text, cite a time when you feel Kristin experienced bullying. How did you feel when you read about the incident you’ve selected?

7. Describe a time you were bullied by someone. How did that experience make you feel?

8. Describe a time you witnessed (or heard about) someone else being bullied? How did you feel about that? How did you react?

9. Make a list of people you could turn to for help in stopping a bully. (Think about friends, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbors, etc.)

10. Create a plan for intervening when you see bullying. Include a script for what you can say to the bully. Consider both in-person and online interactions.

VOCABULARY

Research and write the dictionary definitions of the following words:

1. EMPATHY
2. SYMPATHY
3. BULLYING
4. HATE SPEECH
5. HATE CRIMES

Discuss which words were new to you and which words, if any, were defined differently than you expected.**

**This could be used as an independent assignment or opened up to a group discussion.
WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Explore the connections among empathy, sympathy, respect, and bullying. Which of the first three qualities are present or are lacking in a bully? What do you think motivates bullies? Why do you think people with visible differences often become the victims of bullies? What is your role in stopping bullying in your school or community?

PERSUASIVE WRITING & PUBLIC SPEAKING

Invite students to explore examples of bullying in current events, whether on the local, national or international level. Have them consider topics such as mass shootings (particularly in schools), police-related violence, sexual harassment, media coverage, social justice demonstrations, social media behavior, and political rhetoric.

Ask each student to write and then present a 3 to 5 minute persuasive talk explaining why the topic the student has chosen is an example or product of bullying. Encourage students to consider points such as:

- The differences and similarities between bullying and hate speech/hate crimes
- What is, or is not, protected by the First Amendment
- The role bullying plays in school and community violence, both by individuals and groups
- The individuals or communities subjected to the bullying (i.e., why they are targeted)
- Interventions for the type of behavior they’ve chosen to discuss
LESSON 3: MAKING CHOICES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These could be presented as:

- A worksheet, with room for short written responses
- A whole-class discussion session
- Questions to be broken up and assigned to small groups, with answers presented to the class

Re-watch Kristin Bartzokis’s promotional video for her memoir, Diary of a Beautiful Disaster: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2MBrRwDOrl

1. What kinds of choices do you face every day?

2. What are the most important choices you believe everyone faces in life? For example, think about family, career, and moral choices.

3. What does strength mean to you?

4. What does it mean to you when Kristin says her motto is “Choose Strong?”

5. Referring to the text, when do you see examples of Kristin choosing to be strong?

6. What is a difficult choice you’ve made about which you feel proud? How did your friends and family react to your choice?

7. In her writing, how does Kristin describe herself? Do you feel she is confident in who she is all the time? How confident are you in who you are?

8. How does confidence affect the way you make choices?

9. In what ways can you relate to Kristin?

10. How does a person’s confidence change at different stages in life? How has your confidence level varied over time?
CREATIVE ACTIVITY AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Have students choose their own motivational hashtag motto, like Kristin’s #ChooseStrong. Then, have them create a locker-sized vision board of magazine and/or web images that illustrate and support their motto. Encourage them to hang these posters in their lockers for daily reminders and affirmations of their goals and the steps they’ll take to reach them. Then, have students write a 500-word essay on what their vision board means to them and why they selected their motto and corresponding images.

RESEARCH AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT

To bring all three lessons together, have students write a research paper on the ways respect and empathy inform—or sometimes don’t inform—daily decision-making. Students should research the psychology of decision-making, including an exploration of the roles of group dynamics and social pressures. Students also should research the evolving impact of media—both traditional and social—on the way individuals make choices. Additionally, students should identify decision-making processes and tools, including but not limited to pro/con lists, brainstorming, nominal group technique, multivoting etc. (These can be tools that work for individuals and/or for groups.) After researching the physical and social science of decision-making, students should personalize and apply that information by describing a difficult choice they’ve made. Have them discuss:

- What factors did they weigh? Were respect and empathy involved?
- What process did they use to make the major decision?
- Are they proud of the choice they made? Would they make it again?
- What was the biggest factor that led to the ultimate choice?
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Shriners Hospitals for Children “Cut the Bull” Campaign
- STOMP Out Bullying
- StopBullying.gov

IN CLOSING

KiCam Projects is humbled by and grateful for the opportunity to create this discussion guide for the Children’s Craniofacial Association. We hope *Diary of a Beautiful Disaster* finds a home in every high school classroom and encourages the development of greater empathy in each student who learns about Kristin’s story. Ultimately, we hope everyone who reads *Diary of a Beautiful Disaster* learns to embrace his or her own unique gifts and is inspired to embrace the gifts present in every individual.
ABOUT THE BOOK

For Magda Newman, normal was a goal—she wanted her son Nathaniel to be able to play on the playground, swim at the beach, enjoy the moments of childhood that are often taken for granted. But Nathaniel’s severe Treacher Collins syndrome—a craniofacial condition—meant that other concerns came first. Could he eat without the aid of a gastrointestinal tube? Could he hear? Would he ever be able to breathe effortlessly?

In this moving memoir, Newman, with the help of her son, tells the story of raising Nathaniel, from the shock she and her husband faced when he was born, to the inspiration of Nathaniel’s own strength and quirky humor. All this while also facing both non-Hodgkins and Hodgkins lymphoma diagnoses of her own. This uplifting story of a family tackling complex and terrifying circumstances with love and resilience is a true testament to Magda and her family, and to families everywhere who quietly but courageously persist.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is Magda’s reaction when Nathaniel is born? Talk about the honesty of the book and how that helped you to understand what the diagnosis of Treacher Collins was like for the family, or how it has helped you understand your own reactions to people who might look different from yourself.

- How do Nathaniel’s interjections help to enhance the story? What do you learn from them?

- Look at the roles Magda and Russel each take up in the early days of Nathaniel’s childhood. How do these evolve over time? How does Magda talk about the roles they play later when Nathaniel needs surgery after surgery (pp. 148–49)? How does economic necessity or medical necessity sometimes dictate family roles, and why do you think they’re often delineated by gender? Have you had similar experiences with your family? Are you seeing societal shifts? The subtitle of the book is A Mother and Her Beautiful Son, but who else is this book about? Discuss the roles that Russel and Jacob play in the family.

- “There’s always soup to be made” was something Magda’s mother used to say to her. What are its real and metaphorical meanings in this book? Where else do you see Magda’s heritage helping her face challenges?

- Why do you think no one believed Magda when she became ill? After her diagnosis, what is Magda’s attitude toward treatment and recovery? How is it different the second time? What were some of the positive influences in her life that helped her? And what were some of the negative influences, and how did she handle them?

- “Beauty is an accident just as much as Treacher Collins is an accident, but either way, your appearance shapes you by shaping how people react to you” (p. 109). Talk about beauty as an external and an internal quality. How did Magda’s relationship to appearances change after having Nathaniel? Why did she wear a wig after she lost her hair to chemo? How is beauty tied to normalcy?
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

• Discuss the similarities and differences you see in parenting choices the Newmans had to confront with a child with Treacher Collins compared to your own experiences as a parent (or grandparent, or teacher, or aunt or uncle, etc.). For example, when Nathaniel started school, Magda and Russel worked with the principal to send out a letter to the community explaining why Nathaniel looks the way he does, which made for an easier entry into kindergarten. “The best way for children to learn empathy is from their parents, and the ones we met would often take the time to show their kids there was no reason to be scared or stare, and they should just treat Nathan like a fellow child” (p. 122), Magda writes. What do you think are good ways for parents to model empathy for children?

• On p. 170, Nathaniel, responding to the impact on his life of reading Wonder by R. J. Palacio and seeing the corresponding film, writes: “I don’t want to be seen as Auggie Pullman, or ‘the real Wonder boy.’ First of all, I’m not the only kid with Treacher Collins, and secondly, I just want to be seen as Nathaniel Newman. I want to be seen as a normal kid who happens to look different.” How has reading Normal changed your perception of what’s “normal”? How has it helped you understand what it’s like to have Treacher Collins or to parent a child with Treacher Collins—or a condition with a similar impact?

• The title of the book, Normal, is also a word that appears often in the book. Early on, Magda writes, “Normal was our goal . . . ‘Normal’ meant seeing, eating, hearing, breathing. Normal was a happy carefree childhood” (p. 13). Over the course of the book, the question of what is normal is addressed over and over again. On p. 83, Nathaniel writes, “Maybe ‘normal’ is what is possible . . . But nobody’s normal because everyone’s different.” What is your definition of normal? What does being normal mean to you?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Magdalena and Nathaniel Newman live in Seattle, Washington, together with the rest of the family—dad, brother, and four dogs.

ALSO AVAILABLE:

Normal: One Kid’s Extraordinary Journey (for young readers) by Magdalena and Nathaniel Newman
Dear Educator:

I hope you are well! I wanted to start off by thanking you for helping us spread the message of kindness and acceptance through our #ChooseKind Initiative. We hope you enjoy our resources and that they benefit you and your students.

As an educator, I am sure you are familiar with the constant changes in teaching strategies and curriculums to best serve your students and meet their needs. We hope to do the same with our own #ChooseKind Initiative. Our initiative is incredibly unique because it not only benefits CCA Kids (affected children and families with a craniofacial condition) by giving them a platform and a tool to talk about their difference confidently, but it also is incredibly impactful to students who read Wonder, use the curriculum, and hear a presentation from a CCA Kid. Teachers in the past reported that after reading Wonder and participating in a visit or Skype session, students are more outgoing and more patient with each other, and bullying problems get resolved. This proactive kindness education is stronger and more powerful than bullying prevention alone, because our resources help students form values that will stay with them for their entire lives. The #ChooseKind message is universal because at some point in all our lives we feel unsure, self-conscious and out of place.

We want to be able to continue to modify and better our curriculum and initiative so that it continues to be positively impactful. However, we need your help! Enclosed you will find a Craniofacial Awareness Survey. Please give your students this survey before and after using our curriculum. These surveys will help us tremendously to make changes and improvements for the next year.

SURVEY STEPS:

1. Locate the Survey that matches your student’s age level. Print copies for each student.
2. Have students pick a 4-digit number (they can remember) or their student ID number and write it in the designated spot. This number will be repeated when students take the survey a second time after completing the #ChooseKind curriculum or CCA kid/adult presentation.
3. Once students have taken the survey combine them and keep them aside.
4. After completion of all or part of the curriculum or presentation, reprint a survey for each person.
5. Have students retake the surveys using the SAME 4-digit number or student ID number. Once completed, combine with the first round of surveys and return back to CCA for data collection.
6. All surveys can either be faxed, emailed, or sent via postal mail to:
   Children’s Craniofacial Association
   ATTN: Khadija Moten
   13140 Coit Road, Suite 517
   Dallas, TX 75240

Thank you so much for your assistance in improving this initiative and for teaching your students the importance of choosing kind.

With Kindness,

Khadija Moten
Outreach Director
Khadija.CCAKids@gmail.com
Children’s Craniofacial Association

P.S. If you need Wonder books contact us to receive a donation supply.
CURRICULUM EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY (MIDDLE SCHOOL)

Please pick one response per question. Answer questions to the best of your abilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Significant 4 digit #:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today’s Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of School:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I know what acceptance means.</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know how to be kind to others.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness is important to me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have seen people being bullied in my school.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is hard to stick up for someone being bullied.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that it is worth sticking up for someone being bullied.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable with reaching out to trusted adults if I or someone I know is being bullied.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person’s appearance is important to me in order to be kind to them.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person’s appearance is important to me in order to be friends with them.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what a craniofacial difference is.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How a person acts is more important to me than how they look.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that my words and actions have effects on those around me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends are all unique and individual in their own way.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think it is good that everyone is different.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is important to not judge people based off how they look.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know the difference between being “friendly” and being a “friend”.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the following activities do you consider to be bullying? (Please check all that apply.)

- [ ] Calling people names
- [ ] Posting false & mean rumors about others on social network
- [ ] Sending offensive messages or images via phone or email to other students
- [ ] Hostile/ aggressive behavior towards other students
- [ ] Joking around about the way someone looks, acts, etc but then saying “just kidding”
**CURRICULUM EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY (HIGH SCHOOL)**

Please pick one response per question. Answer questions to the best of your abilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Significant 4 digit #:</th>
<th>FREQUENTLY</th>
<th>VERY OFTEN</th>
<th>OCCASIONALLY</th>
<th>RARELY</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
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<td>Today's Date:</td>
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<td>Name of School:</td>
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</table>

My school encourages kindness.  
I have seen people being bullied in my school.  
I have been bullied before.  
I think that it is worth sticking up for someone being bullied.  
I believe everyone has a role in preventing bullying.  
I am kind to others, regardless of their appearance.  
I am friends with someone, regardless of their appearance.  
I know the difference between being "friendly" and being a "friend".  
I believe bullying is the same as hate speech/crimes.  
I believe isolating/excluding someone is the same as bullying.  
How likely are you to challenge others on their inappropriate comments on someone's difference?  
I understand what "empathy" means.  
I am empathetic to people's situations.  
I believe everyone has something to contribute to the world.  
I have met someone with a craniofacial difference.  
I think it is important to not judge people based off how they look.  

Which of the following activities do you consider to be unkind? (Please check all that apply.)

- [ ] Calling people names
- [ ] Posting false & mean rumors about others on social network
- [ ] Sending offensive messages or images via phone or email to other students
- [ ] Hostile/aggressive behavior towards other students
- [ ] Joking around about the way someone looks, acts, etc but then saying "just kidding"