



# **GIVE WELL, LIVE WELL: THE WELLNESS BENEFITS OF GENEROSITY**

SEPTEMBER TOOLKIT

# GIVE WELL, LIVE WELL: THE WELLNESS BENEFITS OF GENEROSITY

Giving to charity isn't just about helping others – it's also incredibly beneficial for your own well-being. Whether through financial donations, volunteering, acts of service or homemade gifts, generosity has been shown to boost mental health, reduce stress and even improve physical health.

In honor of **International Day of Charity on Sept. 5**, let's explore why giving matters, how it benefits you and creative ways to make an impact.



# WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CHARITY?



International Day of Charity was established to raise awareness and encourage charitable efforts worldwide. It highlights the role of nonprofits and volunteer organizations in alleviating suffering, often stepping in where traditional support systems fall short.

Despite their critical work, **81% of charities report an increased demand for services**, while **only 38% feel financially equipped** to meet those needs. This day serves as a powerful reminder to support charitable organizations in any way possible – whether through donations, time or creative efforts.

On this International Day of Charity, take a moment to give back in a way that matters to you – because even small acts of kindness can create a ripple effect of positive change.



# WHY DONATING IS IMPORTANT

- **Addresses urgent needs:** Provides food, shelter, medical care and education to those in need.
- **Supports communities:** Strengthens local economies, social programs and disaster relief efforts.
- **Encourages social responsibility:** Fosters a culture of compassion and collective action.
- **Empowers nonprofits:** Many charities rely on donations to continue their work and expand their impact.

In 2023, 25% of adults in the U.S. volunteered for a charity – that's 63 million people making a difference! If you haven't joined them yet, why not start today?

Each year in Oklahoma, residents donate approximately \$2.5 billion to charity, which represents 4.46% of household income. The state has over 16,953 nonprofit organizations, including 11,960 public charities. A charity usually exists because a group needs support but is not getting enough of it elsewhere. In other words, there is an unmet need or not enough support by traditional means.

When you give to charity, you allow that organization to carry out essential support work. Whether it's helping homeless teens or people living with a disability, your donation empowers someone to improve their circumstances. And without donations, these organizations and support systems simply wouldn't exist as they do today. Of course, it's not just about making a positive impact on your community. When you support a cause that matters to you, it can make you feel good, too.



# HEALTH BENEFITS OF GIVING

Science backs what many of us instinctively feel – **giving feels good**. Here's how generosity directly improves your health:

## **Boosts feel-good hormones:**

Acts of kindness trigger serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin, improving mood and emotional well-being.



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## **Lowers blood pressure:**

Reduces stress, leading to better heart health.



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## **Increases lifespan:**

Studies show that regular volunteers and donors tend to live longer.



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## **Reduces anxiety and depression:**

Helping others creates a sense of purpose, combating feelings of loneliness and isolation.



Donating to charity isn't just about helping others – it's an investment in your own well-being. Whether through volunteering, financial contributions, acts of service or homemade gifts, generosity has proven benefits for happiness, stress reduction and overall health.

# HOW TO FIND A CHARITY THAT ALIGNS WITH YOUR VALUES

Choosing the right charity isn't just about donating money – it's about making an impact in areas that truly matter to you. Whether you care about social justice, environmental conservation, medical research or local community support, finding a charity that aligns with your values makes giving more meaningful.

## Steps to find the right charity for you:

- **Identify your passion areas:** What causes resonate with you the most? Think about issues you deeply care about, whether it's education, animal welfare, disaster relief or health care access.
- **Research reputable charities:** Look up charities that specialize in your area of interest using reliable sources like Charity Navigator, GuideStar or GiveWell to check ratings and transparency.
- **Verify financial transparency:** Make sure your donation will be used effectively by reviewing how much goes toward direct services versus administrative costs.
- **See their impact:** A strong charity shares success stories and provides tangible results of their work. Look for charities that provide data and testimonials showcasing their impact.
- **Decide how you want to give:** Do you prefer one-time donations, monthly contributions, volunteering or donating supplies? Find an organization that offers giving options that work for you.
- **Check local vs. global organizations:** Some people prefer helping locally, while others want their donation to support international humanitarian efforts. Consider which feels more aligned with your personal goals.



# WAYS TO DONATE AND GET INVOLVED

## Cash donations

Direct financial support to charities.



## In-kind contributions:

Donate clothing, food or supplies.



## Fundraising:

Organize events or campaigns to raise money.



## Volunteer time:

Give your skills and effort instead of money.



## Join a giving circle:

Pool resources with others for greater impact.



## Use charity-run services:

Support businesses that fund nonprofit work.



## Acts of service and homemade gifts:

Offer time, effort or creative gifts to make a difference.





# ACTS OF SERVICE: GIVING WITHOUT SPENDING A DOLLAR

Not all giving requires money – sometimes, the most meaningful contributions come in the form of acts of service.

## **Help with daily tasks:**

Cook a meal, clean someone's home or run errands to ease their burden.



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## **Offer support:**

Assist with childcare, home repairs or organizing projects they've been struggling with.



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## **Take responsibilities off their plate:**

Surprise them by handling something they've been putting off.



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## **Be present:**

Simply showing up and offering time can be invaluable.



For many people, thoughtful gestures mean more than physical gifts – helping someone when they need it most is its own kind of generosity.

# SCC: SUPPORTING CHARITIES THROUGH PUBLIC SERVICE

The State Charitable Campaign (SCC) allows state employees to contribute to vetted charities, ensuring donations make a real impact.

- Overseen by the Oversight Committee for State Employee Charitable Contributions.
- Approves charities to ensure transparency and effectiveness.
- Works with nonprofits to manage and distribute contributions annually.

This program empowers public employees to extend their service beyond their official duties and give back in meaningful ways.



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