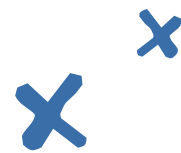




Giving Back WITHOUT GIVING AWAY Your Paycheck



Many people mistakenly believe that the only true way to give back to their community is through financial donations. Although cash donations are indeed a fantastic way to support your favorite charity or cause, it's certainly not the only way you can give back. There are several ways you can help your community that don't cost a single cent. Here are just a few examples:

Look next door. Helping your community can be as close as next door if you have neighbors in need. Mowing the lawn, babysitting, watering plants, or helping carry in groceries are just a few ways you can help your neighbors out.

Give your time. Volunteer at a food pantry, housing shelter, or anywhere else that you know needs help. Many non-profit organizations allow you to schedule volunteer hours on their website, or you can call them

directly to arrange. If you have children in school, you could also consider helping with field trips or other school activities—these are great ways to give back while also staying involved in your child's life.

Donate your stuff. If you have clothes, shoes, blankets, furniture, or books that you're not using anymore, donate them to a local charity. This is a terrific way to de-clutter your living space while also giving back to the community. Win-win!

Use your skills. Think about the unique skills and talents you have and how you can use them to help your community. Are you a gifted singer? Maybe you can join your church choir. Do you have graphic design skills? Maybe you can create brochures or flyers for a community fundraiser. Using your talents and skills is a fabulous way to give back.

Donate blood. The American Red Cross is always seeking blood donors. Visit www.redcrossblood.org to learn more about blood donation and to make an appointment.

Again, these are just a few ways you can make an impact without having to open up your wallet. There are many other creative ways you can give back to your community. At the end of the day, your good intentions and commitment will better the lives of others— regardless of your financial situation.



Volunteering is good for you! When you volunteer not only are you helping those in need, but research shows you could also be strengthening your body, improving your mood, and reducing stress.