

Incorporate Charitable Giving Into Your Holiday Giving & Financial Plan

Does your holiday giving and financial plan include giving generously? If not, perhaps it's time to review and revise it. There are numerous ways to incorporate charitable giving into both your holiday giving and financial plan.

I walked in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day Breast Cancer Walk in Seattle in 2005 and 2006. Next year I'm walking again – only this time I'm going to Washington, DC to walk with my girlfriends. My participation in this amazing, life-changing event wasn't about giving financially, but about giving of myself. For most of my adult life I didn't think I *had* the time to participate in events like the 3-Day Walk. But, what I now realize is that it wasn't that I didn't *have* the time -- I didn't *make* the time. And, by not making the time I missed the opportunity and experience to grow personally.

This is a perfect time to donate to the Red Cross to help the Southern California fire victims. In September 2004 I spent a night in Red Cross Shelter in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida waiting out Hurricane Jeanne. After that experience I have the deepest respect and gratitude for the Red Cross and their volunteers. Make your donation online at the Red Cross website.

With the holidays right around the corner incorporate charitable giving into your holiday planning. Instead of buying gifts for family members, donate to a charitable organization in their name. Write a note in a beautiful card telling the person why you're making the donation on their behalf. You could even include a brochure about the organization.

If you're having a holiday party, ask your guests to bring a several cans of food to donate the local food bank. Or, ask them to donate to your favorite charity instead of bringing a hostess gift.

One of my favorite donations during the holidays is ordering a fresh wreath from the Kitsap County Hospice. Not only does the wreath make a great gift, but it supports a wonderful organization and a portion of the price is tax-deductible. The wreaths are shipped all over the United States.

Clear your clutter and donate to the organization of your choice. I regularly go through my closet and donate my clothes to the YWCA's Clothing Closet and Women's Shelter. Another option is to donate the things you no longer use or need to Money Wise Women for their Upscale Garage Sale or to other organizations that hold garage sales as fundraiser. If you do it before the end of the year, you'll have a charitable donation deduction for this year's income taxes.

Use your creativity to make something and donate it to a local organization that's having an auction to raise funds. I love to create cards using my rubber stamps. I often donate cards to Northwest Hope and Healing. The cards are included in the Healing Basket that is given to newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. The patients can use the cards to write to their family and friends.

Give to charitable organizations that touch your heart. There are so many wonderful organizations – both national and local. Select the organization(s) of your choice. You can donate to more than one organization. Some of the organizations I support include:

Susan G. Komen 3-Day Breast Cancer Walk – www.the3day.org

YWCA – www.ywca.org

Etta Projects – www.ettaprojects.org

American Red Cross – www.redcross.org

Hospice of Kitsap County -- www.hospiceofkitsapcounty.org

Money Wise Women Educational Services – www.moneywisewomen.net

Incorporate giving generously and abundantly into your holiday giving and financial plan. I promise – it will give you a sense of great satisfaction. “*The surest way to happiness in a cause greater than yourself.*”

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