

Raising Charitable Children

Recommended Websites

Project Ideas

- www.pointsoflight.org Click on The Points of Light Foundation National Family Volunteer Day Page and read about different projects families have completed over the years. Also checkout Make a Difference Day and Family Volunteering with FamilyCares.org for more creative project ideas.
- www.kids-who-care.org A website (and non-profit org.) dedicated to children's service activities. Browse for unique ideas.

Collecting and Donating Items

- www.projectlinus.org Knit, crochet, sew, quilt or make “no-sew” fleece baby blankets, toddler blankets or adult blankets for people in need. Scout troops can earn a Linus Patch for their efforts.
- www.lionsclubs.org Collect used eyeglasses so they can be cleaned, repaired, classified by prescription and distributed to people in need. Hearing aids can also be collected. Call 1.800.74.SIGHT for nearest Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center or drop off the eyeglasses at a local Lions Club or participating LensCrafter store.
- www.craftvarncouncil.com/warmup.html “Warm Up America” A service program started by a woman from Wausau, Wisconsin. Crochet or knit one 7”x 9”rectangle (or more) and send it in where it will be joined with others to create a full-size afghan for victims of natural disasters, battered women, the homeless and other people in need.
- www.shoesfororphansouls.org Collect and donate shoes and socks for orphanages in the United States and over 25 countries. Shoes for Orphan Souls will tell you what styles and sizes are most needed and where to send them.
- www.shareyoursoles.org Collect shoes to be sent to needy persons. Shoes are collected, sorted, cleaned, polished, and packed to be sent to 20+ countries in the world.
- www.glasslipperproject.org For the “princesses” in your house--donate lightly used formal dresses and accessories to Chicago high school students for their proms.

Supporting our Troops

- www.anysoldier.com Send a care package to our troops overseas. Click on the “Where to Send” prompt and pick a soldier you’d like to support. You’ll see a detailed list of items that particular soldier or battalion needs.
- [USO](http://www.uso.org) Invite an active serviceman stationed at Great Lakes to Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter Dinner.

Providing assistance and support for the sick

- www.makeachildsmile.org A wonderful way to bring a smile to faces of children with life-threatening illnesses. Send cards or small gifts to the children featured on their website—or, make and deliver “get well” cards/signs to local hospital pediatric wards.
- www.reachoutandread.org This national program encourages pediatricians to make literacy a significant part of their patient care. One component has volunteers reading to children in clinic waiting rooms.
- www.taybearhugs.org Send a teddy bear “hug” to children in the hospital or consider having a birthday party at Build-a-Bear and letting the children make one bear to send to a child who’s hospitalized with cancer. Help them hug away their fears!
- www.locksoflove.org If your daughter has long hair and decides she wants a shorter look—consider asking her if she’d like to donate her cut hair to Locks of Love—making wigs for pediatric and adult cancer patients
- www.rmhcni.org Families can prepare meals or baked goods either at home or onsite for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House near Loyola Hospital Medical Center.

Helping the Hungry and the Homeless

- www.boxproject.org The Box Project is a national, non-profit organization that has been matching volunteer sponsors from across the United States with recipient families living in rural poverty in America since 1962. They currently service carefully selected areas of rural poverty including: the Mississippi Delta and rural communities in Maine, Appalachia (including West Virginia and Kentucky) and the Native American reservations of South Dakota. Their mission is to encourage and enrich the lives of families and individuals living in poverty in rural America by establishing meaningful relationships, promoting education and offering material aid.
- www.savethechildren.org Does your child love to draw? Enter the Save the Children Art Contest (at any time and as often as you wish!). Winning entries are featured on licensed merchandise and winners receive a \$500 savings bond.
- www.christianchildrensfund.org Sponsor a child for just 80 cents a day. In lieu of birthday presents one year, suggest to your own child that guests could bring a donation for your sponsored child to the party. Feature a display with the sponsored child’s photo and bio on the gift table at the party.

- www.westsuburbanpads.org Provides shelter and three meals for the homeless from Sept. 15 – May 15 each year. During the summer provides a hot lunch meal four days per week and bag lunch five times weekly
- Oak Park – River Forest Food Pantry: Collect canned goods, non-perishable food items, or other necessary items for the pantry.

Supporting the Rights of Animals

- www.guidedogs.org Volunteer to raise guide dogs from the time they are little puppies, and give these special pets the love, care, and training they need to grow up and do their important jobs. Start by contacting Guide Dogs for the Blind. You can also help by adopting an adult guide dog who's getting too old to keep doing its job. These animals deserve to be taken care of and loved in their later years. By volunteering to adopt a former helper animal, you will keep it out of a shelter and give it the honor and respect it deserves.
- www.defenders.org Through the Defenders of Wildlife National Headquarters your child can sponsor a sea otter, dolphin, whale, bear, polar bear, wolf, or snowy owl.
- www.gorillafund.org Founded by Dian Fossey in 1978 this organization promotes the conservation of mountain gorillas and their habitats through research, education and protection programs.

Protecting the Environment

- www.epa.gov/recyclecity/ Games, activities, and stories to help kids learn about reducing waste and encouraging recycling.
- www.greatlakes.org Families can participate by working for the Adopt-A-Beach program.
- www.chicagoriver.org Families can participate in the adopt a portion of the river program.
- www.fotp.org Families can participate in the Adopt-a-Park program.
- www.savetheprairiesociety.org Families can work to preserve, protect, and restore native ecosystems.
- www.oprf.com/thatcher Families can work to preserve the landscapes of Thatcher Woods River corridor.

Reaching Out to People with Special Needs

- www.glasa.org Volunteer to do athletic activities with children and adults who have physical or visual impairments. Play wheelchair basketball, hockey, volleyball—you name it!
- www.wssra.net Families can provide assistance for special events.

Volunteering with Senior Citizens

- www.catholiccharities.net Accolade Adult Day Service provides compassionate care for those suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Volunteer for singing, friendly visiting, or craft activities.
- www.aldengroup.org Alden Town Manor (a senior residence) can use volunteers to socialize with residents, help with special events, or help with the activity department.
- www.woodbineresidence.com Families can make musical presentations or help with special holiday parties.

Volunteer Vacations

Another way for you and your family to get involved is to plan a vacation around a volunteer activity or group. An increasing number of travelers are choosing volunteering as a rewarding and realistic way of seeing the world. You might think the best way to spend your vacation time is to relax and take it easy, but working with a volunteer group can be an amazing adventure that nobody in your family will ever forget! To learn more about family volunteer vacations check out these web sites:

www.choicehumanitarian.org; Choice Humanitarian

www.habitat.org/gv Habitat for Humanity-International Global Village Program

www.globalvolunteers.org/volunteeraroad.htm; Global Volunteers

www.amizade.org. Amizade

Fight for a Cause (teach your children that they *can* have a say in how to make our country a better place to live.)

www.timeforkids.com Kids can become informed about current events, play games, and learn about the world.

www.kidsnewsroom.com Find current events, sports, and entertainment news presented at a kid's eye view.

www.kidsvotingusa.org. This organization is working to involve kids in voting and elections at an early age. Take a look at their "Family Guide" for ideas on how to engage your children in the democratic process.

Empower your children ... !

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