



How Your Family Can Be More Charitable

By Stephanie Haywood of www.MyLifeBoost.com

Managing your family's busy schedule can be complex, but somewhere in between that vacation to Disney World and after-school activities should come time to participate in charitable acts. Several studies show that [acts of kindness](#) can build self-esteem, help you have better friendships, give you a sense of belonging, and make you feel thankful for what you have—all of which are beneficial for everyone in your family. You need not jet off to a foreign country to build a home to make a difference. All efforts, great and small, can have an impact on society and your family. Learn more courtesy of [Eliana's Light](#):

Be a Good Role Model

[Research](#) has revealed that many teens value their own individual happiness and academic achievements over caring for others because that's what they feel adults value. As a parent, it's important that you're being a good charitable role model through conversation and action. If you recently volunteered or did a good deed such as dropping off clothing at a homeless shelter, tell your kids about how your actions made you feel so they understand the positive impact helping can have. You can also take steps to set yourself and your family up for success by taking mindful, health-focused steps at home. If you are all working toward a [healthy lifestyle](#) -- eating right, getting exercise, making time for meditation and calm -- you'll have more energy to devote to being model citizens.

Start a Community Garden

Consider adding a community garden to your property. There are many valuable lessons kids of all ages and adults can learn from growing things; it's therapeutic for all involved; and the produce can be both enjoyed by you and your neighbors and donated to local food banks. To clear out the space, you may need to check out a site like Angi to find a professional to do some [backyard work](#) and give advice on how best to cultivate a fruitful garden.

Make Charitable Endeavors Part of Your Family's Routine

A simple yet effective way to inspire generosity is by making it part of a routine effort. Encourage your family to regularly go through personal items and discard anything they no longer need (think gently used clothing, toys, books, and household items) in a box placed in a common area like the garage. Each time it's full, take it to a shelter or family in need—you can even arrange a pickup if you're short on time. Not only will you be decluttering your home, but you'll be teaching your kids how easy it can be to be charitable on a regular basis.

Implement a Giving Fund

Encourage your kids to give a portion of their allowance to a charity of their choice, and you do the same with your paycheck. By starting a save, spend, give program, you'll be teaching them the basics of budgeting, too. [Source organizations](#) where even small amounts of money can go a long way, such as helping a newborn in an impoverished country for just \$7. At the same time, you can also make it a group effort by saving up for a larger family donation at the end of the year.

Use the Correct Language

[Psychological studies](#) revealed that the language parents use to get their children to do something is key. For example, young children were more apt to follow instruction if they were asked to be "little helpers" as opposed to being asked to help. Other studies have shown that kids tend to develop negative stereotypes about impoverished people, so be sure to have a thorough discussion about social equality—i.e., not everyone from a certain race or country is poor, bad, or uneducated. Educate them on why these people or areas are struggling.

Turn a Regular Act Into a Charitable One

One way to do something charitable without even thinking about it is to share something you already love doing. For parents, it might be cooking (shelters and soup kitchens always need someone to prepare a meal), sewing, or craftsmanship such as woodworking. For kids, [craft projects](#) can carry a lot of weight, especially around the holidays when people are in need of gifts.

To truly make an impact on the lives of others as well as your family, it's important to engage in philanthropic endeavors on a regular basis. The easiest way to do this is by performing random acts of kindness such as mowing the lawn for a neighbor, holding the door open, paying a compliment, or sharing something. Don't underestimate the power of making someone's day!

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