

Giving Feels So Good

Even if you don't have tons of money like the Rockefellers and the Kennedy's who donate millions of dollars annually to charitable causes, you can still make a tremendous difference in the lives of others. By giving of yourself and your time to volunteer in your community, you will not only be helping others, you may just find yourself experiencing unprecedented, personal growth.

Some families have been contributing their money and time to the same charities and social causes for generations. But if the notion of community service is new to you, it is easy to become confused by the volumes of organizations wanting your time and/or money. Unfortunately, and we hate to mention it, there are miscreants who would like to see you part with your money – however, if you do your homework, you can avoid unscrupulous individuals and groups.

So how do you go about choosing reputable vehicles for your community service objectives? Start with what interests you. If you have a religious affiliation, your church, synagogue or temple may be an excellent place to start. Most religious groups have giving programs that could benefit from your involvement. Your school or place of work may also have a pet project they readily support.

You may decide to stick with the most recognizable names like The American Red Cross, Big Brother Big Sisters or the Salvation Army, which provide various combinations of social, medical, educational and community services. If it's hands-on work you enjoy, then Habitat for Humanity may be the right fit for you.

If you are looking for something more unique or specialized, then the internet may be your best resource. There you can review many opportunities for giving along with assessment of the reputations of those organizations that interest you. Some sites worth taking a look at are: www.LearningtoGive.org which promotes informed giving and www.Globalgiving.com which connects you to over 450 pre-screened grassroots charity projects around the world.

So go out there and get involved. Your community will welcome you, and you will feel great about your contributions. As a side benefit, you will meet people who have interests similar to your own.

So how do you go about choosing reputable vehicles for your community service objectives? Start with what interests you.

