

How You Give is Just as Important as What You Give – Give Wisely this Holiday Season

Because of technology and the creativity of charities, there are many different ways that donors can give to a worthy cause. Whether you're giving money, canned goods, used items or your time, BBB Wise Giving Alliance reminds donors that how you give is just as important as what you give.

According to the Giving USA Foundation, total estimated charitable giving in the United States rose 3.8 percent in 2010 (2.1 percent adjusted for inflation). The increase reflects the continued determination of every American to support charitable organizations even during challenging economic times.

"With a tight budget this holiday season, it will be important for donors to be creative when giving back and supporting those who are less fortunate," said H. Art Taylor, president and CEO of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. "When looking to make a contribution, it's important to take the time to do your research. How you give is just as important as what you give."

BBB Wise Giving Alliance offers the following five common ways that people donate to charities over the holidays and a few things to consider:

Give items. Many organizations solicit for donations over the holidays including coats, toys, and canned goods. Whatever you're donating, make sure the items are of good condition and that the recipient charity is accepting such items to help further its cause.

Give when you shop. Many charities have had great success partnering with businesses that agree to donate some amount of the purchase price from sales of items to a worthy cause. This type of cause-related marketing means that you can help while you shop. Check if the promotion identifies the actual or anticipated amount of the purchase price the charity will receive. Also some businesses, like grocery stores, ask if you want to donate to a charity and have that amount added to your receipt (also called embedded giving). See if the embedded promotion states which specific charity will receive the collected funds.

Give online. Giving online with a credit or debit card is among the most efficient ways to support a charity. Before you enter in your numbers, give the website a thorough review, look for the organization's privacy policy, and verify if the organization has appropriate security measures in place to protect such transactions.

Give through text messaging. The option to give via text message took off in the wake of the disastrous earthquake in Haiti. After texting a message to a number, the donation is tacked on to your cell phone bill. While donating via text is fast and

easy for the donor, the actual money can take 60 – 90 days to reach the charity since the funds are forwarded after you pay the donation charge on your next monthly cell phone bill. During disaster giving periods like Haiti, however, cell phone carriers work to forward funds faster. Of course, charities welcome donations at any time during the year.

Give your time. In today's tight economy, you may not have money, but you can always give a little bit of your time to help support a worthy cause. In addition to volunteering around the holidays, you can also be a vocal supporter of a charity and help raise awareness among friends and family and on your Facebook page or blog.

The BBB Wise Giving Alliance reports on more than 1,200 national charitable organizations at www.bbb.org/charity and determines if they meet 20 accountability standards addressing governance, finances and fund raising practices.

To review charity evaluations and get more advice on how to give when times are tight, visit www.bbb.org/charity.