



# GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

# 30-Day **GIVING** CHALLENGE

A BETTER YOU  
How giving back could make you  
**HAPPIER, HEALTHIER**  
*+ more*  
**MOTIVATED**

- THE VERY BEST WAYS TO -  
donate  
your **time,**  
**money &**  
**kindness**

**PLUS**  
⇓  
**Gifts that benefit amazing causes around the world**

EXCLUSIVE **GH+** EDITION

# 01

## THIS YEAR, *choose kindness*

**THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS UPON US**, and it's all about family, friends, gratitude and giving! And maybe, after all we've lived through these past two years, you're even more passionate about those things than ever before. If that's the case, you're not alone. A May 2020 survey by global preventative mental wellness platform Modern Health found that amid the coronavirus pandemic, 75% of more than 700 respondents reported feeling more grateful for their health, their relationships and the life that they'd built. More than half said they were inspired to give back, donate money and volunteer help to those who needed it, and 33% said they were giving more to charitable organizations than before the pandemic.

Americans are giving back in other ways too: A September 2020 report from Indiana University's Women's Philanthropy Institute found that 48.3% of 3,405 respondents engaged in charitable giving indirectly — for example, by making a point of frequenting local businesses and ordering gifts or services offered by friends or family members.

If you're looking for new ways to connect with your community and give back, you've come to the right place. Throughout this challenge, you'll find simple ways to show kindness, raise money and volunteer (we've even included a list of ways you can serve your community without ever leaving your home) with organizations that support many types of causes, from racial justice and civil rights to homelessness and mental health.

Whatever you choose to do, we know it will fill your holiday season with that much more joy — and hopefully create a positive ripple effect in ways you could never have imagined!



## 02

# THE BENEFITS OF *giving back*



You already know the number one reason you should be charitable: It makes the world a better place. And you probably have some personal motivations too. Maybe you volunteer because it's a fun way to meet new people in your area, or you're passionate about a cause and want to advance it as much as possible. You might even want to inspire your family and friends to make the world a kinder, more inclusive place.

As the saying goes, generosity is its own reward, but the Cleveland Clinic reports that donating to charity or volunteering has measurable physical and mental health benefits. Studies show that those who give of themselves can have lower blood pressure and stress levels, fewer incidences of depression, higher self-esteem and even longer lives. Emotionally supporting one another can even help people recover from cardiac events. And because giving can release happy brain chemicals like dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin, it makes you feel good both in the moment and over a longer term. "You can't control the globe, but you can control how you act locally," says Kurt Gray, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Here are some of the many health benefits you could receive just by adding a few more good deeds to your schedule this month.



### **You may live longer.**

A *Journal of Health Psychology* review of the Longitudinal Study on Aging, which compiled data from more than 7,000 Americans ages 70 and older, found that people who gave back frequently tended to live longer than those who didn't. The link remained constant even when factors like medical status, physical activity and social integration were taken out of the picture. The association was greatest for people who also visited friends or attended religious services on a regular basis.



### **You could decrease your risk of dementia.**

One 2017 study from the University of Calgary monitored 1,001 Swedish citizens who had retired in 2010 over a five-year period. The retirees were divided into three groups: people who volunteered at least one hour a week, people who volunteered sporadically and people who never volunteered. At the end of the five years, the researchers found that the people who had volunteered at least one hour a week were 2.44 times less likely to develop dementia than those who had never volunteered. The seniors who volunteered sporadically did not reap any additional benefits to their cognitive health.



### **You'll feel more connected to others.**

A 2018 study published in the journal *BMC Public Health* found a measurable association between charitable acts and improved mental health, physical health and life satisfaction. But the strongest correlation they found was between doing good deeds and social well-being, which was assessed based on how strongly participants agreed or disagreed with the following statements: "I am lacking companionship" and "I feel isolated from others."

If you'd like to work toward this benefit, you'll need to participate in a certain type of service. In the study, the correlation was found only in those who participated in "other-oriented" giving as opposed to "self-oriented" giving. Other-oriented participants were more likely to focus their efforts on causes like human services, education and youth development, while self-oriented volunteers were more likely to reach out to cultural, political, environmental or business groups.



### **You could experience a happier life.**

Research published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* in the 1990s found that for older Americans, participating in community service and social events was a strong predictor of life satisfaction. A



more recent study published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Psychology* discovered that people who volunteered more, as indicated by data in an organized survey, tended to report fewer symptoms of depression.

The same goes for giving money to charity. A survey by the Gallop World Poll found that in 120 of 136 countries, people who had donated to charity in the past month reported greater life satisfaction. In fact, the researchers found that donating to charity had a similar effect on happiness as a doubling of household income.



### **You may lower your risk of high blood pressure.**

Acts of service can improve more than just your mental health — they can also boost your physical health. A 2013 study published in the journal *Psychology and Aging* found that people who regularly gave back to their communities were less likely to develop hypertension than those who didn't. For the study, researchers measured participants' volunteer hours as well as their blood pressure levels twice, four years apart. Those who had volunteered at least 200 hours in the year before the tests had a lower likelihood of high blood pressure over the course of the four years than those who hadn't. There was no association between volunteering and high blood pressure risk for those who had volunteered for fewer than 200 hours the year before the tests.

“Many people find volunteer work helpful with respect to stress reduction, and we know that stress is very strongly linked to health outcomes,” Rodlescia Sneed, Ph.D., the study's lead author and a professor at Michigan State University, told *Harvard Health Publishing* at the time. Keep in mind that 200 hours a year is just 16.5 hours a month — something that's totally doable if you find a consistent way to work it into your schedule.



### **You may feel a stronger sense of purpose.**

That sense of pride you feel after sending in a donation to your favorite charity, helping a friend with a task or wrapping up a day of service? It can linger — and that can positively affect your mental health in the long term. Research published in the journal *Sociological Forum* in 2013 found that giving back just one day a month may provide a greater sense of purpose and help people feel more connected to your communities. The researchers found that it didn't matter how much time someone devoted to the task; it only mattered that the person had formed an identity as a giver and considered giving a part of who they were.



# 03

## NOW IT'S *your turn*



### How to Do This Challenge:

Each week, we'll focus on a specific area of giving: your friends and family; your local community; a large-scale charitable organization or cause; the world as a whole. And because we know that (a) you're busy and may not always have a whole hour or day to spend volunteering and (b) there are many different, but equally valuable, ways to give, each week we'll present two offerings for you to choose from. Select one – or, if you're feeling really inspired, more than one – to tackle this week.

If you're pressed for time, try the Short and Sweet Option, which you can do in as little as five minutes! At the end of each week, take a moment to reflect on how you felt after giving back and appreciate the good you brought into the world.



WEEK  
01

## Share the love with your family and friends



GIVE  
THE  
GIFT OF  
TIME

### Practice the Art of Savoring

“When good things come around, like the holiday season, people think they’ll automatically feel happy,” says Fred Bryant, Ph.D., a social psychologist at Loyola University in Chicago and coauthor of the book *Savoring*. “But we don’t always react to these good things in a way that maximizes their benefits.” (You might, for instance, futz around with the place settings before a holiday dinner instead of drinking in your family’s laughter, or dismiss a long-deserved promotion as just extra work.) Enter the technique psychologists call savoring, a way to fully absorb life’s wonderful moments, large and small. “Through your thoughts and behavior, you extend and intensify a good experience, extracting every morsel from it,” says Bryant. The result: not just more delightful moments but a boost in overall happiness levels as well.

“Savoring gives you a bigger dose of positive emotion,” notes Christine Carter, Ph.D., author of *The Sweet Spot: How to Find Your Groove at Home and Work*. “And positive emotions have been shown to bring our blood pressure down, reverse the stress response and give us more access to the parts of our brains needed for creativity and problem-solving.” Plus, a number of studies have linked positive emotions with a host of health benefits, from better blood sugar levels to greater longevity.



**Your Move:** Be on alert for nice things that happen during your day to which you normally wouldn't give a second thought. When you notice one, pause and really soak up the moment. Create a shared "Daily Memories" album on your phone and invite your family or a few close friends to join. Encourage your loved ones to post their happy moments from the day and scroll through them when you need a smile.

Extending each encounter as long as possible—even for just 30 seconds—will help etch it more deeply into long-term memory and create a stash of wonderful feelings you can draw on to see you through life's challenges. "The benefits of experiencing positive emotions are cumulative. A little hit is good, but more is better," Carter says.

Even if this "stop and smell the roses" mentality doesn't feel natural at first, keep at it. "Savoring is a skill like any other—the more you do it, the better you get at it," says Bryant. And the holidays, with their once-a-year special moments, are a perfect time to practice.

★  
MORE  
WAYS TO  
SHOW  
YOU CARE

**Make Any Day Special:** If you're looking for additional opportunities to spend quality time together, these unique activities will make any day of the year one to celebrate.



#### Get Your TV Marathon On

This activity is one everyone can enjoy, rain or shine. Grab your favorite snacks and cozy up in front of the TV for some screen-based bonding. Bonus: Use this time to introduce your friends or family to your favorite shows or ask them to share theirs. Who knows, maybe you'll find something unexpected that you love or gain a deeper understanding of what makes your loved ones tick.



#### Collect Nonperishable Foods to Donate

Often food banks and soup kitchens get inundated with volunteers over the holidays and then experience a steep drop-off. Help them out in the slow times by asking houseguests to bring a nonperishable food item to donate later. Keep in mind that people experiencing food insecurity want to eat the same delicious things anyone else does, so donate only unexpired, usable food.



#### Ask Kids to Set the Table

Get even the littlest in your household involved in family life by having them set the table for dinner while the adults put the finishing touches on the food. Giving them a task is a triple win: They'll be proud that they could contribute to the meal, learn the importance of pitching in and stay out of trouble (and away from the hot stove).



#### Take a Walk After Dinner

This one is great for a big holiday or a regular Tuesday! For a tradition that's both fun and good for you, get your blood pumping after eating. Bring water if it's warm where you are or bundle up if you live in a cold climate; carry some flashlights if it's after dusk and go for a lap or two around the block. Taking a stroll gives everyone more time to connect with one another.



#### Make Your Next Party a Potluck

Especially if you invite friends from far and wide or your family members come from a variety of backgrounds, asking everyone to bring a dish to pass around can create a more diverse and exciting spread. It also lessens the load on the host. Just make sure to coordinate who's bringing what ahead of time so you'll have all bases covered.



#### Celebrate Everyone's Birthdays

Families and friend groups that see each other only once a year, this one's for you. Sing "Happy Birthday" when you're finally able to get everyone in one place—cake with candles included! That way everyone can celebrate their special day with those they love, even if not all can travel to gather on the actual date.





GIVE  
THE  
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MONEY



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## Choose a Gift That Gives Back

It's an amazing feeling to present someone you love with a gift that keeps on giving. The best kind: a gift that gives back to charities in need. While you can always make a donation in your loved one's honor (let's be clear that this is a wonderful present in our eyes), many brands go the extra mile and donate a portion of their proceeds to important causes: the environment, animals, children in need, mental health services and LGBTQ+ youth, just to name a few. Really, you'll get the most bang for your buck this way: You can pick up a present the recipient will actually use in their day-to-day life while making the world a safer, better place for present and future generations.

**Your Move:** If you already have a charity in mind that you want to support, log on to their website to see if it has an online shop, as many larger organizations do. You could also visit a community holiday fair, a locally owned business or a fair-trade shop to find gifts unique to your area. If you want to get even closer to home, ask your friends and family members if they have a business or skill they'd like to promote. That way you'll not only support their entrepreneurial endeavors, but also likely get an item lovingly crafted by someone you know.

**Gifts for Good:** To make the selection process even easier, check out a few of our favorite "giving" gifts below. Be sure to read up on all the ways in which these charity gifts are making a difference: Some benefit the artisans creating the products around the globe, while others support Black-, Latinx- and Asian-owned businesses, and several donate a portion of the proceeds to top-rated charities like Every Mother Counts and Girls Inc. There's no right or wrong approach here – just choose whichever option feels best to you. You're sure to find something for everyone on your list.



### Calf Socks

\$12, [bombas.com](https://bombas.com)

The athlete in your life will appreciate a pair of high-performance socks made with a cushioned footbed and stay-up technology. For every pair purchased, one pair of socks is donated – to date, Bombas has donated over 50 million clothing items through more than 3,500 Giving Partners across the country.



### Personalized Apron

\$40, [minted.com](https://minted.com)

Minted really does it all: It gives independent artists a major platform and finds a way to give back to organizations that need it most. This striped apron, available in sizes for adults and kids, is a prime example: The profits from each sale go to Every Mother Counts, a nonprofit that aims to make pregnancy and childbirth safe for every mother, everywhere.



### Black Futures Matter Lined Notebook

\$20, [erincondren.com](https://erincondren.com)

Here's a message we all need to hear every so often. Plus, half the profits go to Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective and the other half go right into the designer's pocket.





### Optimism Necklace

\$38, [bando.com](https://bando.com)

On days when someone you love needs a reminder to see the glass as half full, they can put on this necklace for a burst of optimism. You'll both feel even better knowing that the purchase supports Girls Inc., a nonprofit encouraging young girls to be just as ambitious, bold and inspiring as your loved one is.



### Always Pan

\$145, [fromourplace.com](https://fromourplace.com)

There's a reason this culinary tool is a cult classic. Our Place knows that time spent at the dinner table is priceless – and it isn't going to cut corners. All its products, including the popular Always Pan, are made in safe and ethical working conditions, and proceeds support a community in need. In the wake of the coronavirus, Our Place partnered with Feeding America to donate more than 200,000 meals.



### Pride Cocktail Napkins

\$32, [potterybarn.com](https://potterybarn.com)

Bring color and love to your dinner table with these embroidered napkins. Inspirational messages ("All for one and love for all") stitched onto each napkin benefit those at your party, but the impact extends well beyond your walls: 25% of the purchase price goes directly to The Trevor Project.



### The Original Set

\$25, [bravosierra.com](https://bravosierra.com)

Refresh your medicine cabinet while supporting the well-being of U.S. service members, veterans and their families. Bravo Sierra is the first company to make skincare, grooming and hygiene products specifically for the military – and now they're available to members of the military and civilians alike.



### Bar 5 Milk + White Chocolate

\$15, [seattlechocolate.com](https://seattlechocolate.com)

See? You always knew your sweet tooth would pay off. The premium chocolate brand donates a percentage of its yearly sales to organizations that feed those in need. That means the more chocolate you buy, the better.



## SHORT AND SWEET OPTION

### Say Thank You

Through a text, a phone call or handwritten note, thank at least one person who has inspired you this year. When you have the opportunity to express your appreciation to another person, do it in a way that acknowledges the giver rather than how their act makes you feel. Instead of saying "I can't wait to wear this scarf!" phrase your thanks in a way that highlights the other person's efforts or the qualities you like most about them: "You're so thoughtful to remember my favorite color!" Psychologist Sara Algoe, Ph.D., an associate professor of social psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says, "I call this putting the 'you' in 'thank you.'" Her research suggests that this approach can strengthen bonds – which is healthy for both of you. "Strong relationships have the same positive impact on our longevity as the negative impact smoking 15 cigarettes a day has on our mortality," she says. And living longer in better health gives you more reasons to be thankful!



WEEK  
02

## Make an impact in your community



GIVE  
THE  
GIFT OF  
TIME

### Volunteer for a Local Organization

Participating in community service is one of the most rewarding things you can do. No matter what your age, giving back can help you build friendships, develop new skills and increase life satisfaction — all while making the world a better place. It's no wonder that in a *Good Housekeeping* poll of more than 4,000 people, 19% of respondents said they typically volunteered once a month and another 19% said they volunteered even more than that.

**Your Move:** Community organizations, religious groups and charity-oriented social groups provide wonderful ways to connect with others and give back. Ruth Wolever, Ph.D., a professor and director of the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, explains that joining a group focused on charity work rather than a common interest (like a running group or a book club) may provide an easier opportunity to socialize, as you'll be working in tandem on the task at hand. You shouldn't have too much trouble finding an organization that needs your help in your area — but if you're looking for somewhere to start, Wolever, who serves as an executive board member at the National Board for Health & Wellness Coaching, recommends Meetup, a social-driven community board that may clue you in to charity work in your area. Don't



be afraid to think big either. While you could totally pick up litter at the beach by yourself, you'd cover a lot more land if you organized a group to help you out. You might even ask everyone in that group to bring a can of food for a food pantry too. It's all about getting creative and brainstorming ways to make giving back fun.

★  
MORE  
WAYS TO  
SHOW  
YOU CARE

**Creative Community Service Ideas:** Take a look at this list of impactful ways you can volunteer and make a difference. Remember that these ideas are meant to be general. If one speaks to you, think of ways you can personalize it to align with your interests and expertise!

#### For Kids

- ▶ Make cards for seniors or servicepeople or a thank-you card for your mail carrier.
- ▶ Use chalk to write inspiring quotes on the sidewalk.
- ▶ Pick up litter at a local park.
- ▶ Collect donations in lieu of birthday gifts.
- ▶ Choose food at the grocery store to donate to a food bank.
- ▶ Cheer on the athletes at a Special Olympics event.
- ▶ Invite someone new to play at the playground.
- ▶ Participate in a local charity walk.
- ▶ Decorate place mats for Meals on Wheels.
- ▶ Plant a tree.
- ▶ Put a tip in a tip jar.
- ▶ Greet new neighbors with a gift package or make a "New to the Neighborhood" guidebook for new kids at school.

#### For Teens

- ▶ Rake leaves or shovel snow for a neighbor.
- ▶ Tutor elementary school children or coach a youth sports team.
- ▶ Be a "grand-friend" to a senior in your area.
- ▶ Start a Little Free Library or a Little Free Pantry.
- ▶ Create craft kits or activity sets for kids in hospitals or homeless shelters.
- ▶ Volunteer for the National Park Service or to help maintain a local hiking trail.
- ▶ Become a conversation volunteer for people who are learning English.
- ▶ Unpack and shelve food at a food pantry.
- ▶ Paint a mural, beautify a public space or maintain a community garden.
- ▶ Create a recycling program at school.

#### For Adults

- ▶ Deliver meals for Meals on Wheels or deliver groceries to those in need.
- ▶ Mentor a student interested in your career path or offer job interview training at a community center.
- ▶ Become CPR certified.
- ▶ Start a neighborhood welcome committee.
- ▶ Clean graffiti in your neighborhood, spruce up a local park or help an elderly neighbor maintain their yard.
- ▶ Become a member at a museum, theater or cultural institution and volunteer at events.
- ▶ Clean up after a natural disaster or storm.
- ▶ Organize a musical hour or reading program for kids at a local park or library.
- ▶ Quilt or knit blankets for local hospitals.
- ▶ Volunteer at a pet shelter.

#### Virtual Community Service Ideas

- ▶ Read books with a buddy on StoriiTime ([storiitime.com](http://storiitime.com)).
- ▶ Start a Pay It Forward or Buy Nothing group for your neighborhood on Facebook.
- ▶ Volunteer as a crisis counselor for a crisis hotline like Crisis Text Hotline ([crisistexthotline.org](http://crisistexthotline.org)) or IMAlive ([imalive.org](http://imalive.org)) or support victims of sexual assault by becoming a crisis counselor with RAINN ([rainn.org](http://rainn.org)).
- ▶ Help people who are blind or have low vision via video chat using Be My Eyes ([bemyeyes.com](http://bemyeyes.com)).
- ▶ Teach kids and teens about your current career at Career Village ([careervillage.org](http://careervillage.org)).
- ▶ Use your professional skills to help a nonprofit through Catch a Fire ([catchafire.org](http://catchafire.org)).
- ▶ Become an online volunteer listener through 7Cups ([7cups.com](http://7cups.com)).
- ▶ Play games with seniors on video chat through Lifetime Connections Without Walls ([familyeldercare.org](http://familyeldercare.org)).
- ▶ Help others navigate challenges at work by becoming a peer counselor with Empower Work ([empowerwork.org](http://empowerwork.org)).
- ▶ Archive historical documents for the Smithsonian Institute ([transcription.si.edu](http://transcription.si.edu)).





## GIVE THE GIFT OF MONEY

### Contribute to a Community Fundraiser

You give, you get! Spending money on others can improve cardiovascular function, a study in *Health Psychology* found. Participants were given \$40 per week for three weeks and told to invest it in either themselves or others. Those in the latter group showed a decrease in blood pressure. The study authors suspect that their generosity led to heightened feelings of social connection and lower levels of stress, both of which have been shown to promote heart health.

**Your Move:** Consider organizing or participating in a fundraiser for an organization you care about. Maybe your school needs a little extra money to start a new initiative, or maybe you know of a nonprofit that's constantly strapped for cash. It might even be that there's an incredible charity or organization you want to raise money for. You can choose a fundraiser as simple as attending a bake sale or as involved as organizing a pop-up picnic at a local park, depending on your organization's needs, your time, the amount of money you want to contribute and the resources you have available.

**Unique Fundraising Options:** Tap into our list of creative fundraising ideas to help you plan an event you'll want to repeat every year. We've even included some virtual fundraising ideas for things you can do while social distancing.

## ★ MORE WAYS TO SHOW YOU CARE

#### Best School Fundraising Ideas

- ▶ Host a community yard sale in your school's parking lot or ask local artists to sell crafts at a school craft sale.
- ▶ Collect box tops.
- ▶ Host a Read-a-thon; pledges are tied to the number of books read in a month.
- ▶ Organize a pancake breakfast or a themed bake sale.
- ▶ Throw a clothing swap; participants donate clothes and make a small donation for every piece they take.
- ▶ Organize a "Straw Draw" event; participants pay to draw a straw, and each straw correlates to a donated prize.
- ▶ Start a face-painting station at a local farmers' market or community event.
- ▶ Host a cupcake war in which participants see who bakes the best treats; you can charge an entry fee and a tasting fee.
- ▶ Host a board game or video game tournament.

#### Best Fundraising Ideas to Do With Kids

- ▶ Host a Clean-a-thon; pledges are tied to the number of pounds of trash collected.
- ▶ Design and sell T-shirts.
- ▶ Host a trivia night.
- ▶ Offer gift-wrapping services; you could set up a stand in your neighborhood or advertise on a community board or a local social media group.
- ▶ Host a community hike day; charge a small donation fee and lead everyone on a hike.
- ▶ Host a pop-up picnic in a local park or town square; you can charge an entry fee and sell donated items at the event.
- ▶ Host a penny drive at school; each classroom gets a jar and races to fill it.
- ▶ Host a themed fun run.
- ▶ Set up a scavenger hunt or a history tour.
- ▶ Host a car wash.
- ▶ Throw a murder mystery dinner party.
- ▶ Host a haunted house event or a pumpkin-carving contest.

#### Best Virtual Fundraising Ideas

- ▶ Host a virtual book talk or a Q&A discussion night with a notable member of your community.
- ▶ Throw a virtual concert, poetry reading or talent show.
- ▶ Host a virtual cooking class or exercise class.
- ▶ Host a virtual game or movie night.
- ▶ Create a community coupon book of coupons donated by local businesses and sell the book online.
- ▶ Organize a virtual silent auction.
- ▶ Host a mentor auction; people in your community can offer their mentoring services virtually.
- ▶ Organize a Phone-a-thon to ask for donations.
- ▶ Organize a virtual race or walkathon (participants walk on their own time).
- ▶ Host a step challenge; pledges are tied to the number of steps taken.





SHORT  
AND  
SWEET  
OPTION

## Perform Anonymous Acts of Kindness

Performing acts of kindness, especially for people you don't know, increases levels of oxytocin (a hormone associated with happiness), which can improve your mood and lower feelings of anxiety. Amazingly, the same goes for witnessing someone else's generosity. But you don't need to rely on grand gestures to make a difference: Every small step counts.

When you're out for a walk, say hello or wave to a person you pass on the street. Or shovel your neighbor's walkway the next time it snows. When you do something nice for a stranger, you start to get the endorphins and the oxytocin going in your body, says Judith Orloff, M.D., psychiatrist and author of *Thriving as an Empath*. "Oxytocin is the bonding hormone. It's what mothers have when they give birth. So oxytocin is important." If you want to take the experience further, you might even try starting conversations. Get out of your comfort zone and have a conversation with your neighbor, a parent at your kid's school, a new person at your company — in short, anyone with whom you may interact regularly, says Susan Pinker, a psychologist and the author of *The Village Effect*. This doesn't have to be a close relationship; research tells us that even weak bonds strengthen our immunity and well-being.

WEEK  
03

## Reach out to a large-scale charitable organization



Fabric: Mike Garten. Solar panels, houses, and grass: Getty Images.





GIVE  
THE  
GIFT OF  
TIME

## Try a Virtual Volunteer Opportunity

When you think about volunteering, you probably have a certain picture in your mind. Maybe you're serving food at a soup kitchen, tutoring kids at a library or cleaning a community park. But amid the coronavirus pandemic, many of those in-person volunteer opportunities are out of the question — especially for high-risk individuals. What's more, if you live in a smaller community, your in-person options could be limited or you may not have access to some larger organizations of interest to you. But just because you can't give back alongside others doesn't mean you can't give back on your own. Enter: virtual volunteer opportunities.

**Your Move:** In a *Good Housekeeping* poll of almost 5,000 readers, 48% said COVID-19 has impacted their volunteer efforts, while 46% said their volunteering had been largely unaffected.

Interestingly, 5% said they had shifted their volunteering to online. Joining their ranks is a lot easier than you might think. Websites such as [volunteermatch.org](https://volunteermatch.org) and AARP's searchable database of volunteer opportunities, Create the Good ([createthegood.aarp.org](https://createthegood.aarp.org)) hook you up with projects that fit your interests — like hosting a virtual story time for kids or Zoom chatting with residents of a local senior home — so you can change the world without even putting on your coat.

**Volunteer Opportunities You Can Do From Home:** To take the guesswork out of finding the right give-back option for yourself, check out our list of some of the best volunteer opportunities you can do remotely, *below*. All you need is a computer, an Internet connection and a passion for helping others.

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HIRE HEROES USA

### Hire Heroes USA

[hireheroesusa.org](https://hireheroesusa.org)

Help veterans and military spouses excel in their careers by conducting mock interviews, offering general career counseling or guiding federal-sector applicants through the USA Jobs portal and interview process. Most online volunteer sessions are conducted via phone or video.



INSTANT  
WILD

### ZSL Instant Wild

[instantwild.zsl.org](https://instantwild.zsl.org)

Contribute to essential conservation efforts by tagging animals in images and videos. Don't worry if you lack expertise — the organization provides helpful field guides for each project. Watching videos of cute animals while saving their futures? Sounds like a dream.



### Tarjimly

[tarjimly.org](https://tarjimly.org)

The Tarjimly app connects refugees, asylees, immigrants and the people who support them with multilingual volunteer translators. As a remote volunteer, you'll receive a notification whenever someone who needs your skills makes a translation request (translations are needed for everything from texts and documents to voice notes and live calls); you can choose whether to accept the request based on your availability.





### TED Translate

[ted.com/participate/translate](https://ted.com/participate/translate)

You've probably learned something from more than a few TED Talks over the years – and by volunteering as a translator for the organization, you'll enable others to do that too. With this remote volunteer opportunity, you can work as many or as few hours as you'd like.



### The Trevor Project

[thetrevorproject.org](https://thetrevorproject.org)

Support LGBTQ+ youth who are struggling with issues such as coming out, LGBTQ+ identity, depression and suicide by volunteering to respond to chat messages as a crisis counselor for The Trevor Project. You'll need to complete a 40-hour online training course and serve one three-hour shift per week for at least a year.



### Bookshare

[bookshare.org](https://bookshare.org)

This e-book library makes reading easier for people with barriers such as dyslexia, learning disabilities, visual impairments and physical disabilities; titles are available in braille and large-font formats as well as with karaoke-style highlighting. As a virtual volunteer, you'll upload books to the Bookshare collection using a scanner or proofread previously scanned files and format them properly.



### Translators Without Borders

[translatorswithoutborders.org](https://translatorswithoutborders.org)

This nonprofit offers language and translation support for humanitarian and development agencies as well as other nonprofits. If you're fluent in a second language, you can volunteer remotely to translate medical texts or crisis-response documents.



### Sidelines

[sidelines.org](https://sidelines.org)

Sidelines' mission is to support women and families experiencing complicated pregnancies and premature birth – and it needs volunteers who have experienced those things to help. As a volunteer, you'll complete online training and provide emotional support to women in a variety of ways, including through email, phone, video chat and discussion groups.



**GIVE  
THE  
GIFT OF  
MONEY**

## Fund a Cause You Believe In

Giving to a large-scale charity or global organization can help you reach groups and populations outside your local area. This can also be a way to contribute to a cause you care deeply about or help provide immediate relief when time is of the essence, such as after a natural disaster. But before you make a decision on where to give, it's important to find a charity you trust so you can rest assured that your donation will go as far as possible.

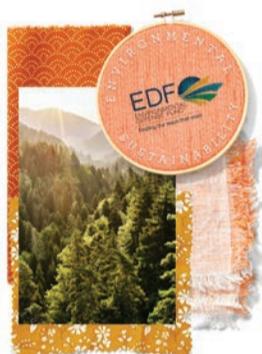
**Your Move:** “Don't just respond to every solicitation you get,” says Elie Hasenfield, cofounder of [givewell.org](https://givewell.org), an independent nonprofit charity evaluator. “Look for the organizations that are doing good in the areas you care most about.” Once you find one that makes your heart sing, evaluate its performance. Hasenfield recommends asking management: *How do you know your program is*



working? How do you measure your success? How will additional funding be used in the coming months and years? Use the evaluation tools offered on [givewell.org](http://givewell.org) and [charitynavigator.com](http://charitynavigator.com) — they've done most of the legwork for you.

★  
MORE  
WAYS TO  
SHOW  
YOU CARE

**Put Your Money Toward a Good Cause:** You can also check out some great charities to donate to below. To vet these organizations, we combed through Charity Watch and Charity Navigator, two trusted watchdog groups that assign charities a grade or number rating for financial health and transparency. We've also included our Good Housekeeping Humanitarian Seal holder, No Kid Hungry. With organizations that focus on so many different causes, you're bound to find a charity you're excited to support.



### Environmental Defense Fund

[edf.org](http://edf.org)

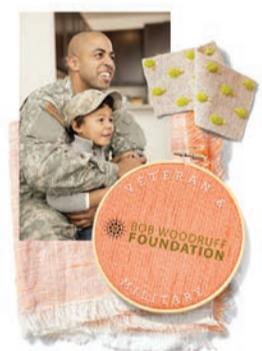
With Charity Navigator's highest four-star rating, the Environmental Defense Fund works to institute clean energy solutions, reduce emissions and find sustainable ways to grow food and supply water. Along with influencing legislation and conducting research, the organization builds partnerships with corporations to help them become more environmentally friendly. It currently works in 26 countries and has helped protect 4 million acres of land.



### Animal Welfare Institute

[awionline.org](http://awionline.org)

No matter which types of animals you love most — whether it's cats and dogs, farm animals, marine life, wildlife or laboratory animals — the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) is out there serving them. The AWI engages with policymakers, scientists and the public to abolish factory farms, implement alternatives to experimentation on live animals, protect endangered and threatened species and more. The organization also makes it easy to write to legislators on issues ranging from shark finning to racehorse conditions.



### Bob Woodruff Foundation

[bobwoodrufffoundation.org](http://bobwoodrufffoundation.org)

The Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) funds programs that serve veterans and their families. It honors journalist Bob Woodruff, who was hit by a roadside bomb in 2006 while covering the war in Iraq and miraculously survived. The foundation seeks to meet the emerging and long-term needs of today's veterans, addressing issues including suicide prevention, mental health, caregiver support and food insecurity. Since 2006, it has invested more than \$70 million in programs that empower impacted veterans, service members and their family members.



### No Kid Hungry

[nokidhungry.org](http://nokidhungry.org)

A Good Housekeeping Humanitarian Seal holder, No Kid Hungry is a national campaign run by the nonprofit Share Our Strength. The organization focuses on ending childhood hunger, which typically affects more than 11 million children in the United States. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, however, that number could reach 18 million (that's one in four youngsters). No Kid Hungry improves access to child nutrition programs, including school breakfasts, summer meals and after-school meals, and works with elected officials to improve the food programs kids and families rely on.





### Ronald McDonald House Charities

[rmhc.org](http://rmhc.org)

When children become ill or need important surgery, their families sometimes have to go far for treatment. This can be an expensive endeavor and require lots of travel back and forth. To keep families together, Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) provides overnight stays in its accommodations. The organization also offers nutritious meals for its guests as well as education programs for outpatients and their siblings and peer support for families.



### Refugees International

[refugeesinternational.org](http://refugeesinternational.org)

There are nearly 80 million refugees around the world, and this nonprofit steps in to advocate for lifesaving assistance and protection for people forcibly displaced from their homes. Every year, Refugees International conducts about 20 field missions around the world to speak directly with displaced people and identify their needs. The organization prides itself on being independent, as it does not accept money from the United Nations or the U.S. government.



### Mental Health America

[mhanational.org](http://mhanational.org)

One of the first steps in getting help for your mental health is knowing when you need it. Since 2014, Mental Health America's (MHA) free online screening tool has provided more than 6.7 million mental health screenings. The organization advocates for legislation to create a nation that's more supportive of the mental health of its citizens. It fights for early intervention, reduced stigma and discrimination, better treatment and a decrease in incarceration and homelessness among people living with mental illness. Since 2020, MHA has been especially focused on suicide prevention and access to crisis care, early intervention for children and youth and workplace mental health, among other initiatives.



### Equal Justice Initiative

[eji.org](http://eji.org)

This nonprofit is dedicated to ending mass incarceration, excessive punishment and racial and economic injustice; it was founded by Bryan Stevenson, a public interest lawyer and author of the best-selling book *Just Mercy*, which became a hit film. The Equal Justice Initiative advocates for criminal justice reform, supports impoverished and marginalized communities and aids people in their reentry into society after having been in prison. It also educates people about slavery and racial injustice with reports, projects and its museum and memorial located in Montgomery, AL. The charity has a four-star rating on Charity Navigator.



**SHORT  
AND  
SWEET  
OPTION**

## Tap Into the Power of Social Media

Everyone talks about limiting social media, but what if you used it for good? Instead of filling your feed with over-the-top celebrities or people you haven't spoken to since high school — our minds can handle only so many political arguments and images of fake-perfect lives — click "Follow" on the account of a group that has a mission you believe in or a politician who shares your values. You'll keep yourself informed of their ongoing activities and may find something with which you want to participate more fully when you have the time.



WEEK  
04

## Help create a healthier planet



GIVE  
THE  
GIFT OF  
TIME

### Declutter & Donate

Messy environments have been linked to anxiety and stress, so organizing your cluttered closet or desk may bring calmness. And donating what you don't need can amplify the boost. Nothing makes decluttering easier than knowing your possessions are going to a worthy cause — or at the very least, *not* going to the dump. Consider this: Around 11 million tons of textile waste ends up in landfills each year. And old jeans and tees don't have a short stay there either — depending on the material, their breakdown could take from several weeks to several decades, releasing methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide, in the process. Fortunately, there are simple ways you can donate clothes to save the planet — and help those in need at the same time.

**Your Move:** If you're looking to support your local community, you might consider donating gently used items to your neighborhood church, school or homeless shelter. No matter where you decide to give, call ahead before you pack up the car to make sure the organization is currently accepting donations. During the coronavirus pandemic, some groups updated their donation requirements.



★  
MORE  
WAYS TO  
SHOW  
YOU CARE

**Give Your Stuff a Second Life:** You can also use this list to find places to donate clothes, toys and other goods. While some of these organizations collect clothes to give directly to people in need, others give back in different ways, such as by reselling clothes to raise funds for important causes or sending unsold donations to eco-friendly recycling centers.



**American Red Cross**

### **American Red Cross**

[redcross.org](http://redcross.org)

One of the oldest and most well-respected humanitarian organizations in the country, the American Red Cross provides emergency assistance, disaster relief and disaster preparedness education for millions of people around the world. The nonprofit currently has a partnership with GreenDrop, an organization that will take donated clothes and resell them to thrift stores to benefit the American Red Cross.



**DRESS FOR SUCCESS**  
Going Places. Going Strong.

### **Dress for Success**

[dressforsuccess.org](http://dressforsuccess.org)

If your closet is overflowing with professional clothing, consider donating some pieces to Dress for Success, a nonprofit that empowers low-income women by providing them with work-appropriate attire as they seek and maintain employment. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has expanded to nearly 150 cities in 25 countries and has helped more than 1.2 million women secure jobs and develop their careers.



**FREE  
THE  
GIRLS**

### **Free the Girls**

[freethegirls.org](http://freethegirls.org)

Don't throw away your old bras! By donating them to Free the Girls, you can help bring economic opportunity to survivors of sex trafficking in places like Uganda, El Salvador and Mozambique. The organization gives all donated bras to women who have escaped human trafficking; the women then have the opportunity to sell the bras in secondhand markets in their communities and earn an income that can support them and their families.



### **Goodwill**

[goodwill.org](http://goodwill.org)

Goodwill is one of the most well-known places to donate used clothes (and tons of other things too!). The nonprofit is funded by a massive network of retail thrift stores across the country. Revenue from the stores goes directly toward helping individuals find employment and grow their careers by providing them with job training, placement services and other community-based programs. Anything it can't sell, Goodwill will forward to recycling organizations that will help the items stay out of landfills.



**One Warm Coat**

### **One Warm Coat**

[onewarmcoat.org](http://onewarmcoat.org)

Want to share the warmth during the cold winter months? Donate your spare outerwear to One Warm Coat, a nonprofit that provides free coats to people in need. Working toward its mission of raising awareness of the vital need for warm coats across the country, the organization has hosted more than 38,000 coat drives and has provided 6.6 million free coats since 1992.





### **Planet Aid** [planetaid.org](https://planetaid.org)

Many charities accept only clothing that's in good and wearable condition – but Planet Aid is different. The organization makes it easy to donate and recycle all your unwanted clothes, with the mission of saving all textiles from landfills to help protect the environment. Specifically, the nonprofit collects donated clothing to be sold and reused in developing countries. Shoes and textiles such as bedding, towels and curtains are also accepted. All the proceeds go toward development projects to fight poverty in these areas.



### **The Salvation Army** [salvationarmyusa.org](https://salvationarmyusa.org)

The Salvation Army is an international charity organization that provides assistance to nearly 23 million Americans each year, with services that include everything from operating homeless shelters and conducting disaster relief to providing support for veterans, the elderly and the LGBTQ+ community. The Salvation Army accepts donations of all kinds of clothing, including men's, women's and children's clothes and accessories. Clothing donations go toward stocking the charity's network of thrift stores, with all the proceeds helping to fund the Salvation Army's adult rehabilitation centers. It also accepts other goods such as furniture, appliances and other household items.



### **Soles4Souls** [soles4souls.org](https://soles4souls.org)

Looking for the best place to donate your shoes? Soles4Souls is all about “turning shoes and clothing into opportunity.” It works toward this mission by collecting unwanted footwear and clothing to distribute to people in need across the country and the world. The organization also works to fight poverty by helping people start businesses selling the donated shoes and clothing they receive.



### **Vietnam Veterans of America** [vva.org](https://vva.org)

The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is an organization dedicated to promoting and serving the needs of Vietnam War veterans through legislative initiatives, education and outreach programs. The nonprofit collects donations of clothing and household items, which it either gives directly to homeless and low-income veterans or resells in its resale stores to generate funds for its various programs and initiatives.



**GIVE  
THE  
GIFT OF  
MONEY**

## **Look for Sustainable Gifts and Goods**

The average person in the United States produces about 4.5 pounds of waste each day, according to a 2017 study by the EPA – that adds up to over 267 million tons of trash per year. If you're trying to be mindful of your environmental impact, it makes sense to look for sustainable products as alternatives to disposable single-use items. But since so many products, from dish soaps to sheet sets, have “green” claims on their packaging, it can be hard to recognize which ones are truly worth your hard-earned cash.

That's why the Good Housekeeping Institute is here to help you make better decisions for your home and the environment, thanks to our rigorous testing and expert advice. Our team is passionate about sustainability and the environment, and our work shows it. We regularly evaluate products for the Green Good Housekeeping Seal (an emblem earned based on environmental impact), and we



host the annual Raise the Green Bar sustainability summit. In 2019, we launched our first-ever Sustainable Packaging Awards to highlight brands making an effort to use minimal packaging.

**Your Move:** It's much easier to adjust to an eco-conscious lifestyle than you may think (and there's more to it than recycling your plastics and composting at home). You just need to know what to look for before you get to the store. Here's what our environmental experts suggest:

- \* Prioritize reusable items over single-use ones. Even small swaps, like using a reusable bag instead of plastic ones when you go grocery shopping, can make a difference in your environmental impact.
- \* Look for established third-party emblems like EcoCert Cosmos for organic cosmetics, Fair Trade Certified ingredients or GreenGuard Certified.
- \* Opt for sustainable and recycled materials. For clothing, bedding and other textiles, our pros recommend looking for fibers like Tencel and organic cotton if buying secondhand products isn't an option.

FYI: Our environmental experts prefer to use the term “sustainable” rather than “eco-friendly” because the latter implies that a product has no negative impact on the environment. “Eco-friendly” also considered a greenwashing term, and the FTC has strict guidelines on “eco-friendly” claims. It's important to note that with all our recommendations below, we're saying a single attribute of the product is good for the environment – not necessarily everything about it.



SHORT  
AND  
SWEET  
OPTION

### Ditch the Plastic Straws

Americans use nearly 500 million plastic straws every day. Replace your plastic straws with a set of reusable ones made from stainless steel, silicone or bamboo – the sea turtles will thank you.

WEEK

05

AND  
BEYOND

You don't need to stop giving once this challenge ends. Though this has been a challenging year, science teaches us that showing kindness to ourselves and others can boost our feelings of gratitude and enhance our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. When we take a moment (or more) to be helpful, that simple act reminds us that are valuable parts of a much larger human community. This is one of the most rewarding and affirming mindsets.

Hopefully, these four weeks have shown you that there are lots of small, simple things you can do to make a big impact on the world around you – and inspired you to continue to make positive changes in the days and months ahead. If you're looking for simple ways to set yourself up for a better year, consider trying another of our GH+ Exclusive Guides and Challenges. The expert-backed strategies offered in each one provide you with a wealth of new ways to improve your overall health and preserve your peace of mind no matter what life throws your way. Find them all [here](#).