

Learning the Gift of Giving

There is no correct time to teach children to be charitable. In fact, humans are born with an innate sense of empathy and generosity towards others. When a toddler sees a baby crying, they will instinctively try to cheer up the baby. A five year old will comfort a friend when they are sad. Encouraging children to care for others by giving or volunteering can be taught at an early age.

The start of a new year is a perfect time to “get organized.” Initiate a conversation with your children concerning families who are less fortunate. Explain that some families don’t have extra money to spend on gifts. Comment on how lucky your children are to have so many toys. Suggest that it would be a really good idea to give the toys and books they no longer play with or read to children who don’t have a lot of toys and books. Let your children decide what to keep and what to give. If you make the choice for them, it will not have the same impact. The value of teaching your child to donate to others can be a rewarding experience; they will feel generous and gratified. Next, they can sort out their clothes and shoes. They can put the clothes in a family donation box. Have everyone get involved. When your children see the family taking part in this project, they will not only feel good but they will have more room for all their new stuff. Food pantries always need donations. Go through your pantry and cupboards with your child or children and decide what you would like to give away (Check that the dates are not expired). Animal shelters also need food and blankets. When you are food shopping with your children, pick up some pet food to give to a shelter. If you have any old blankets and towels that you no longer use, they are greatly needed and appreciated at the shelters. Take your children with you to make your donations to any of the charitable organizations, it will be more realistic and they will have a sense of accomplishment. If you don’t already have one, get a charity box for your home, it’s a great way to always remember to give to others. When your children see you putting your spare change in the box, they will do the same.

Instilling the habit of charity can be both rewarding and empowering. Always praise your children when they make donations or show concern for others. Teaching your children charity at an early age will encourage them to grow up to be kind and compassionate souls.

At Woodcrest School we always encourage our students to be charitable. At the start of the school year, our 3rd grade students who are our “Green Team,” choose a variety of charitable organizations such as; Make a Wish, SPCA, Red Cross, Susan G Komen, American Cancer Foundation, American Arthritis Foundation and more. Every two months they total up the plastic bottles they have collected and then donate to one of their charities. In the past 5 years the 3rd graders have collected \$1450. The entire school collects for the USO, The Fred Jordan Mission and Pennies for Patients.

Shosh Byron
Executive Director
Woodcrest School