

Introduction to Philanthropy

GENEROSITY
EXEMPTION
DONATION
COMPASSION
KINDNESS
VOLUNTEERING
CONTRIBUTION
CHARITY

PHILANTHROPY

What is Philanthropy?

The word philanthropy originated from the Greek word (philos), meaning “loving” and (Anthropos) meaning “mankind.” When combined, the word philanthropy means the love of mankind. What could be better?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines philanthropy as:

1. goodwill to fellow members of the human race; especially, an active effort to promote human welfare
2. an act or gift done or made for humanitarian purposes
3. an organization distributing or supported by funds set aside for humanitarian purposes

According to Wikipedia, philanthropy means the love of humanity, in the sense of caring, nourishing, developing, and enhancing what it means to be human.



In daily life, you can think of philanthropy as goodwill to other people. Philanthropy is something as small as holding the door open for someone behind you or tipping the barista at the local coffee shop.

Philanthropy represents using your personal resources to make the world a better place. Philanthropy suggests starting at the root of the societal problem and working to solve issues there.

The basis of philanthropy represents two parts: the benefactor and the beneficiary. One person or organization (benefactor) gives money or services to another person or organization (beneficiary). Say your family has a garden and it produces twenty-five tomatoes this week. You cannot use all of them so you give them to your neighbors. You would be the benefactor and your neighbors would be the beneficiary. Yes, this is the most basic form of philanthropy.

Let’s use this benefactor and beneficiary concept with you and your child as part of the example. If instead of packing one pudding for your daughter in her lunch you pack two. You ask her to share this extra pudding with a classmate. You are teaching your child philanthropy at it most basic level by allowing her to be the benefactor and her classmate to be the beneficiary of her action.

By teaching your children to help others, you’re also teaching them to be good people, plain and simple.

How does philanthropy differ from charity?

Charity is aid given to those in need, and for many, charity is the hands-on relief received for a particular need.

As Lauren A. Pistell, executive director of Richard S. Shineman Foundation states in her blog entry, “Philanthropy vs. Charity—What’s the Difference?” (Feb 2017) the contrast is:

Charity refers to the direct relief of suffering and social problems. Philanthropy systematically seeks out root causes of these issues and endeavors to find a solution.

A commonly used example compares charity as giving fish to a hungry person to philanthropy teaching that person how to fish.

When you teach your child about charity, you are focusing more on the “now” of the moment rather than the long term benefit that could result from it. For instance, if you are walking with your children and give loose change to a homeless person, you are teaching your child to be charitable. If rather than give loose change your family becomes motivated to reduce directly the homeless population in your immediate community through your volunteering and financial donations, you are being philanthropic.

As a parent, it is important to focus on both charity and philanthropy. Both serve a purpose. We all would like to find a solution to societal problems, but solutions are not always immediately available. Therefore, our day-to-day activities or direct and immediate relief also becomes impactful.

How do parents teach philanthropy to their children?

According to recent research from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, children learn about philanthropic giving from their parents. That means *you*. The two most successful ways to teach your children are through talking about and demonstrating kindness to others. In other words, be the change you want to see in the world, and your children will mimic this as they grow. However, while being an excellent role model is admirable in and of itself, children actually learn more about philanthropy and continue to be philanthropic on their own when they have open, focused, and intentional conversations about charity. This is where you are essential.

Open dialogue, thoughtful conversations, and age-appropriate explanations about giving are helpful strategies for raising philanthropic children. Additional research suggests that conversations should be focused on the emotional benefits of those who are being helped. For example, when you and your family volunteer at the local soup kitchen, talk about how you're not only providing food for the hungry, you're doing much more! You are providing people with relief from the emotional distress of trying to find the next meal for their family. You are helping the children in these families—kids just like your own—receive the proper nutrition so they can have the energy to excel in school. Show your children that these kids are the same as they are, just in different circumstances. Discuss how you are helping the beneficiaries of the soup kitchen learn that other people, better off than they are, are empathetic of their needs and want to help. In other words, if you just show up two days a month at the local soup kitchen without every discussing the “whys” and “hows” of your actions helping others both charitably and philanthropically, you are missing out on teachable moments necessary to raise a junior philanthropists in your household.

Philanthropy is “an empowering experience” that helps children “gain a profound sense of their place in the world,” state Eileen Gallo and Jon Gallo in their book, *Silver Spoon Kids: How Successful Parents Raise Responsible Children*.

Let's explore *A Day in the Life* story to witness how you, as parents, can show your child empowering experiences in philanthropy.

A Day in the Life

Each day is a wonderful gift. Anything can happen between the hours of sunrise and sunset. Will this day be the beginning of something new or simply the familiar routine? Will you meet a new person who might change your world in numerous ways?

Will you experience a natural or man-made event that will have a profound effect on you and your family? The truth is, we just don't know from moment to moment and day to day what will happen. Most of us have basic daily routines. We wake up, plan the day ahead, get ready for work, take care of our children or pets, go to work or school, and return home.

But some people need the help of others so they can function well in their homes, workplaces, and society. Extending help through philanthropy involves loving and treating each other with care and respect. This is the basic premise of philanthropy, the love of mankind regardless of race, religion or economic status.

A family's routine day can be filled with acts of philanthropy. You, as a dedicated parent, can use various situations to teach a child how to help others. Many children will learn by example. Other children



will learn through explanation. Both styles will give a child lessons that will form the core of philanthropic giving.

Here's how a routine day of Sandy and her daughter Debby can be turned into a Day of Philanthropic Giving. Sandy uses both examples and explanations to teach Debby about helping others.

A Day in the Life of Sandy and Debby

Sandy drives Debby to school. As Sandy gets on the toll road turnpike she pays-double her toll, asking the attendant to tell the car behind her car to also "pay it forward" to someone else.

As they approach the school parking lot, Sandy flags the other rushed parent to go ahead of her. Sandy is not in a hurry and can extend a courtesy to the other parent.

One of the activities Sandy and her daughter enjoyed the previous evening was baking a cake for the school bake sale. While working together in the kitchen, Sandy explained to Debby how important it is to participate because the money raised buys uniforms for other students at school.

After school, Sandy and Debby stop for refreshments at the local coffee shop. The bill comes to \$4.20; Sandy puts the extra change in the tip glass. She explains to Debby that some of the employees do not make much money and she wants to help them earn a little more by leaving the tip.

On the way home, Sandy stops at the family's church. Earlier in the week, she helped the volunteers at church fill boxes with supplies for the military serving overseas. Because Debby's dad is currently overseas, she knows firsthand how much the supplies are needed. She and her mother feel it is a good way to stay connected to her dad. Other members of the church also send notes with the supplies.

Later that afternoon, Debby is playing with her friend Leslie, who comes from a family who is having financial difficulty. Sandy asks Debby to invite Leslie to stay for dinner. After dinner, Sandy packages the remaining meal for Leslie's family to enjoy.

That night Sandy talks to Debby about her day. Debby tells Sandy that her teacher had a tough day, because of some unruly eighth grade students. Sandy suggests Debby make the teacher one of her big smile paintings to give her in the morning. She also suggests Debby make one for her dad to include in the next box going overseas.

As Sandy says goodnight to Debby, she reads a short story with her. Sandy asks Debby, "If you could change the world to make it a better place, how would you do it?" Debby tells Sandy that she would want every homeless cat to find a forever home. Sandy then suggests to Debby that they start volunteering together one day a month at the local animal shelter, to help this cause.



Ask Yourself

What altruistic deed have you performed lately?

Did you include your children?

Reflections

As you can see, this day was not unusual. What was exemplary is that Sandy used her daily events to teach Debby the benefit of helping others. Many people's daily activities do not include helping anyone else. When we slow down and consciously look for ways to help others, those opportunities appear to us. Whether it is being kind and supportive, donating money to those in need, or giving time or talent through

volunteering, philanthropy is centered on being altruistic. An altruistic person considers another person's needs rather than focusing solely on his or her own needs. Simply put, be kind to others. Be giving. Tomorrow morning could be the start of not only a new day, but also a new *you* who takes every opportunity to lead by example in helping others. Rather than let the daily opportunities to help others pass you by, embrace them to help mankind. And make sure your children are watching!



Call to Action Introduction to Philanthropy

<u>A Day in Your Life</u> Using daily interactions to be philanthropic to others	
Today's Date	
Do you see opportunities daily?	
Describe one of the opportunities.	
What is your normal response?	
Did you change your response today?	
How did you change it?	

<u>Teaching Children</u>	
Was your child present during the opportunity?	
What did he notice?	
Were you pleased with his observation?	

Did you try to enlist his help?	
How did he react?	
Is this the reaction you expected or wanted?	
Will you try to change your child's involvement for future opportunities?	
What did your child learn?	

Further Actions	
What opportunities will you encourage or create for your child to demonstrate altruistic behavior?	

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