



CHARITY AROUND THE WORLD

BY LAVANYA SUNKARA

Holiday charitable giving is fulfilling, but determining which charities to donate to could be difficult. Here you will find ten organizations doing amazing work around the world that could benefit from your tax-deductible donations.

1) ACUMEN FUND - This Fund invests in innovative enterprises that provide affordable health care, water and energy services in developing countries. The D-Light Design makes cheap solar lights that provide cleaner lighting to families that rely on kerosene lamps. The UHEAL mobile eye care program gives Kenyans access to eye care that was previously unavailable. Currently, more than 35 enterprises are helping 36 million people in India, Pakistan and East and South Africa. www.acumenfund.org

2) CANCERCARE - Located in Manhattan, this national nonprofit offers practical help, financial assistance and free counseling for those affected by cancer. Every year, the center helps over 100,000 people, from those receiving treatments to caregivers to the bereaved. www.cancercare.org

3) CENTRAL ASIA INSTITUTE - Greg Mortenson, fondly known as Dr. Greg, kept his word of building a school in a village that saved his life following a failed climb up Pakistan's K2. He not only kept his word, but also garnered funds and support of the locals to build 131 schools in rural and often dangerous regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan educating over 58,000 children, including 44,000 girls. www.ikat.org

4) DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS/MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES (MSF) - Whether treating malnutrition in Sudan or Cholera in Haiti or helping bring medicine to AIDS patients in Mozambique, the health care professionals of MSF are serving the neediest in areas devastated by man-made and natural calamities. MSF is in 60 countries providing medical care independent of political, military and religious agendas. www.doctorswithoutborders.org

5) HABITAT FOR HUMANITY (HFH) - Run mostly by volunteers, HFH gives hope and decent sustainable housing to low-income families around the world. HFH built houses for 23,000 families affected by the 2004 Tsunami and 2,000 along the Gulf Coast since the 2005 hurricanes. More recently, it has expanded efforts in Haiti after the devastating earthquake to provide temporary to permanent shelters. www.habitat.org

6) LITTLE BABY FACE FOUNDATION - Make a difference in the lives of children born with facial deformities by giving to this foundation that brings together world-class surgeons at the finest facilities in NYC to conduct corrective surgery. Needy children from as close as Astoria to as far as Mongolia are brought in to the facilities to undergo needed procedures at no cost to the patients. www.littlebabyface.org

7) MERCY CORPS - Teach a man to fish and you feed him for life is this emergency relief organization's motto. In addition to giving care packages, the charity helps turn crisis into opportunity by implementing projects that mobilize locals to help themselves. Their Cash for Work programs from Haiti to Gaza are creating jobs and providing crucial income to those who otherwise would have had no other means of making a living. www.mercycorps.org

8) NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION (NWF) - We have all seen the heartbreaking images of oil drenched pelicans on the gulf coast. NWF has been on the front lines responding to the crisis we saw unfold on our TV screens. Along with caring for the animals, conducting research and collaborating with local groups in the Gulf, this advocacy and direct action organization continues to reach out to the public in keeping with its motto of inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future. www.nwf.org

9) RAINFOREST ALLIANCE - The next time you purchase coffee with the little green frog logo symbolizing Rainforest Alliance certification, know that the beans were sustainably grown by farmers who reduced waste and water pollution while curbing deforestation and providing good work conditions for workers. Invest in our planet's future by buying certified products or giving to Adopt-a-Rainforest program that supports conservation groups in tropical countries that work to stop rainforest destruction. www.rainforest-alliance.org

10) WATERAID AMERICA - Some of us in this world take clean water for granted, but others remain in areas where water is as precious as a Tiffany's diamond necklace. WaterAid America helps the world's poorest communities gain access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation. From the slums of Bangladesh to the island of Madagascar, WaterAid is raising awareness and tackling the water issue with innovative projects and collaboration with local organizations. www.wateraidamerica.org