



GIVING FOR GOOD

Make an impact in your community

FAMILY FEATURES

Inspiration to give back to your community can come from any number of places, from a personal desire to make a difference to fulfilling a graduation requirement for community service hours. No matter the reason or the origin, chances are strong that you can make an impact.

Giving back may be as simple as writing a check to an organization that works to further a mission you care deeply about. Or it may mean lending a hand to put on a fundraising event in your community. Perhaps you have a skill or talent you can share with others in the name of a good cause.

If you're committed to contributing to your community in a meaningful way, consider one of these ideas to improve the lives of those around you:

Spend Time with the Elderly

Seniors often hold wisdom, knowledge and experience that younger generations have yet to accumulate. Yet, as they age, a community's oldest residents are often left alone. These days it's less common for family members to live near one another, so "adopting" an elderly resident down the street or at the local senior housing center is a way to help monitor his or her well-being and ensure personal ties to the community are maintained. Not only can this provide a valuable service for an elderly person and his or her family, it may bring

you great personal satisfaction as you learn about the community's history through the eyes of someone who saw it evolve firsthand.

Donate to Nonprofits

If you're concerned your budget doesn't stretch far enough to make a meaningful cash contribution, there are plenty of other ways you can donate to nonprofit organizations in your community. Volunteer hours or even gently used items like office furniture or supplies are often in high demand. You can even donate by helping your favorite nonprofit uncover new funding opportunities. For example, the America's Farmers Grow Communities program, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, provides farmers an opportunity to help a nonprofit of their choice. Eligible farmers can enroll in the program for a chance to direct a donation to a local eligible nonprofit organization. Since 2010, the program has shown a commitment to strengthening farming communities by awarding more than \$29 million to non-profits, supporting food banks, ag youth organizations, supplying essentials for the needy and acquiring life-saving emergency response equipment.

Be a Mentor

Much as you can gain valuable wisdom from elderly residents, you also likely have your own knowledge that can benefit others in your community. Consider the areas where you excel and explore how your community can benefit. You might put your athletic talents to use coaching a youth sports team, teach scouts a skill for advancement or lend your experience as a human resources professional to an organization that helps disadvantaged individuals improve their employment opportunities. If you're good with numbers, maybe volunteering as a financial advisor to a local nonprofit board is worth considering.

Help Create Future Leaders

If the future vitality and well-being of your community is a priority, your giving may involve creating opportunities for future generations. Programs like America's Farmers Grow Ag Leaders, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, encourage rural youth to become the next generation of ag leaders by awarding scholarships to support their pursuit of higher education in ag-related fields of study. The scholarships are administered by the National FFA Organization, but students do not have to be FFA members to apply. Since 2014, the program has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships for students looking to study ag-related fields after high school.



Plant Flower Beds

Making a community better isn't always about dollars and cents. Simply making your hometown a more enjoyable place to be is a reward you can enjoy along with your neighbors. Special beautification projects such as creating and maintaining flower beds in public spaces can help create a more welcoming, friendly environment. Other ideas include community cleanup initiatives and organizing groups to help with yardwork for those who are physically unable.

Get Involved in Schools

Nearly every school district can benefit from added resources to support youth education. You may be able to help your school secure funding for a special initiative through a program such as America's Farmers Grow Rural Education, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, which allows farmers to nominate local public school districts to compete for merit-based STEM grants. Nominated schools have the opportunity to apply for a grant to fund projects that enhance science, technology, engineering and math education in their districts. Since 2011, more than \$16 million has been awarded to over 900 rural school districts.

Farmers can find more ways to give back to their communities along with program information and official rules at AmericasFarmers.com.

