

Family Philanthropy Activities

Having family together to volunteer or contribute back to your community can create memories that last a lifetime. The following activities are broken down into specific age groups and have been compiled by our clients as well as things we have done with families that received positive responses.

Note: These don't have to be done only during the holidays!

All Ages:

What are you thankful for?

Start your next family gathering (holiday, birthday, weekly dinner) with everyone sharing **three things** that they are grateful for **from that day**. This will take the emphasis away from what they should expect to receive at this gathering, to sharing what they experienced during the day. You can prep some of the older guests in advance so that they can model the behavior for the youngsters in your group.

What is your family story?

Values are passed down from generation to generation. How are these attributes shared? One way is the collective memory of family. Take some time to interview family members and record these stories digitally. They make a great gift and family heirloom.

Stumped on what to ask? We have created a sample list of questions that can be found in the "Insights" section of our website. These questions focus on lessons learned, values, successes and challenges, the greatest gift that was ever given and received; the things that have shaped the family identity. Encourage the younger members of your family to craft their own questions about what they are curious about. You can repeat these interviews annually so that your family has a living legacy of values being transmitted.

Create a Giving Circle or Donor Advised Fund (DAF) for family & friends

Giving of treasures is only one piece of the pie. What about leveraging your individual donation in several ways by connecting with your friends and extended family (TIES)? Creating a Giving Circle or opening up a DAF your community foundation or investment firm allows for others to join together to amplify their financial contributions. You can engage those who contribute in other ways too, like volunteering together or encouraging the youngsters to volunteer to be matched by a financial contribution into the fund. The collective of individuals can choose what, when and how best to support organizations in the community.

The giving jar

In some traditions they call it a "Pushke" or a "Charity Box." Taken from the *Save, Spend, Give* model of financial management, the giving jar is where you put your loose change and if you are teaching kids about financial literacy, have them put a percentage of their allowance, babysitting money or after-school job money into the jar. Just like a charity account, once the funds are in the jar they can only be used to help someone outside of the family.



Ages 3 to 6:

Neighbourhood walk and mapping

Go for a walk around your community. Talk about what you see and who you see. When you get home draw a picture map of your community. Talk about what it would look like if things weren't there. This allows parents to see the world through the eyes of their children and also start the conversation about the role that people and organizations play in the community.

Elementary & Junior High Age:

Book club

Reading together can be a game-changer in how a child looks at the world. Establish a library for each child in your family that focuses on a different aspect of philanthropy, community building and family. Have a monthly call where the cousins can join in via Skype or Facetime to talk about the book they received. In the resources section of this document are some examples of child-friendly books to start your family philanthropy library (i.e. Quiltmaker's Gift).

Book club questions can be:

- How did the story make you feel? How did a specific character's actions make you feel?
- What did the illustrations tell you that the words didn't state?
- Describe how something in your life mirrors that which happened in the story.
- What would you do in the same circumstances that the characters found themselves in?

High School:

Junior Council

If you have a formal foundation, consider creating a Junior Council that mirrors the formal Board of Directors. This group of the Next Generation Family Foundation leaders meets quarterly to learn about governance, financial management and grant making through the experience of the foundation. This group is given some discretionary funds to determine how and to whom should be granted funds. A presentation is made to the Board to explain their decisions before funds are allocated. It is important that this Council is given enough autonomy to make funding decisions so long as they don't put the foundation at risk by granting outside of the foundation's objects.



Adults:

Everything above, including being a mentor to a child in your family or even other professionals, colleagues and staff.

Advocacy & PR

Connect with your favourite organization about how you can help advocate for the work that they do. Is there a need for support in social media? Writing letters to government officials? Writing a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper or professional association magazine?

Corporate Philanthropy

If you own your own company consider how you model community engagement and corporate citizenship to your employees and customers. Can you reflect your philanthropic values through your hiring and procurement policies? What about in your corporate brand and engagement strategy?

If you are an employee can you ask your employer about matching donations for volunteer time or even for your own payroll deductions to charities?

Booklist

The following books can be ordered right through the Karma & Cents Bookshelf on our website.

- *What to do When it's Your Turn... And it's Always Your Turn*, by Seth Godin
- *Opposite of Spoiled*, by Ron Lieber
- *The Quiltmaker's Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau
- *The Quiltmaker's Journey* by Jeff Brumbeau
- *Too Many Toys!* by David Shannon
- *The Biggest House in the World*, by Leo Lionni