

News Column

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### *The Season of Giving*

With Christmas right around the corner, many are caught up in the rush of shopping, cooking, making party arrangements, and coordinating family celebrations. In the midst of all the anticipation and chaos of planning for the upcoming weeks, I would like to encourage you to focus on giving back to others this season.

Research shows that sharing time and money with people in less fortunate situations promotes personal growth and self-esteem. Charitable giving also has a positive effect on the brain that creates a sense of happiness and increased self-worth.

Here are a few ways to give back to our community and our residents this holiday season.

- 1) Volunteer. Giving does not always mean you have to reach for your wallet. Giving the gift of your time is a valuable donation that can affect many. Assist local groups by helping prepare, serve, or distribute meals. Offer to shovel a neighbor's porch, sidewalk, or driveway when it snows.
- 2) Adopt a family or even an individual if you are in a financial position to do so. You can help spread the joy of the holiday season to a whole family by giving even one or two small gifts. If you would like to consider this option but your budget doesn't allow you to adopt an entire family, contact local groups such as senior centers, schools, and daycare providers to see if you can give to an individual. A simple gift of new pajamas or slippers might help bring joy to someone feeling alone.
- 3) Donate to a greater cause. In our community, we have had individuals suffer tragedies and accidents in recent months. Look into ways that you can support them in their time of need. Many great organizations are collecting donations throughout the holiday season as well. Depending on your interests, you could give food to your local food pantry, donate money or goods to the Salvation Army, or buy toys for a local toy drive.
- 4) Think small. When we think of giving back, we might not consider even the smallest of acts to be impactful. That is far from the truth. There are many great opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others this holiday season. Something as simple as a handwritten note or paying for the car behind you in the fast food drive-thru can brighten someone's day.

While there are many opportunities to give during the holiday season, keep in mind that doing random acts of kindness is something we can do all year long. It is both humbling and rewarding to do something for someone else regardless of the time of year.

For more information about Family and Community Wellness, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension, contact the office at 620-583-7455, email me at [celutz@ksu.edu](mailto:celutz@ksu.edu) or stop by the office. Visit the K-State Research and Extension - Greenwood County Facebook page and [www.greenwood.k-state.edu](http://www.greenwood.k-state.edu) for more up-to-date information on programming.