



DRE License #01792094

This publication is proudly presented by

**Rod Johnston**  
Century 21 Action!  
[www.RodsRealty.com](http://www.RodsRealty.com)  
(562) 522-6861



**8** *MAGICAL WAYS TO  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON*



### Volunteer at a food bank

A new report has found that nearly 1 in 6 Americans are in danger of going hungry this holiday season, including millions of children. Food banks have never seen as much activity as they are seeing right now and there have never been as many ways to contribute to your local food bank as there are right now. Food banks across the country are desperately in need of food, volunteers, and cash. If you can supply any of these things, visit the [Feeding America website](#). Here

you will find a national directory of food banks, great information on the scope of hunger in America, and several creative ways you can fight hunger in your community throughout the holiday season.



### Write a thank you letter to someone's boss

During the holiday season, many businesses (especially retail) see a spike in sales and activity. To keep up with the rush, these businesses hire temporary help for the holiday season. Most of these employees would love to hold onto their jobs after the holiday rush, but have little hope unless they perform well above expectations. You can help their chances by letting bosses and managers know when you receive great service from one of their employees. If you have the time, write a thank you letter. If not, make a phone call or simply ask to speak to the manager after you have received great service. Your small comment may be the difference between that person keeping their job or filing for unemployment.

### Donate old clothes to Goodwill

An oldie, but a goodie, giving clothes to [Goodwill](#) helps people in a variety of ways. First, it ensures that someone else will get to use the clothes you no longer need, at a time of year when quality warm clothes really matter. Second, since Goodwill sells clothes at huge discounts, your clothes may be the best chance a low-income individual has at building a nice wardrobe. Finally, since the proceeds from Goodwill go to help disadvantaged people, the money that is collected from the sale of your items will continue to improve peoples' lives. Goodwill truly is the gift that keeps on giving.





### Help someone start a business

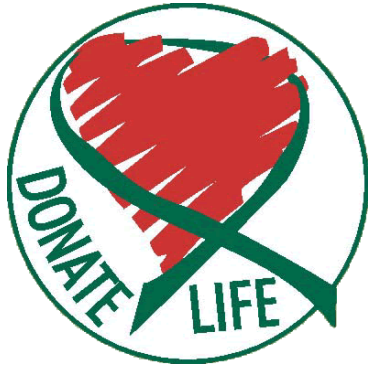
In an economy with double-digit unemployment, anything you can do to promote or finance a new business will make a huge difference. Small businesses are the engine for new jobs and new businesses are the best chance we have at a quick and thorough recovery. Even if you don't have a lot of money, you can make a real difference through sites like [Kiva](#). Kiva is a micro-lending site that allows

you to fund small businesses throughout the world with very small loans or donations. Entrepreneurs develop online profiles that explain how much money they need and what they will use it for. Then, lenders and donors fund the project by giving as much as they want to (no amount is too small). You can choose to support entrepreneurs in your own community or contribute to business owners in remote African villages—it's up to you. Once you contribute, you can track the progress of the people you help through regular email updates.

### Serve socially conscious holiday meals

Nearly 1/3 of all greenhouse gases are related to our food supply. It takes an extraordinary amount of energy and land to raise and care for cattle, chickens, and pigs. Additionally, most of these animals live in horrific conditions throughout their lives—genetically manipulated to grow larger than their bone and circulatory structures can support and then jammed into small pens that make movement nearly impossible. Finally, most food in America travels huge distances between factory farms, packaging plants, and distribution centers—all leading to more greenhouse gases. In other words, the traditional holiday meal is very hard on the environment. If you replaced just one meat dish with a vegetarian dish made with local produce, you would be making a bigger difference than if you had your entire dinner party drive hybrid cars to your house.





### **Become an organ donor**

There are over 100,000 people currently on medical waiting lists for various organs and tissues. Just a single organ donor can save dozens of lives, which means that if even a fraction of the people who died each year had made the decision to become organ donors while alive, these waiting lists would disappear and thousands of lives would be saved. Becoming an organ donor is free, easy, and painless. It usually requires little more than filling out a form on a website. The process is slightly different in each

state. You can find out about your state's unique donor sign-up process at the government's official [organ donation site](#).



### **Seek out (or start) programs at your local church**

Local churches are responsible for more community support and public outreach than every government program combined. Local churches are in tune with the specific needs of their local communities and tend to provide more complete support than even venerable nonprofit organizations. Bottom line: if you want to make a real difference in your community, the best place to start is your local church. Seek out ministry

leaders and ask how you can help. If you have an idea for an outreach program that doesn't yet exist, propose it to one of your church leaders. If you get the okay, you can take advantage of the donor and volunteer database the church has spent years accumulating, which will help you launch your new initiative quickly and effectively.



### **Make it a tradition**

Those who give regularly know that giving is not an act, it's a lifestyle. Giving enriches the giver's life as much as the recipient's, and, according to recent research, a spirit of giving can make you healthier and happier. Most importantly, the more often you give, the more likely you are to set an example for your friends and family members. If you find a way to contribute this holiday season that really makes a difference,

solidify it as a tradition within your family, church, or business. By doing this, you can ensure that your giving spirit extends into the future long after you are gone.