

Hidden Heroes

June 9, 2009



Most of us can name a number of famously wealthy people like John D Rockefeller, Henry Ford, or Andrew Carnegie. Men, who spent most of their lives making a fortune and in old age, choose to give most of their money to charity. In giving away their wealth, foundations were created; our towns got public libraries, schools, and hospitals. Our society benefited greatly from their generosity and the money has helped charitable organizations for

many generations



Where did these men learn to want to help others? And maybe an even better question is - how do we get our kids to want to help others?

One way to help introduce charitable giving to our kids is to help them become aware of the hero's in the world all around them. Donors and volunteers are everywhere, but we don't always notice them, even those who have a huge impact in our communities.

When To Do

At home after dinner, Sunday morning, running errands

What To Do

Help your children look for "evidence" of the work of donors and volunteers. Help them learn to identify volunteers and organizations that support others.

At Home:

- See if your kids can name programs they have participated in to raise money for a good cause such as:
 - School fundraisers/auction
 - Girl Scout cookie sales
 - Community planting day
 - Car wash
 - Beach cleanup project
- Gather newspapers and community fliers to find volunteer activities in your community.
- See if your kids can name people they know who help others with their time. It could even be you!
- Challenge your kids to come up with things they would like to give money or time to supporting.
 - Have them write down or draw pictures of how they could help others.
 - animals at a zoo
 - puppies or kittens at an animal shelter
 - families who need food/clothing/toys
 - kids who are sick and in the hospital

While Out and About:

- See if you and your kids can identify organizations that rely on volunteers or donations to be able to operate as you are driving around town.
- Look at billboards, bus stop advertisements, or listen to ads made over the radio for organizations like:
 - Hospitals
 - Houses of worship
 - Political organizations
 - Roadside cleanup projects

The unsung hero's are all around and easy to find once you start to look.

What You Need

Newspapers
Internet access

Direct mail packages/catalogs
Flyer

Paper
Pencils/drawing pens

Talk About It

Which volunteer or organization really got your kids attention? Why? Which did they think was the most important to them? Why? Of all the things you discovered, which was their favorite?