



How to...

SPECIAL DELIVERIES

Last year, the US Postal Service processed nearly 12 billion pieces of mail—including cards—during the holiday season.



Give back at the holidays

There are many ways to make a difference this time of year.

The holiday season is an ideal time to spread joy by giving to others. Making a card, volunteering, or simply spreading kindness not only lifts other people's spirits but can also make your own holiday season more meaningful. Here are some ways to give back.

Start small

Small gestures, especially during the holidays, can have a larger impact than you might expect. The holiday season can feel lonely or stressful to some people. Simple acts of kindness like stopping to say hi to a neighbor who lives alone, carrying packages for another person, or holding a store door open takes barely any time but can add a bright spot to someone's day.

Show thanks

You may already express your gratitude to parents, other relatives, and friends who give you presents during the holiday season. You can also think about showing your appreciation to others who are important to you or are working to make the holidays special. For example, you could bake treats for the music director at the house of worship where your family attends services. If you play a sport, you could thank a coach with a fun video of season highlights. You could even leave a handmade thank-you card in the mailbox of the home that has your favorite holiday decorations.



Make treats for someone special.

Hold a fundraiser

Another way to give back during the holidays is to support a cause you care about. One idea is to gather items or raise money to donate to a charity. (See some ideas at right.) You could offer to do holiday-related chores for family and neighbors, like wrapping gifts, helping to decorate, or shoveling snow, in exchange for a donation to a good cause. If your family hosts a holiday get-together, you could ask guests to bring an item to donate to a toy drive or food pantry. You and your family could also consider "adopting" a family in need at the holidays. Check with local charities, then buy the items on a family's wish list together.

Volunteer together

Another way to serve others this holiday season is to donate your time to a good cause. Talk to your family about ways you could volunteer together. Your local community center, a senior home, hospitals, and food banks might especially need help. Volunteer opportunities might include creating brown-bagged meals to distribute to people in need, helping out at a holiday party at a senior center, or organizing the shelves of a local food pantry. You might make connections that carry over into the new year, when you can continue to make time to give back.

4 charities that spread cheer

These organizations offer opportunities for you and your family to serve others.

Toys for Tots

Run by the Marine Corps Reserve, this organization collects more than 24 million new toys and games each year to distribute to kids in need. You can find a local drop-off location at toysfortots.org.



Ronald McDonald House

Ronald McDonald House Charities offers housing and assistance to families who have a child who is in the hospital. At the holidays, many of the locations raise extra money to buy special decorations, gifts, food, and more for families. Find a location at rmhc.org.



One Simple Wish

During the holidays, One Simple Wish receives nearly 10,000 requests from kids who are living in foster care. You can visit onesimplewish.org to grant a holiday wish for anything from a winter coat to art supplies to toys.



Meals on Wheels

This organization delivers groceries and special meals for the holidays to senior citizens who need help. You can find a local chapter to donate to at mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

