

Give wisely this holiday season via the BBB Wise Giving Alliance

Written by BBB

Monday, 24 December 2012 10:41

December is a critical fundraising month for charities. Many people make year-end gifts for tax reasons, or to extend the spirit of the season and their generosity to those less fortunate. The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) offers a few DOs and DON'Ts that apply any time of year when it comes to charitable giving – and will help ensure your donations do the maximum amount of good.

DON'T succumb to high-pressure, emotional pitches. Giving on the spot is never necessary, no matter how hard a telemarketer or door-to-door solicitor pushes it. The charity that needs your money today will welcome it just as much tomorrow, after you've had time to do your research.

DO check out the charity carefully. Make sure you feel comfortable with how your money will be spent. Don't just take the word of someone else; go to www.give.org to verify that a charity meets BBB Wise Giving Alliance's [20 Standards for Charity Accountability](#).

DON'T assume that only “low overhead” matters. How much money a charity spends on the actual cause – as compared to how much goes toward fundraising and administration – is an important factor, but it's not the whole story. A charity with impressive financial ratios could have other significant problems such as insufficient transparency, inadequate board activity and inaccurate appeals.

DO be sure it's the right charity. With so many similar-sounding organizations, names can blur in a donor's mind. Many phony charities purposefully choose a name that sounds similar to more familiar, legitimate outfits.

DON'T assume that the charity wants any item you donate. Worn out, unusable or unwanted donated goods cost charities millions of dollars each year because the organization has to bear the cost of tossing the unacceptable donation. If you have questions about an item's acceptability, visit a given charity's website or call them directly and ask.

DO consider easy text-to-give options. The BBB Mobile Giving Foundation makes it easy to give smaller donations (usually \$10) to charities they monitor, including those providing relief to victims of Hurricane Sandy. Go to mobilegiving.org to find out more.

Donors can check out the BBB Wise Giving Alliance evaluations on nationally soliciting charities for free at give.org .

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The mission of the Better Business Bureau is to be the leader in building marketplace trust by promoting, through self-regulation, the highest standards of business ethics and conduct, and to instill confidence in responsible businesses through programs of education and action that inform, assist and protect the general public. Our hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact the BBB at bbb.org or 651-699-1111, toll-free at 800-646-6222. Visit our Centennial website at bbbis100.org

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