



## **Get creative with holiday donations**

'Tis the season for giving to charity, but with many people feeling the financial pinch of a tough economy, donating cash may not be possible. Don't worry, there are plenty of other options that allow you to give to charity without spending a dime. See the list below for clever ways to cash in on the holiday spirit.

Buy extra groceries and donate to your local food bank. Next time you're at the supermarket, think about how much \$5, \$10 or \$25 will buy in groceries for the homeless. According to the Consumer Price Index, \$10 can buy more than 30 pounds of flour, 18 pounds of rice or about six pounds of peanut butter.

Shop online through a 'charity mall' like GreaterGood.com, iGive.com or Schoolpop.com. Donate a percentage of your purchase to the charity or school of your choice. There are dozens of retailers that participate like Gap, Barnes & Noble, JCPenney and KB Toys.

Instead of throwing away your old cell phone, donate it to a group that will distribute it to persons in need. For example, the Wireless Foundation gives refurbished cell phones to victims of domestic violence to use in an emergency. Or you can sell your old phone and donate the cash to a charity. CellforCash.com pays \$3 to \$92 for used cell phones.

Clean out your closet and donate unwanted clothing to places like Goodwill, the Salvation Army or a local battered women's shelter.

Give away your frequent flier miles. A lot of the major airlines, including Delta, Northwest and United, allow travelers to donate accrued miles to charity. Contact your preferred airline to see if it participates in this type of program.

Give blood. According to the American Red Cross, every two seconds someone in America will need a blood transfusion. Search for blood drives in your area and set up an appointment to donate through their website, [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org). You must be in good health, at least 17 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds.

*Source: "A Dozen Creative Donations" Kiplinger's Personal Finance*