

# Pointers For Parents

## Tips To Make Kids More Nice Than Naughty

(NAPSA)—It's easy for people to get caught up in the retail rush and marketing madness of the holiday season. Parking lots fill up and checkout lines wrap through department store aisles. Children make gift wish lists and their parents scramble to purchase toys before they disappear from the shelves.

Considering all the yuletide lunacy, sidestepping Santa and his ringing bell on the corner or overlooking the toy drive box can become second nature. And for kids, these charitable opportunities can slip by completely unnoticed unless their parents explain the importance of philanthropy and include them in the giving process.

Here are a few tips that can make holiday charity more fun than anything else on your family's "to do" list:

- **Spare Change Challenge:** The Salvation Army Santas have been ringing bells on street corners every December since the 1890s. This year, challenge your kids to contribute a portion of their allowance to every Salvation Army Santa they see. Ask them to keep track of their donations, and at the end of the holidays, reward them with a "humanitarian" prize.

- **Point-and-Click Donation:** Ever think huddling around the computer participating in bidding wars could be just the thing to further family bonding? Several charities are now holding online auctions to benefit their cause—



**Holiday ornaments decorated by celebrities such as Brooke Shields are available in an online charity auction.**

offering tech-savvy families a point-and-click alternative to traditional gift giving. Embassy Suites' "Starry Nights" fund-raiser is in its second year raising money for the Starlight Children's Foundation. Celebrity-decorated ornaments by stars such as Faith Hill, Brooke Shields and Derek Fisher will be sold at [www.ebay.com/starlight](http://www.ebay.com/starlight) December 1-11. Best of all, 100 percent of the proceeds benefit Starlight.

For more information about the Starlight Children's Foundation and "Embassy Suites' Starry Nights," visit [www.embassy-suites.com](http://www.embassy-suites.com).

- **Toy Debate:** For more than 50 years, the U.S. Marine Corps has orchestrated the Toys for Tots program, donating millions of toys each year to needy children. As a

family project this year, urge your kids to research the perfect toy(s) to purchase for the program. If you have more than one child and there is a disagreement, let them present evidence about why their selection is the best. Then let a "toy jury" decide the verdict.

- **Food Adventure:** Contributing to a food bank is also a simple way to help around the holidays. Treat this effort as a scavenger hunt. Hide canned goods around the house, and give clues to help your kids find each "treasure." Then take a day trip to the food bank with the canned goods, and arrange for your kids to see how the organization operates. Most establishments will be glad to explain the process to youngsters.

- **Friends Field Trip:** Helping a charity during the holidays (or any other time) doesn't necessarily require money. Many hospitals and nursing homes—as well as soup kitchens and shelters—are more than happy to have parent/kid volunteers. You can also recruit a few other parents and kids to make the volunteer time a group, neighborhood or community activity.

So this holiday season, when you're making a list and checking it twice, add in some time to show your kids how simple it is to help a good cause. They might not fully grasp "goodwill toward men," but some kids will understand philanthropy if they think a man in a red suit knows when they've been bad or good.