



# Charity Matters

## Make Your Charity Dollars Count

(NAPSA)—Experts believe that the slowed economy will have a negative effect on charitable giving this year. With half of all donations historically made between Thanksgiving and Christmas, it could be a sad holiday season for non-profits. So givers should be diligent in making sure that their donations are properly utilized.

“We’re not optimistic,” said Trent Stamp, executive director of Charity Navigator, an online consumer resource for charity ratings. “Without the money Americans had in past years to actively support charities, we anticipate donations will be

down about 10 percent this year. We urge those who do give to be particularly strategic when deciding which charities deserve support.”

Charity Navigator offers the following tips for those planning to give this holiday season:

- **Avoid telemarketers:** The new “do-not-call” legislation is bringing peace to dinner tables all over the country, but it exempts many charities from these restrictions. You can count on telemarketers seeking more business for charities, which means more phone calls soliciting your support. Avoid them and their generally high fundraising costs.

- **Think about the long term:** Like investing, giving should be driven by long-term goals. Define what you hope your giving accomplishes and develop a plan to reach those goals. Dropping some change in the bucket outside the

mall is fine, but responsible philanthropy—the kind that changes the world—demands more thought.

- **Concentrate your giving:** Diversification isn’t an important consideration when giving. A few well-placed larger gifts go farther and have the potential to do more good than a wide array of smaller gifts. It’s even more incumbent upon givers to research a charity

and make sure they’ll get the most bang for their buck.

- **Don’t forget the arts:** Arts charities suffer disproportionately during tough economic times. The arts are critical to

our communities and it is essential that we ensure their long-term survival.

- **Follow your investment.** Once you give, be sure to contact your charity next March or April and find out how they’re using your money. You’re not looking for a list of itemized expenses, but instead a progress report to give you a sense of how responsive they are to you and if they can communicate their progress clearly. If your charity can’t tell you what kind of results they created from your investment, find one that will.

Charity Navigator is best known for its ratings, accessible at no charge at [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org), of the financial health of more than 2,500 of America’s best-known charities.

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- Think about the long term
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- Follow your investment

