

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: A DOZEN WAYS TO GIVE

by Barbara H. Cane, Attorney at Law

1. Review your investment portfolio. Give gains by transferring appreciated securities to your favorite charity. Losses? Use them yourself and give cash for a charitable deduction.
2. Review your will. Add charitable beneficiaries. Designate a dollar amount, a gift of a specific item, or a percentage of the estate. Name your favorite charity as a "contingent beneficiary" if all your near ones and dear ones are gone and cannot receive the gifts you intend for them.
3. Remember you can make gifts by means of a revocable living trust too.
4. Use your IRA or retirement fund. If these pass by beneficiary designation to a charity, no income tax or estate tax is ever paid on the amounts passing to charity.
5. A Charitable Remainder Trust can help you diversify your portfolio, deal with an awkward asset, or defer capital gains. You get income tax benefits now and reduce your estate.
6. A Charitable Lead Trust lets you give to charity now and ultimately pass assets to your loved ones at reduced transfer tax cost.
7. Review your insurance. You could name a charitable beneficiary on existing policies (including those from your employer), or you could buy a new policy specifically to create a charitable gift.
8. Make giving a family affair. Make a gift and invite family members to join you. Follow it up with more gifts at your death...from you and from family members in your memory.
9. Endow your annual gift. Suppose you give \$1,000 to your favorite charity each year. Who will give it when you are gone? Make a gift of \$20,000. Interest at 5% will replace your annual gift in perpetuity.
10. Put your house to work. Give your house to charity with a retained life estate to get a current income tax deduction and remove the asset from your estate, or give it to charity at your death to get an estate tax deduction.
11. Tell your relatives and friends what donations you want them to make in your memory when you die.
12. If you are on the board of a charity, set an example. Nothing speaks louder to potential donors and grant makers than knowing that every board member has included the charity in his or her estate plan.

c. 2005 Barbara H. Cane, Law Offices of Barbara H. Cane.