

## WYANDOTTE

# Goodfellows ready to help those in need this holiday season

By Jim Kasuba

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Christmas is a season for giving and receiving.

The problem for some folks is that they don't have much to give, at least not in monetary terms. That can make for some lean holidays for families with young children.

That's where the Wyandotte Goodfellows come in.

Each year, Wyandotte residents who are feeling the economic pinch during the holidays count on the Goodfellows to make sure their children don't wake up Christmas morning with few or no gifts under the tree.

Most of the funds raised by the benevolent organization are raised at this time of year when volunteers hit the streets to sell newspapers and collect donations. The cost of the newspaper is a donation that helps the organization live up to its motto of "No Child Without a Christmas."

Wyandotte Police Reserve Patrol Officer Joe Mayhew, chairman of the paper sales, said he is prepared for another successful season.

The organization looks to be in reasonably good shape heading into the holiday season, considering all that has happened over the past few years of a global pandemic. The Wyandotte Street Art Fair was back on track this year, so the Goodfellows are going into the 2022 holiday season with stronger funding.

But the Goodfellows get their

money in ways other than fundraisers.

"We also rely on donations from our generous Wyandotte residents to perform our work," said Larry Stec, the longtime president of the Wyandotte Goodfellows.

The Wyandotte Goodfellows utilize a system that has served them well over the years. It involves spending their funds on Christmas gifts with money that was collected the prior year. In that way, they go into the shopping season knowing exactly how much they can spend.

"Last year, we helped approximately 300 Wyandotte families with food and gifts during the holidays," Stec said.

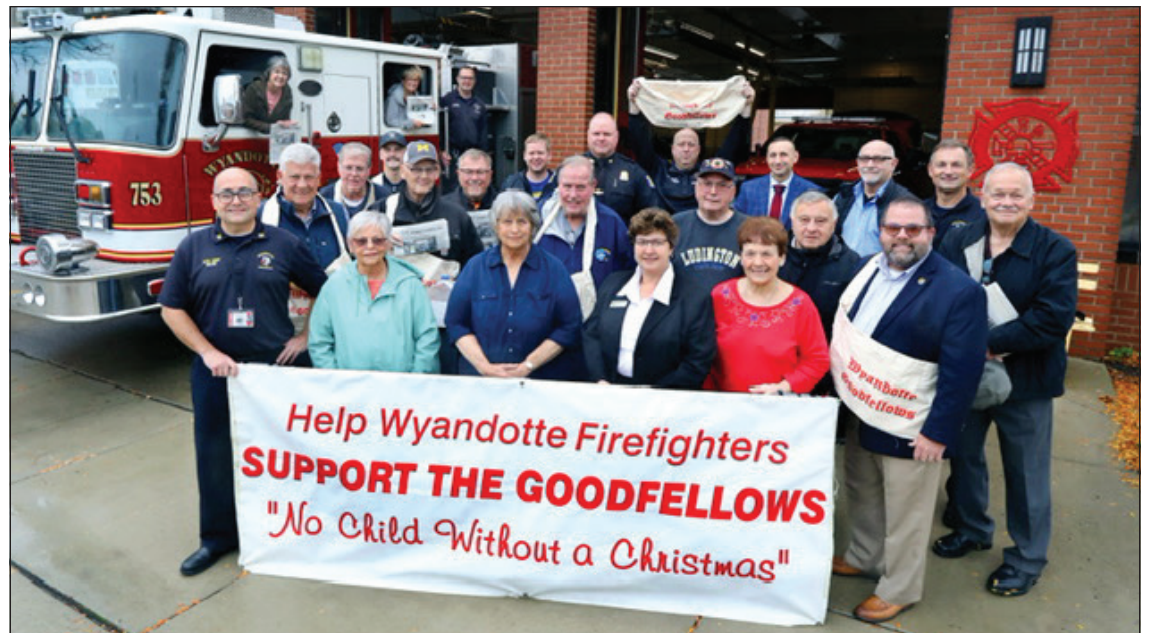
This year, members will distribute gifts to income-qualified Wyandotte families over the course of three days at the Copeland Center, 2306 Fourth St.

The distribution times and dates are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 5, and Tuesday, Dec. 6. The group is also offering an evening distribution for those who work during the day or otherwise can't make it during earlier hours. Distribution will take place from 3 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 8.

Going to the Copeland Center is the easiest and best way to receive assistance from the Wyandotte Goodfellows.

Requirements for recipients are:

- A government identification card with photo.
- Proof of residency.
- Children's birth certificate or



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LARRY CARUSO

The Wyandotte Goodfellows stand behind their motto "No Child Without a Christmas."

current school grade report (paper or digital).

▪ Proof of housing: i.e., rental agreement, lease, mortgage statement, tax bill or letter from relative with contact phone number.

▪ Proof of income: i.e., child support (current or delinquent), pay stub, Social Security statement, etc.

Because the Goodfellows have no full-time staff or phone number, the best way to donate or suggest a family who could use help is by mail at P.O. Box 392, Wyandotte, MI 48192.

People may also leave a mes-



Wyandotte Goodfellows President Larry Stec checks out some winter caps with Stephanie Badalamenti from First Merchants Bank.

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## GIVING BACK

# How to become an environmental volunteer



Environmental volunteerism offers many opportunities to eco-conscious men, women and children who want to use their free time to protect the planet.

PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

People who want to volunteer their time have many opportunities to choose from. Volunteer efforts can be even more rewarding when individuals choose causes that have profound meaning to them. For some, this may mean helping animals, championing research to cure a particular disease or helping to provide services for disadvantaged youth.

Environmental stewards likely want to get involved with nonprofit groups that focus on conservation. Climate change and the impact of human activity on the planet concerns people in all corners of the globe. Many people feel that the time has come to prioritize protecting the planet. Consider some of these facts, courtesy of Eco-Friendly Habits:

- One hundred acres of rainforests are cut down every day.

- Beef production is one of the biggest causes of deforestation.

- About five million tons of oil produced in the world end up in oceans every year.

- Plastics kill more than one million sea animals annually.

Environmental volunteering, which refers to work undertaken to benefit the natural environment, may be the right opportunity for those looking to get involved. Here are some volunteering efforts and groups that champion environmental causes.

## International efforts

Amigos is a program that operates in Costa Rica, Colorado and Ecuador. Various projects help preserve biodiversity, explore sustainable farming practices and educate people about the importance of biodiversity.

## Fire brigade

Many countries employ volunteer fire brigades to handle wildfires. This type of volunteerism often involves training and activity in the field, so it requires

a significant dedication of time and effort.

## Beach sweeps

Various organizations coordinate regional beach clean-up efforts. World-packers, Clean Ocean Action and others rely on volunteers to help sweep trash from beaches.

## Environmental education

Individuals who are teachers or specialists in certain areas of ecology may want to share their knowledge with others. They may be able to volunteer at the elementary, high school or even college level and educate young people about various environmental topics.

Environmental volunteerism offers many opportunities to eco-conscious men, women and children who want to use their free time to protect the planet.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

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**GIVING BACK**

# Everything you need to donate a car

Have an older car sitting around? While there's always the option to clean it up and attempt to sell it, chances are it won't generate much of a profit. And it may prove to be more work than it's worth. There is another option for unloading an old car, and that includes donating it for a tax deduction.

As you navigate the process of donating a car, it's best to get the facts and work with reputable organizations. This ensures the easiest and safest donation process. In fact, some charities will even pick up the vehicle and do much of the leg-work for donors.

First and foremost, ensure the charitable organization is qualified to receive tax-deductible donations and has a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search Tool can be a useful resource during this part of the process.

Secondly, research the charity and confirm that it is transparent with its efforts, including what percentage of contributions go to charitable programs. Keep in mind that even leg-

itimate charities may not fully disclose how they utilize donations.

Keep in mind that not too long ago a person could deduct the "fair market value" of the vehicle donated, but that is no longer the case, says Edmunds.com. It's important for donors to learn the proper procedures, which may require finding out what the charity ends up selling the donated vehicle for. If the car is valued at \$1,000, but the charity gets \$500 for it, then that person should only deduct \$500 on their taxes, indicates Consumer Affairs.

Charitable groups often have different procedures regarding vehicle donations. For example, the National Kidney Foundation's TowKars program will have a towing company pick up the vehicle after a person visits the website or calls to register the donation. After that, the vehicle will be picked up and then a tax receipt will be sent. Forbes Advisor lists Habitat for Humanity, Disabled American Veterans and the Make-A-Wish Foundation as well-known and reputable charity groups that



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Donating a car may be an option for those looking to help others and unload an old car.

accept car donations.

Donating a car may be an option for those looking to help others and unload an old car.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

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## GIVING BACK

# Ways for individuals with disabilities to give back

The World Health Organization reports that around 15% of the world's population, or roughly 1 billion people, have some sort of disability, making them the world's largest minority demographic. A group with such a large footprint on society has the collective power to make a significant difference.

Individuals with disabilities often can do anything they choose, thanks to advancements in medicine, accessibility and other accommodations that help people rise above any limitations they might have. That means that giving back through various charitable efforts is possible in spite of any disability.

Individuals with disabilities are urged to get in-

involved because of the positive effects of volunteering. Volunteerism can benefit individuals and the communities they call home. The social lives of those with either physical or developmental disabilities can benefit from further interactions with others on deeper levels.

People with disabilities can be part of any charitable organization. They can reach out to the organization to find out how they can become volunteers, and what accommodations are made to assist people with specific issues.

Advocating for issues that directly relate to them may be something people with disabilities want to pursue. Various charitable groups help volunteers with



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Individuals with disabilities are urged to get involved because of the positive effects of volunteering.

disabilities find the support they need. The following are some of those groups.

- Easterseals. This or-

ganization was formed in 1919 by Edgar Allen in response to the lack of medical care available to peo-

ple with disabilities. Easterseals today provides job training and other support services.

- Special Olympics. The Special Olympics was started by the Shriver family after a friend expressed frustration regarding the lack of recreational opportunities for disabled individuals. The Special Olympics is now a global movement that empowers athletes of all abilities and ages. It provides year-round sports training and athletic events.

- United Cerebral Palsy. This organization was founded in 1949 by the Goldensons to improve quality of life for children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. Today it assists hundreds of thou-

sands of people, helping them to live independently and productively.

- Goodwill Industries. This organization was founded by Reverend Edgar Helms in Boston in 1902. It is the leading provider of educational and workforce-related services. It helps people overcome barriers to employment, including disability, to find work and land lasting careers.

People with disabilities are urged to get involved in any way they can. In addition to general charitable groups, such individuals may find working with organizations devoted to the disabled to be especially rewarding.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



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## GIVING BACK

# Avoid these 4 charity scams

Charitable giving grew in 2021. According to Blackbaud Institute, a social good innovator, giving not only increased after COVID-19, but actually rebounded more than it had in a decade — increasing in the United States by 9% overall.

Annual private philanthropy as a percentage of GDP is about 1.44% in the United States. Philanthropy Roundtable reports that rate in Canada is 0.77%.

People tend to give the most to charity at the end of the year. While legitimate organizations may step up their solicitation of donations at this time, scammers also realize the months of November and December is prime giving season. So many scammers increase their deceptive tactics to

cheat unsuspecting individuals at this time of year.

Here are four common charity scams that every prospective donor should be aware of.

## 1. Impersonating another charity

Most philanthropic groups have an online presence in some shape or form. Scammers will replicate the look of the charitable group's website or social media account, or may contact you through email or text to solicit funds. Thinking it is a legitimate charity, you may follow a link to enter donation information. To avoid this scam, do not click on any links. Rather, enter the exact email address of a charity, if you

know it, or use a trusted resource like Charity Navigator for contact information. If you're still leery about online transactions, call the charity and ask to be sent a donation statement in the mail, which you should be able to mail back postage-paid.

## 2. The hard sell

A legitimate charity is happy to welcome a donation any time you're able to give it. A scam operation may employ a hard sell or a deadline by which the donation must be made. In addition, a fraudulent "charity" might ask for payment only by cash, gift card or wire transfer (because it is difficult to trace), and this should raise a red flag that something is amiss.

## 3. A thank-you for your donation

AARP warns that some scammers will send you a thank-you for a donation that you supposedly already made to entice you to give again. This is designed to lower your inhibitions about a soliciting charity. It's always a good idea to keep records of charitable giving, especially for tax-related reporting, so you can easily verify if you gave to a group in the past.

## 4. Cryptocurrency wallet

As methods of making payments change, scam groups often ride the wave. The Federal Trade Commission learned that when the



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Individuals need to be extra cautious with charitable giving to avoid common scams.

government of Ukraine announced it would be accepting donations to support their efforts via a cryptocurrency wallet, scammers started getting in on the action. But instead of the funds getting sent to the government's wallet, the donations headed to a private wallet.

Always conduct an online search of the wallet address

to confirm that money is being sent to the right place. Typically you can't reverse cryptocurrency payments, so due diligence is required.

Individuals need to be extra cautious with charitable giving to avoid common scams.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

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## GIVING BACK

# Give life with blood and plasma donations

Financial donations and volunteering are popular ways to give back to nonprofit organizations. However, there are many additional ways to give back, including donations that can help save lives.

Donating blood can be a worthwhile effort for someone looking to make a difference. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says every two seconds someone in the United States needs blood or blood products. When people think of donating blood products, they may think about donating whole blood. However, there's a need for other components, namely plasma. Here's a deeper look at what's involved in the blood and plasma donation process.

## Blood versus plasma

Whole blood donations include donating all four blood components: red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, and plasma. Whole blood is used to treat blood loss that occurs during an injury or surgery.

Patients in need of plasma may have cancer, immunodeficiencies or rare diseases that can benefit from plasma treatment. Additionally, there is a global demand for plasma-derived medicine, such as immunoglobulin, according to the Immune Deficiency Foundation. One patient who needs Ig for a year requires 130 to 1,200 plasma donations to procure enough plasma.

Plasma is separated from whole blood, and there is not enough plasma in the whole blood supply to cover the demand for whole blood as well as plasma separately.

## Eligibility

Donors must meet some eligibility requirements, according to the American Red Cross.

**Blood:** Blood can be donated once every 56 days. Individuals must be in good health, at least 16 years old in most areas, and must weigh at least 110 pounds.

**Plasma:** All blood types can give plasma, but only AB plasma type is universal. People with AB blood are considered elite plasma donors. Plasma can be donated once every 28 days.

Good health is required and donors must be at least 17 years old and weight no less than 110 pounds.

Donors also can donate red blood cells and platelets separately from whole blood or plasma. There are different eligibility requirements for these blood components.

## Time commitment

It takes roughly 60 minutes to make a whole blood donation, says HHS. Plasma donation wait times can vary. An initial donation can take about two hours, while subsequent donations may be 90 minutes.

## Benefits

Apart from the feeling of satisfaction from helping others, donating blood can help save the lives of up to three people. Since plasma donations are so important, and there is a greater time commitment to donation, some plasma donors are financially reimbursed.

## Preparation

Individuals interested in donating blood products are urged to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Twenty-four hours before the appointment, the American Red Cross recommends drinking nine to 13 cups of water, and an additional two cups prior to the donation. Meals full of iron and protein are essential, and caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and fatty foods should be avoided.

Donating whole blood, plasma and other blood products can make a difference in the lives of many. Visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) to learn more about becoming a blood donor.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



Donating blood can be a worthwhile effort for someone looking to make a difference.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Donating whole blood, plasma and other blood products can make a difference in the lives of many.

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**GIVING BACK**

# Using Family Volunteer Day to deepen children's civic engagement

Nov. 19, 2022 is Family Volunteer Day, a global day of service that empowers families to work together to support their communities. Increasingly, parents of young children are placing a larger focus on civic engagement and giving back, and this annual event is a great way for your family to get started or strengthen your involvement.

Need some guidance? The following actions draw upon Points of Light's Civic Circle, a framework that helps people understand the many facets of civic engagement and provides an opportunity to show children the variety of ways they can support causes they care

about this Family Volunteer Day. Combine these ideas to engage your whole family, strengthen your community and amplify your efforts:

**1.** Volunteer. Hands-on action is always an impactful way to get involved, especially on Family Volunteer Day. Whether you find time to volunteer at a local organization or use one of Points of Light's DIY project guides, there are plenty of options for families of all ages and abilities. Consider projects that focus on issue areas that children can easily understand and get involved with, such as food insecurity, animal welfare and climate change.

**2.** Donate. Most organizations need financial support to continue their operations and deliver on their missions. Having a family fundraiser can be a great way to support an organization or cause. Whether you run a lemonade stand, plan a virtual fundraiser, sell friendship bracelets or do something else creative, activities like these help youth learn planning skills and the value of supporting organizations financially.

**3.** Purchase Power. With the holiday season quickly approaching, gift giving is on many people's minds. Have young people help you select gifts from

small local businesses or BIPOC- or women-owned businesses. You can also find and support companies that give back — either with a percentage of proceeds or by working sustainably.

**4.** Listen and Learn. A critical element of civic engagement is listening to and learning from the community you hope to serve. Before taking action, learn about what's really needed. If you can't talk to those directly impacted, ask a local non-profit organization if they

have suggestions or more information. You can also read books, listen to podcasts or watch documentaries about the causes you wish to support.

**5.** Use Your Voice. Helping kids find their voice is important because they can use it to harness their power in bringing awareness to important causes. Kids can share information by telling friends and family what they learned over a dinner, sharing a report at school, or providing information for others with an action

item to take.

If you're looking for tactical ideas, Points of Light's website has family-friendly toolkits for youth of all ages that incorporates some of these elements. Visit [pointsoflight.org/familyvolunteerday/](https://pointsoflight.org/familyvolunteerday/) to find a project that's right for you.

Family Volunteer Day can be just a starting point. Taking action and understanding the impact of your work can lead to a lifetime of civic engagement and service.

*Story courtesy of StatePoint Media*



PHOTO COURTESY OF STATEPOINT MEDIA

Family Volunteer Day is a great way for your family to get started with civic engagement or strengthen your involvement.

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## GIVING BACK

# When is the right time for kids to start volunteering?

Aristotle once said the essence of life is “to serve others and do good.” It’s well documented that volunteerism offers many benefits to those who are recipients of the charitable work as well as the volunteers.

According to The Corporation for National & Community Service, one in four Americans volunteers. Volunteers come from all walks of life and various age groups. Nearly one-quarter of all volunteers are people under the age of 24.

Parents and guardians who want to introduce their children to volunteerism may not know when is the right age to do so. Many experts agree that there isn’t a definitive age for children to get involved in volunteering. In fact, no child is too young to volunteer.

Joseph F. Hagan Jr., M.D., a clinical professor of pediatrics at Larner College of Medicine at

the University of Vermont, says helping out during the toddler and preschool years helps shape a child’s sense of morality.

Rather than wondering if a child is too young to volunteer, adults should focus on finding the right activity to match the child’s age. For example, a three- or four-year-old child can fill bags or boxes with donated food or help gather blankets and towels to donate to an animal rescue. However, a toddler or preschooler may not have the stamina to complete a 5K walk.

Volunteerism doesn’t even have to be in the traditional sense of working with an established charity. A youngster can pick flowers from a field and deliver them to an elderly neighbor. Or a preschooler can invite a child playing alone to come play together. A toddler who loves sorting items can help sort recycling items at

home and watch a parent deliver them to the recycling center.

Another way to engage kids in volunteer work is to match their interests with the tasks. Many kids can’t get enough of animals, so they may want to help out an animal organization or be involved with a conservation group. A child can collect change to “adopt” an endangered species.

Kids also can visit a children’s hospital and deliver gifts to youngsters battling illnesses. In such situations, kids may be more engaged if they can help kids their own ages.

Children are never too young to volunteer. Finding the right fit can inspire a lifetime of giving back that benefits youngsters throughout their lives.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Children are never too young to volunteer. Finding the right fit can inspire a lifetime of giving back that benefits youngsters throughout their lives.

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**GIVING BACK**

# Find the right volunteer opportunity for you

Giving back to one's community can provide a sense of purpose and improve an individual's overall well-being. Data from Volunteer Hub indicates that people who volunteer improve their health by strengthening their bodies, improving their moods and reducing stress.

Volunteerism also produces additional benefits, including boosting one's positive perception to others. A study from Career-Builder found 60% of hiring managers see volunteerism as a valuable asset when making recruitment decisions. Furthermore, human resources executives attest that contributing to a nonprofit can improve leadership skills.

By understanding the value behind volunteer work — for the people or organization on the receiving end as well as the volunteer — more individuals may decide to donate their time and services. However, finding the right volunteer opportunity may take some trial and error.

The following are some tips for finding the right fit.

- Consider skills and interests. Before choosing a volunteer opportunity, make a list of activities that you enjoy. This may help guide volunteer choices. For example, if you like hiking, you may volunteer to clean up a local park.

- Assess your skill levels. Is there something you are particularly adept at doing? For example, if you are a certified public accountant, you may be able to volunteer by mentoring young accounting students, or doing taxes or bookkeeping tasks for the elderly or less fortunate.

- Think about commitment level. Figure out how much time you can spend



volunteering. Maybe you only have the weekends or a few hours in the evenings? Understanding how much free time you have can help you choose opportunities that fit within these parameters.

- Research potential organizations. Not all nonprofit groups are created equal. Utilize resources such as CreativeVolunteer that vet charitable groups to determine if they are trustworthy.

- Define your goals. Have goals in mind when selecting opportunities. Defining a goal can help

you maintain the motivation to volunteer and see a project through to completion.

- Start small. Wade into a volunteer opportunity slowly to see if it is the right fit. This may include volunteering one day a week or month. Increase the time you spend volunteering once you've found the right place for you.

Volunteering can bring joy to a person's life, especially when individuals find an inspiring opportunity.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



Volunteering can bring joy to a person's life, especially when individuals find an inspiring opportunity.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION





*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!*



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