



TODAY'S EDITION

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STUDENT EDITION
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2021

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THE JOY OF GIVING

This Christmas, return to the real reason behind the season - the joy of sharing and caring. After all, what's Christmas without charity and glad tidings for everyone? We ask students and teachers to tell us what they think makes the best gift and how they plan to celebrate. Read on to get some ideas on how to get the glow within

Send a hand
ABHISHEK KUMAR, class X, AKSIPS Smart School, Sector 41, Chandigarh

The practice of exchanging gifts has been followed by humans for a long time. The sudden outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way I now present gifts. The notion of gifting to loved ones for me during the pandemic has been more in terms of spending time with them in their happy and sad times, either physically or virtually. The pandemic brought with it the social distancing norms which made it impossible for us to join some special occasions. So with the help of technology we marked our presence virtually at many such events. It also taught us that lending a hand to the needy through NGOs and other organisations brings us more satisfaction than wasting our energies in futile pursuits.

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give"
- WINSTON CHURCHILL

Love is the greatest gift

TAHAAN ALEXANDER ABRAHAM, class V, The Choice School, Tripunithura, Ernakulam

A gift may not always have to come in cute packages or wrapped beautifully. They can be things one cannot see or touch. Love is the greatest gift one could ever receive. It is the most important gift because it makes someone elated and purposeful. And what better time of the year to express than now? **A person who feels love knows that someone cares for them and appreciates them**, which I think is the main essence of Christmas."

The message of love
NOA MATHEW, class IX, Chavara Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore

This year I have decided to do something creative. My classmate Bhanu struggled a lot when her father had passed away due to Covid after a difficult hospitalisation and they spent all their life saving. I started noticing that she was not present for all the classes. When I asked her about it, she told me that she uses her mother's phone. Her mother is a nurse at a hospital and they couldn't afford a second phone. Hearing this, I thought of giving my spare phone to her, which is currently facing some technical problem. If I could fix it and give it to her as a Christmas gift, I believe that **I will be spreading the message of love.**

We value things that we took for granted
ABHINAVAMI RAG S S, class VIII, Carmel School, Peyad, Thiruvananthapuram

The restrictions placed on real-world socialising have made it taxing to maintain relationships and confer gifts to our loved ones. The approach to gift-giving has changed considerably. During lockdown, we began to value things that we used to take for granted. **Quality family time is an invaluable gift these days.** Even though many gifting opportunities appear online, now we know that the best gifts are gestures from the heart and they don't need money. The pandemic showed that humanity exists. Gifting now is not about monetarily valuable gifts, but what actually makes the recipient happy.

Each one, cheers one
KAJAL CHHATJIA, executive director, Gayatri Group of Schools, Pune

Christmas traditions, such as putting up a tree, gifts and giving to charity - all this has evolved during the pandemic as we avoid large gatherings. This year, I am going to make this celebration of cheer and joy for the less privileged children by gifting them goodies. Let's together think of making the occasion memorable by following the mission of "each one, cheers one!"

Make good memories
NANDINI SINGLA, class V, Sri Venkateswar International School, sector 18, Dwarka, Delhi

There is no better gift than good memories since they last forever and we remember them more often, so they make us happy. Therefore, we ought to give good memories to others. You can do this by taking them on trips or by taking them to an amusement park or just by talking to them and having fun."

Gift a smile
PIA JOYDEV OZA, class X, SSPM'S Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidya Mandir, Mumbai

I think the best gift of all to give would be...a smile. Isn't it beautiful when you're the reason behind someone's joy? Doesn't it feel good to know that you made someone's day better, even by an infinitesimal amount?

Material things rot away, but joy doesn't.

And it's not difficult either - offering a smile, a helping hand, a little compliment. All you need is kindness, compassion, and a pure heart! The last two years have showed us that life is completely unpredictable. We have learnt to make our time on this planet worthwhile, to stand by humanity against all odds. Particularly in these trying times, I am grateful for what I have - a house, a bed, warmth and fortune. But there are people who aren't so lucky. When you realise that you have enough, you realise the importance of charity - of sharing and helping. You realise that rich or poor, we're all in this together, and everyone deserves a shot at a good life. On cold winter nights, Christmas brings warmth - it makes our soul glow with humanity and compassion. This is the time for sharing and receiving, loving and helping.

That's what Christmas is to me - more than a festival, it is a beautiful way of living life.

Season of joy and get together
KARLYN CYNTHIA F M, class XII, ELGI Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Coimbatore

Christmas is the season of joy and of families getting together. The excitement of being with the family, exchanging gifts, taste special dishes, dress spectacularly and so on add much to the festivity. The real spirit of Christmas is something different though. Christmas is not a seasonal celebration or the most awaited festive occasion of the year for me. **It's the time I rejuvenate myself with faith and belief.** It's about love, peace and goodwill and spirit of Christmas is to be retained all through the year. I propose to spend this year's Christmas with those who need a helping hand."

WHY WE MUST GIVE?
The joy of giving lasts longer than the joy of getting. "The phenomenon of hedonistic adaptation" says that the happiness we feel after a particular event or activity diminishes each time we experience that event. But according to research published in "Psychological Science", giving to others may be the exception to this rule. Studies conducted by University of Chicago and Kellogg School of Management found that participants' happiness did not decline, or declined much slower if they repeatedly bestowed gifts on others versus repeatedly receiving those same gifts themselves!

Charity first
SUDHIKSHA INNANJE, class XII, DPS South, Bengaluru

Charity brings a sense of gratitude in us, which is one of the major factors to happiness and humanity. The last two years has made this opinion of mine stronger. Instead of blaming everyone else for poverty that is seen around us, I think helping to make it better by being charitable and helping people out will really make a huge difference if all of us take even small initiatives. **Empathy and gratitude is what makes us humans humane.**

An eco-friendly celebration
R. MITHRA, class VIII, Shree Niketan Patasala, West Tambaram, Chennai

This festival is celebrated in different places in unique ways. In India, particularly in the southern region, I have seen that instead of having traditional Christmas trees, a banana or mango tree is decorated too. Friends remember, the theme of Christmas is "Peace on Earth." So let's unite to **make this year our most eco-friendly and sustainable Christmas yet** and opt for 'green' Christmas decorations, trees and gifts."

Charity uplifts giver & receiver
MEHENAJ GAZI, class XII, Sadhu Vaswani International School (SVIS), Pune

Charity as an act is the essence of every religion. 'Charity' is a way of life mentioned in all the religious scriptures. It is twice blessed - it blesses the one who gives and also the one who takes. December is here and with it the cold and harsh weather. Not to mention the continuing pandemic. The best gift at such times would be to open our hearts to the underprivileged. When you snuggle into your blankets give a thought to those, sleeping on the footpath with no proper clothing. They can surely benefit with a generous blanket, warm clothing, mask, sanitiser and food packets. Look around your locality and you will find plenty of mouths to feed. Our small act of kindness will help them survive the cold weather. Also, educating them on safety and hygiene during these unprecedented times can save lives."

Blessed time of the year
MONICA RACHEL S, class XI, Bethel Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai

Every year my family and I gather together in the church, attend the sermon and after the sermon I meet my friends and wish them a "Merry Christmas". Then we spend the rest of the day as a family, and give gifts to our neighbours. And this is what we plan to do this Christmas too. And if God wills we are also planning to help the poor and tell them the true meaning of Christmas this year. This is the way I spend Christmas. I hope you enjoy this blessed and cheerful time of the year.

Think of what you can give
RIDHI MALHOTRA, class XII, Narayana Junior College, Mumbai

The best gift to give to someone is your time and care. In this fast moving world, time is a precious possession. Just giving our love and care, showing that they are not alone is what can bring a glow from within. As a student **one can share one's knowledge with the less privileged, it's also one of the best gifts one can share.** Last two years have shown us that it probably was the worst of our time - many have lost family members, friends and a lot of children have lost their access to education. We can support small businesses and also volunteer in local camps, provide free food to the needy and do everything to aid the needy. Last two years have made me realise that how basic necessities of life, which we consider ordinary can be a gift to someone. It has encouraged me to help others in the best way possible. I plan to celebrate Christmas in an orphanage, sing carols, decorate a tree, with the orphans and try to bring a smile on their faces.

Gift your time
GURKEERAT KAUR, class X, La Martiniere Girls' College, Lucknow

There are multiple ways to do charity with clothes, medicines, books, food. The list is endless, but I feel that donating your time, an hour or two is another compassionate way to show you care. In a world where loneliness has crept in, turning into a disease I feel if we join groups, children's hospitals, adult and kid's day care programs, we can make a huge impact. People are living in old age homes, adults from broken families, and the ones suffering in hospitals or medical institutions, essentially require compassion and empathy. **This disease has created a vacuum for which we need to form a circle of love and consideration.** Sitting with someone and listening to their words, sharing experiences, talents, ideas and meals with lonely seniors, is simply an acknowledgement of their emotions and feelings."

Gift a listening ear
SURYAKUMARI DENNISON, teacher, Aavishkar Academy, Bengaluru

Over the years, I have shared my love of English with thousands of students. I find this as rewarding today as I did when I embarked on my teaching career. I believe, however, that an educator should not merely impart knowledge. He/she should be a friend and mentor, in whom students can repose their trust. Youngsters should feel free to confide their joys and sorrows to a teacher, in a way that might not be possible at home. As we give students the benefit of our academic expertise, let us also bestow on them the gift of a listening ear!"

During gift-giving behaviours, humans secrete "feel good" chemicals in our brains, such as serotonin (mood-mediating chemical), dopamine (feel-good chemical) and oxytocin (compassion & bonding chemical)

Studies show that giving can actually boost your physical and mental health. Health benefits associated with giving include...

- lower blood pressure
- increased self-esteem
- helps in depression
- lower stress levels
- longer life

A time for healing
ANAHITA JAIN, class VIII, Suncity School, Gurugram

An ordinary dictionary describes Christmas as "the annual festival of the Christian Church commemorating the birth of Jesus," but to me, Christmas is way beyond that. Christmas is the time of healing and renewed strength - it's the time to forgive and forget anything that is hindering our success or relationships. Christmas is the time to forget about us and start thinking about others and **do small acts of kindness** - for the less privileged - your domestic workers, security staff, guards, delivery people and so on."

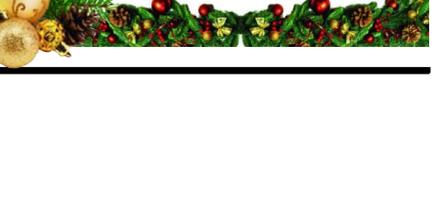
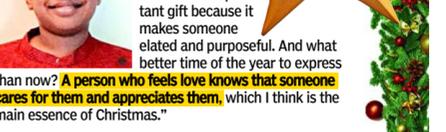
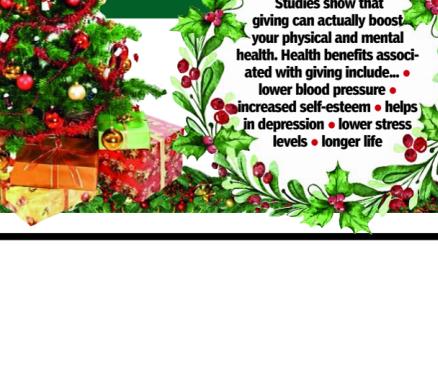
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7 YOUNGSTERS WHO RUN 'REAL' CHARITIES

They are dynamic, aspirational, and no, they aren't your typical young entrepreneurs working to make big bucks in big businesses. On the contrary, they run their own NGOs or social entrepreneurship programmes for different causes to make a difference in the society. They are surely good samaritans but more than just that they raise funds for the underprivileged, empower children from slums and more



TIMES NIE BRINGS TO YOU THEIR SUCCESS STORIES AND THE 'HEART' BEHIND THEIR MISSION

1 VISHAL & ISHAN VIJAY - rooting for kids' basic needs

Two brothers - Vishal and Ishan Vijay - run Every Child Now, a charitable organisation to provide basic amenities to children across the globe. Vishal along with his brother Ishan started this organisation at age 13 (now 18), post his first introduction to poverty during a holiday to India with his parents.

The duo has raised over \$100,000, built a school in Rajasthan and sponsored dozens of Indian children through their NGO. Every Child Now has also deployed resources and raised funds for Ebola outbreaks in Sierra Leone and humanitarian crises in Nepal and Syria. This is besides distributing over 35,000 units of 'basic supplies' for children - in sectors of education, food, healthcare, shelter, and water.



3 SHARAD VIVEK SAGAR - is giving children a real chance to study

The 26-year-old social entrepreneur is on a mission to bring educational opportunities to children from the remotest areas of the country. He founded Dexterity Global at the age of 16 and has provided a chance for education to more than 1.2 million students (approx). Notably, he was enlisted in the 'Forbes 30 under 30 list' and is also one of the very few Indians to reject a Masters degree from the Harvard University!



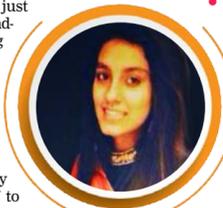
6 FARHANA ROSHAN - is fighting for girls' education

An initiative addressing the issue of girls' education in her community, leading by her example, Farhana reaches out to parents and convinces them to let their daughters complete their education - in both school and college. Her organisation Targib has managed to support 50 girls by getting them admission in residential schools.



2 MUSKAN CHIBBER - funds education of poor children

Nurture Nature - Delhi-based Muskaan Chhibber's dream NGO was registered when she was just 17. Admirably, till date, Nurture Nature has funded the education of over 20 children coming from different rural and semi-urban areas around Delhi. Muskaan's team visits slums in Azadpur and Wazirpur areas to spread awareness about education. They also help underprivileged children get admission in government schools and provide them with funds for their educational needs. Nurture Nature is into spreading awareness about cancer as well and they connect with oncologists and other medical staff to help poor cancer patients get adequate treatment.



4 AARUSHI BATRA - provides free food to the hungry

Along with her three friends, Aarushi founded the Robin Hood Army - a volunteer-based organisation that feeds the less fortunate. The volunteers collect food from restaurants and weddings, pack it hygienically and distribute it among the poor. Now almost 14,000 strong, Robin Hood Army spread over 60 cities is going strong in its mission of not letting the poor sleep hungry. Help their tribe increase.



7 UPASANA RAVIKANNAN - is supporting underprivileged schools

Through her initiative GoPaadhai (which she started at age 16), Upasana is addressing a very important issue - the problem of inequality in education. Her organisation supports underprivileged schools with limited resources to sustain quality education - a task too tough in a country like India where there is wide gap between the rich and poor, leading to various inequalities in all sectors including education and schooling.



Charity begins at SCHOOL...

It's a place where children learn more than just subjects. A lot goes into this evolution, as our seats of learning inculcate values of sharing, giving and compassion in students. This Christmas - let's take a look at how schools across India have made the joy of giving more fulfilling and meaningful

"TRUE HAPPINESS IS IN SUPPORTING NEEDY"

The Apeejay Schools (Park Street, Salt Lake, Bhubaneswar and Haldia) recently organised 'Kindness Day' where students went to old age homes in Kolkata, distributed sweets among street children, donated old clothes in villages and blankets and woollens in Bhubaneswar. What better way to enjoy Christmas than by celebrating the values of humanity and love - to make this world a better place to live in.

Lt Cdr Kiranjit Singh Pannu, CEO, Apeejay Schools (Kolkata, Bhubaneswar and Haldia)

"WE RESOLVE TO DO MORE, SHARE THE BEST, WITHOUT COUNTING COST AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR"

Come December and our students start offering gifts to the less fortunate - a ritual since the last nine years. They raise their hearts, minds and hands to respond to the call of charity by getting involved in small charitable acts.

Maria De Souza, teacher, Villa Theresa School, Mumbai

"LOSE YOURSELF IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS"

The three sections of the school campus have adopted three NGOs (Prem Niwas by Pre-Primary and Primary Section, Prayas by Junior Section and Cheshire Home by Senior Section). We work for these NGOs selflessly. Deepali Gautam, principal, City Montessori School, Station Road, Lucknow



"WE RISE BY LIFTING OTHERS"

This year, we are supporting the needy and homeless by providing 'ration kits' and blankets. We are also supporting animal shelters that care for injured and abandoned animals, many of whom were abandoned during the lockdown. Agnes Davies, Director Academics & Principal, Sherwood High, Bangalore

"OTHERS NEED, I HAVE, I WANT TO GIVE"

Our students touch many lives through charitable initiatives. 'Ignite a reading revolution, Project Warmth, Being Humane, Be Someone's Santa, Green Crusaders, Let's Write, Project Zero Hunger, Disconnect to Reconnect, Project Udaan' are charity drives conducted in our school to instill the value of giving. Our mantra is to make a difference beyond academics.

Kasturi Chatterjee, principal, Gitanjali Devashray, Hyderabad



"SANTA CLAUS ENTERS THROUGH THE HEART"

In December, as winter starts getting colder, our students start collecting blankets, cakes, etc. for distribution in orphanages.

Last year, despite the pandemic, we encouraged the little ones to pack small meaningful gifts and share them with their helpers. These Santas are all around us and touch the lives of needy.

Anuradha Sharma, principal, Ryan International School, Vasant Vihar, Delhi



"OPEN YOUR HEART TO THOSE IN NEED"

Raising funds for charities and sponsoring help for those who require it the most is part of our school curriculum.

Our students raised funds worth lakhs of rupees under the 'Wipe A Tear' programme and donated to HelpAge India. The school also involves students in helping needy school personnel.

N Sitalakshmi, principal, Sanskruthi Global School, Visakhapatnam

"LOAF OF LOVE"

This school has a history of helping the hapless. Loyola Medicare Centre of the 1970s has now become Loaf of Love, a joint charity drive of the school management and the PTA. This year, around ₹5 lakh was collected of which ₹3 lakh was donated to the Regional Cancer Centre, ₹15,000 to Assisi Nikethan (Old Age Home), and 40 foam mattresses for the patients of Karunya Vishranti Bhavan, study materials worth ₹31,165 for an orphanage.

Father PT Joseph, principal, Loyola School, Thiruvananthapuram

"THE HANDS THAT HELP ARE BETTER THAN THE LIPS THAT PRAY"

Our students visited an old age home 'Prema Samajam' and donated clothes as well as served supper to the old and destitute. Charity and service in an old age home gave students the opportunity to learn a lot of humane values. Dr B Lava Kumar, teacher, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh



"1000 CUPS OF TEA IN CHAI KA LANGAR"

We recently organised a 'Chai ka Langar' to kickstart Christmas celebrations. On a cold winter morning, piping hot samosas and masala tea was served with great love outside the school to passers-by. More than 1000 cups of hot and fresh tea, with biscuits and samosas were served along with beautiful Christmas carols, sung by both teachers and students.

Kavita Das, principal, St John's High School, Chandigarh

