

# Children Who Give ... Gain!



**Robert Hull**

Ask a child to help someone in need and watch what happens.

Children who participate in fundraising and volunteerism learn empathy. They want to know who is in need and why. They will quickly see injustices, they will develop a wider world view and a stronger sense of community.

“... the students at the George Hull Centre School Program get tremendous satisfaction knowing that they are helping other people”

*Jane Bray,  
Executive Director  
The George Hull Centre*

And once they've shared their allowance or their time, watch their self-esteem. They'll feel good about what they've done, as they should.

Teenagers receiving mental health services through The George Hull Centre School Program routinely volunteer to help at food banks. The Centre's Executive Director Jane Bray says the students get tremendous satisfaction knowing that they are helping other people. Over

time, feelings of usefulness and importance transfer to other parts of their lives.

The experience can be very powerful as these young people see themselves as capable of being givers of support, not just receivers.

There are wonderful learning opportunities in involving children and youth in charitable activities as well. When The George Hull Centre's students organized a drive for children in Africa, they developed new skills in event planning, letter writing, team work and how to talk to people.

Children who eschew gifts at birthday parties, but request contributions to a favourite charity, may experience a similar sense of accomplishment. They'll also learn something as the questions fly on what's happening to the butterflies or what it would be like to have no schools.

Jane warns that the charity birthday may not be for everyone. “It should not be about loss but about a feeling of giving,” she tells us, so your child must already feel that they have enough and truly want to give to others.

Jane also reminds us that the charity should be chosen carefully to match the child's emotional maturity. A pre-schooler may be quite upset to think about starving polar bears, for instance. Or an anxious child of any age may not be helped by learning about the effects of war on children in other countries.

Nurtured carefully, however, showing our children how to give and contribute makes for a new generation of community-minded philanthropists.

As children, my own daughters participated in toy drives



and walk-a-thons and saw our contributions as a family.

My now 22-year-old just invested in her first Retirement Savings Plan. She named The George Hull Centre as her beneficiary. I couldn't be more proud.

#### Questions For Robert Hull:

Why I love what I do in the philanthropic sector?  
Seeing the best in people and watching resources used for improvement of youth at the right age achieve far more than resources deployed after it is too late.

Number of charities to which I donated last year?  
13, many of which involved participation in cycling tours and fun runs.

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In celebration of **Children's Mental Health Week in Canada**