



## Commit to REALLY doing good this season

**If we really want to do good this holiday season, let's move beyond our traditional approach to poverty and charitable work.** Let's think beyond volunteering with our families and beyond angel tree participation or even adopting families for the holidays.

Buying gifts for other families is a kind and selfless act. But there may be unintended consequences, as these types of activities may make those we want to help feel "less than." You may not see or hear this when a mother shares her gratitude. You may think it went well; people can be so gracious and make you feel so appreciated when you help them.

I saw this up close for 20 years, providing gifts and working with thousands of families over the holiday seasons. One of the most important lessons I learned was how deeply embarrassed parents can get, especially fathers, when you bring holiday gifts to their children. They see that as their role, just as you see it as your role to provide gifts for your children.

**We can do this better.** So many of our neighbors, no matter where we live, feel desperation instead of joy. We can help more effectively than we do. We can implement solutions that do not result in families standing in long lines outside a building so they can pick up free toys for their kids.

We have been immersed in an approach to poverty that has not resulted in substantive positive change. The truth is that many of the same families that sought holiday help 20 years ago are seeking it today. And their kids and their kids' families now seek it, too.

A better approach would have all of us working to remove obstacles to economic security, giving families dignity and the ability to take care of their holiday giving, themselves. **Isn't it time to make that our focus instead of just accepting their needs as part of our society?**

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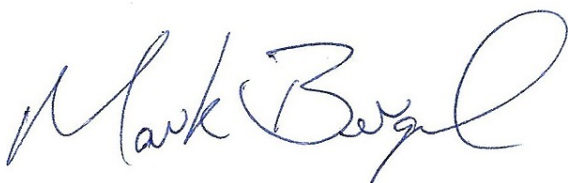
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This holiday season, the biggest gift you can give to those living in poverty is a commitment to creating long-term change that addresses the causes of poverty instead of its symptoms. Work with [sharedhumanityproject.org](https://sharedhumanityproject.org) to remove the obstacles that individuals and families face in your community.

That may mean having your business collaborate with a faith community or local educational institution to develop innovative child care solutions, so parents do not have to spend half of their paycheck or more on child care. It may mean having your civic association work with the local government to increase transportation access so parents do not have to travel an hour to get five miles and so children can gain greater access to sports, arts, or other activities.

There are hundreds of [actions](#) you can take to change the way we address poverty and the economic instability faced by our fellow human beings. And there is no better time to commit to that than the holiday season.

Give the greatest gift, and ACT now to help end poverty in your community. Visit [nationalpovertyplan.org](https://nationalpovertyplan.org) or [email us](#) to learn more.



The Shared  
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