



Business Tip #5 Charitable Donations

It's not always about the money.

I get asked a lot how much my business is worth or how many Pencil Bugs have I sold or how much I've made. When you're only 12 years old, the amounts are not that important.

Knowing how charities work is very important. I have learned that donating is very much appreciated. I'm not making millions – yet- but even a small amount of money can make a huge difference for a child in need.

Shortly after I started my business, I asked my parents about charities and how they work. Like most people, I'd heard of the big ones. My parents said that too often when people donate money to large charities, they never really know where their money is going. Even if I was going to give a small amount, I wanted to know it was directly helping the people that really needed it.

After a lot of discussion, I decided to find a charity that helped kids. I also wanted to see if I could find a local one in my town so hopefully, I could actually see the difference I was making. We looked around and found HUGS Foster Family Agency. They found homes for a few hundred kids who weren't able to live with their parents. We met with them and they were very happy I chose them to donate to and reassured me that my money would be used to buy things the kids needed. In fact, when I would deliver my donation check, often times the CFO would ask how I wanted them to spend that money. If it were close to school starting, I asked for school supplies or clothes. If it was Christmas or someone's birthday, toys were good because I know some kids don't have a lot.

When I was getting close to my third anniversary in business, I decided there were kids in other situations that could probably use my help. I've been very lucky and have never been hospitalized but some kids have to stay in hospitals for weeks and even months. I set up a program with Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego, CA to distribute gift bags full of activity supplies so they would have something to do. A portion of every sale is used to buy things to fill the bags. My parents and I put everything together and even though I can't give them to the kids personally because of hospital age restrictions, I know they will make a lot of kids happy.

Whatever you decide to do in life, whether you start your own business or work for someone else, think about ways you can help others. If you're still a kid, start now. It really makes you feel good to know you're helping. Even if it's in a small way, it still matters.

If more people helped out their communities, the world would be a better place for all of us.