

Tips for Choosing a Charity

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10/6/2008 - **PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo.** -- With the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) under way, you may be wondering which charities are worthy of your hard-earned dollars. The CFC offers many charities to choose from and deciding which ones to donate to can be daunting.

You should select the charity whose mission matters to you most. Give to groups whose work you are already familiar with and to groups you are confident will put your donation to good use.

You should still research the organization to verify it is the one you think it is. You may have confused the charity with another one of a similar name. Do not assume you know the organization and what it does. Read up on their mission and take a look at its financial records. You have a right to know how the organization is going to spend your donation. The bulk of donations should go to help the people and causes they claim to support; the CFC brochure states the administrative expenses at the end of the charity's listing.

Other thoughts to consider are to clarify your values and identify your preferences. Are you more concerned about the environment or supporting the arts? Does someone in your family have an illness that could benefit from one or more of these charities? Perhaps you would like to advocate for a law or educate the public about a cause.

You should also think about whether you want to support a charity that is local, national or even international. A lot of people prefer to support charities that serve their local community. Local charities can appear more concrete because you can see the work being accomplished and the benefits to your neighbors and community. Remember that small and new charities can use your help just as much as the larger more established ones. Make certain that the organization's goals are measurable and its achievements are recorded.

Sometimes volunteering for a charity will help you decide if it is the one you want to support. If you cannot get personally involved, try speaking to the charity's staff members and volunteers. Question them about the group you want to sponsor by asking them how committed they are to the organization and how efficient the organization is in helping support their cause. Once you align yourself to a charity whose issues you are most ardent about, you will be more inclined to be generous and involved with that organization.

http://www.peterson.af.mil/news/story_print.asp?id=123118449