ESSAY: DONATING TO CHARITY

The holidays are a time of generosity and giving. In social studies, classes will compete to see who will raise the most money for charity (and earn the right to watch Mr. H drink some really gross soda!) The big question is: To which worthy cause should we donate the money? To decide, students will research different charities and choose one that they feel should get the donations.

**Step One** - We will conduct research about different charities. The internet has many valuable websites which can help the public find charities to which they can donate. They include [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org), [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), and [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org). As you look around these sites, you’ll notice that there are several categories of charities: ones that benefit animals, environmental organizations, groups that raise money to fight diseases and health problems, and a whole range of others. As you browse, look for charities which raise money for causes that you feel strongly about. Also, you want to pick a charity that you can persuade others to want to give money to. Since the money will be collected from people of all sorts of religious backgrounds, avoid choosing charities which will use the money for specifically religious purposes, such as a church. Groups sponsored by religious groups but do general charity work for all, such as Catholic Charities or the Salvation Army, are appropriate.
These websites are not only helpful in finding charities but also in evaluating which ones do the most effective job of getting the money to those who need it. This is important because some charities do a better job at this than others, with some charities spending a surprising amount of donations to run their organization rather than give it out to those who they are supposed to be working for.

Charitynavigator.org has a useful ratings system to help guide perspective donors toward groups that use their donations most efficiently.

Step Two - Once students have identified a charity to which they think we should donate the money we collect, they will write a five paragraph essay which tries to persuade others that theirs is the best choice. For more details, see the organizer on the attached page.

Extra credit opportunity: If you would like, students can make a brief Powerpoint, poster, or movie presentation to convince others to choose this charity. We will view and discuss some of these presentations in class and students will then vote on which one is the most deserving of our donations. Due date for these is Tuesday, December 17th.
Organizer for charity essay:

Introduction - explain the overall topic of your essay to the reader

Name and description of your charity

Reasons why you think we should donate the money to them. These can include statistics about how big the problem is, explanations about how this charity will help, and an explanation of what might happen if we don’t help out in this situation.

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How well do they spend the money that’s been donated to them? (if you can find out)

Concluding sentence
**Websites to find and evaluate charities:**

www.charitynavigator.org

www.myphilanthropedia.org

www.justgive.org

www.guidestar.org

**Types of charities we can help:**

Famine relief

Helping those with no access to water

Environmental groups

Medical research and treatment

Animal protection

Assisting wounded soldiers

Natural disasters

Youth programs

Local charities, like food banks, etc.