

# SPA CHARITY: WHY AND HOW TO GIVE

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*For it is in giving that we receive. --St. Francis of Assisi*

Among the tenets of green living, two of them are vital to fostering a healthy local community: involvement and charity. Since we enthusiastically purchase food from area farmers' markets and we fervently recycle, it makes sense that we would combine our desire to "take care of our own" and to limit our landfill use by simply aiding those who need us the most: the displaced. Logic also dictates that since spa professionals have an innate desire to nurture, they are ideal candidates for volunteering their services and supplies to the dispossessed, thereby receiving personal gratification and strengthening their community bonds.

Sometimes overlooked, women's shelters are places that require donations for daily operation. Traumatized, emotionally scarred, and often overseeing the needs of their children, many battered women have neglected themselves. While clothes and shoes are always welcome contributions, women at these shelters have intangible needs as well: self-esteem and encouragement. If you provide them with free mini spa treatments and cosmetic samples, you champion them to start caring for themselves again, plus you get something in return: the ability to positively change someone's circumstances. Your thirty minute pedicure could actually be the catalyst that prompts an abuse survivor to gain a little confidence, which confidence aids independence, and which independence yields freedom.

Also places of perpetual hardship, homeless shelters present charitable opportunities too. Many spas are going green, which means they are swapping out their sheets, pillows, and towels for organic or sustainable fabrics. Consequently, they have a surplus of discarded linens, which would be very helpful to many homeless shelters because numerous sheeting options allow for timely bed (or cot) changes. Donating your unwanted linens not only helps your neighbors, but it also prevents unnecessary landfill waste.

Philanthropy is born from responsibility –a duty each of us inherits as members of the human community. Everyone has something to offer, and while giving is selfless, one does receive a rewarding sense of fulfillment. Additionally, your profession actually becomes more effective because philanthropic endeavors cultivate your compassionate instincts. In fact, the Day Spa Association created an organization, SPACare, based on charity and its positive effects within the spa industry, and more nonprofits are springing up from coast to coast. However, generosity doesn't normally begin as a group effort; it is usually initiated by a steadfast individual, someone who confronts the seemingly futile and patiently conquers it, one considerate contribution at a time.



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