

Did You Know...? about Charity Ratings

Did You Know... That there are online organizations whose mission it is to help you to make wise choices when it comes to charitable donations. We've found several organizations that provide this sort of information.

The Holidays are right around the corner, and that is of course a primary time of year for people to remember the less fortunate by opening up their hearts and wallets.

With that in mind, it seemed a logical choice to share with our readers some thoughts on that topic, and some tools we've found to help make informed decisions on where those donations can be put to best use. That being said, we have NO intention of telling anyone where their donations should be gifted.

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

Aesop (620 BC - 560 BC)

These organizations rate charities based upon on a number of criteria, such as the percentages of 'administration expenses' and 'program expenses' [those are the dollars that actually go to providing the programs / services of the cause you wish to support] compared to the overall income that the charity takes in. Fundraising efficiency is based upon the % of dollars spent in the effort to raise those donations. To be expected, each of these organizations feels that their particular methodology of ranking is the most accurate, so it will still take a bit of leg work on your part to ferret out the info you want on your favorite beneficiary. But at least now you may have more information to work with.

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance.

Francis of Assisi

There are numerous so-called 'charity watchdogs' out there. These are some that come up most often when doing a basic web-search on the topic.

BBB Wise Giving Alliance {Better Business Bureau} <http://www.give.org/>

Charity Navigator 'Your Guide to Intelligent Giving'

<http://www.charitynavigator.org/>

Charity Watch {formerly the American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP)}

<https://www.charitywatch.org/>

Sample reports...

According to the BBB WGA, the United Food Bank, {based in Mesa, AZ}, which recently held their 'Give Where You Live' motorcycle raffle, spends 98% of their income on programs, with just the remaining 2% on admin & fundraising expenses. Outstanding!

Charity Navigator reports that 90.3% of the American Red Cross expenses go toward their programs & services.

From CharityWatch.org ... Fisher House Foundation [as of 2013] directs 92% of its cash budget to its program expenses and spends just \$3 in fundraising expense to raise \$100. {Fisher House is best known for creating a network of comfort homes where military and veterans' families can stay at no cost while a loved one is receiving treatment @ a nearby medical center or hospital.}

About their funding...

BBB WGA is a 501(c)(3) charity which receives donations from corporate and private sources.

Charity Navigator is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, receiving support from corporations, foundations, and individuals.

CharityWatch is funded by donations from the public... no advertisers, charities, or other sources that could try to exert influence over their reports. So, their members get to read the entire CharityWatch ratings list, graded from A-F, on more than 600 organizations. However, non-members can access their 'Top-Rated Charities' list. And, unless you're just curious about how the various organizations rank... if a charity isn't listed in the Top-Rated category, do you really want to send your donation to them?

It is demonstrated year after year how big-hearted the Biker Community is when it comes to helping the less fortunate. In talking with people, we've learned that some have become disillusioned with giving to large organizations with suspect track records regarding how they manage donations. For them, the solution has been to keep their donations local... to an area food bank, church, or animal shelter, etc... where they can SEE their donations in action.

But for those with the desire to support larger-scale causes... disaster relief, Veterans causes, etc... you DO have resources to learn where your hand-earned dollars will be put to best use.

We hope these referrals are helpful as the calendar moves into the traditional 'Season of Giving' and you begin considering where any of your charitable donations may be directed.

Betsy