

Want a Cool New Year's Resolution?

22 December 2025



Add "Become a Philanthropist" to Your Resolutions

I am not great at resolutions. Sometimes I set a goal for Lent and at about day 3, forget because the habits set in. Every year in January I set out to lose weight, but then remember there is left over eggnog and Christmas Tree Zebra Cakes that aren't going to finish themselves. I am good at setting goals, but not great at changing habits.

I want to encourage you this year to skip the obvious resolutions: losing weight, reading more, journaling, etc. Instead, think about what it would mean for you to say that in 2026 you are seeking to be a philanthropist.

Now, we haven't done a great job talking about philanthropy. We tend to think of sponsoring hospital wings, or getting your name on a library, or large scholarships at a university. Those are great, but if you're reading this email, that is likely a bit out of reach for you. But that doesn't mean you can't be a philanthropist in your community or around a cause you care about.

As you're considering what this might look like for you, here are 10 ideas!

1. **Become a donor**, even a small one, monthly. Small dollar donations are the driving force behind any political campaign, nonprofit, or movement. Setting up a small monthly donation is usually easy to do and is a way to support that you can almost forget about.
2. **Support the network**. Ask your favorite nonprofit, who their favorite nonprofit is! No organization is out here working alone and it is important to support the organizations who are partnering with the organizations we support.
3. **Like, Follow, Share and Boost**. Helping organizations get their word out and their causes in front of more people is important. It also leads to more followers, which, in this bizarre world, can often also mean that more businesses are willing to donate and sponsor events because it means they are seen by more people.
4. **Volunteer**. Dollars are important but just as important are putting your yourself into the work. Getting your hands dirty, meeting the people who do the work, as well as the folks who are impacted by the work helps you understand the organization better as well as audit whether you're comfortable with how your funds are being spent.
5. **Take a friend**. Volunteering, going to an event, attending the gala? Take someone with you! You don't have to shout about our cause from the rooftops all the time, but getting one friend more passionate or aware of a cause can be just as powerful.
6. **Get on Board!** If you have time, talent and energy to give to a cause, consider joining a board of directors or advisory boards. These are rooms and committees with people who are also passionate about your cause and are working hard for solutions.
7. **Host a lunch or dinner**. Listen, there were decades of bait-and-switch dinners where someone you kind of knew would invite you over to dinner and out of nowhere, there would be someone there pitching you a multi-level marketing scheme. Don't do that to people, let them know you're inviting friends over to learn about a nonprofit in the community.
8. **Collective giving**. You're one person and your giving is limited, but all over the country, in most communities there is an opportunity for collective giving where maybe 10, 20, or 30 people pool their funds and give grants to organizations or projects. Look for groups like [Impact 100](#), [100 Women Who Care](#), 100 Faithful Friends, 100 Millennials Who Care, and so on. If you're not in a place with any of these, consider starting your own!
9. **Host a Collection**. What's your favorite organization need that money *could* buy but collecting helps you get their story out more? Old blankets for the humane society, office supplies for that environmental org, job interview clothes for the training school, toys for the children's shelter, hygiene products for the homeless shelter-- ask what they need and get folks collecting.

10. Involve the next generation. When I was a kid I would hear people talk about being "just one generation away from ..." and that didn't make sense to me, but I get it now. I grew up in a home that, as far as I know, didn't give to anything. Maybe my parents did and they just never talked to the kids about it, but whatever the case, giving was not modeled for me. Have a conversation with your kids as you're writing the check. At some age, let them decide where some of the money goes, then involve them in the other things we listed above. In the same way that you can be a philanthropist at any level, they can be philanthropists at any age.



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