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Blankets to warm the heart

Mother's blanket-making efforts prompt Community Gifts support



Kris Snibbe/Harvard Staff Photographer

Madeline Meehan, Harvard's director of events for Campus Services, helped to turn her mother's labor of love, "We Care Blankets," into something all of Harvard could support through Community Gifts. The nonprofit charity provides handmade blankets to children who are going through chemotherapy at Harvard-affiliated hospitals.

This is one of a series of Gazette articles highlighting some of the many initiatives and charities that Harvard affiliates can support through the Harvard Community Gifts campaign. Until Dec. 7, faculty and staff can choose to donate by payroll deduction, or may elect to give by check or credit card through Jan. 15.

When Madeline Meehan makes her annual donation to [Harvard Community Gifts](#), she won't just be providing handmade blankets to sick children, she'll also be helping her mother's labor of love.

"My mom has always loved knitting, crochet, and children," Meehan said. "She connected those dots when she created [We Care Blankets](#), a nonprofit charity that provides handmade, colorful blankets to children who are going through chemotherapy."

A few years ago, Meehan, who is the director of events for Campus Services,

By Jennifer Doody

Harvard Correspondent
Monday, December 3, 2012

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realized that her annual donation to Harvard Community Gifts could benefit her mother's nonprofit organization. "I called the human resources office at Harvard to see if I could get my mom's charity added to the list," she said. "They were completely accommodating, and so ever since, I've been able to make a tax-deductible donation that goes to her nonprofit — and the donation goes straight to shipping blankets to various hospitals all over the Northeast."

In addition, Meehan's mother, Tamara Baker, said that her daughter's contribution has allowed her to ship blankets to two Harvard-affiliated medical facilities, [Massachusetts General Hospital](#) and the [Dana-Farber Cancer Institute](#).

"Almost all of our funding goes to yarn for [our volunteers](#), who donate their time, love, and art to make all of our blankets," said Baker, who lives in Long Island, N.Y. "Until Madeline started to contribute, either I or another volunteer would actually drive a car full of blankets up to the Massachusetts area and drop them off in person — we just never had the extra funds to ship them. But when Madeline began to contribute, and with the help of a local shipper, we are now able to send our beautiful blankets to children in Boston."

Baker's nonprofit is just one of 500 local and national charities that receive donations from Harvard Community Gifts every year, with donations totaling \$500,000 last year alone. Through Dec. 7, employees may sign up to make their donation through 2013 payroll deductions, allowing smaller payments spread throughout the coming year, at the Harvard Community Gifts website.

"Donations from Harvard Community Gifts enable us to reach out to more children in the Boston area and other parts of the country," Baker said. "This funding helps us to reach out to more and more children with cancer, and provide love, support, and comfort to them at a very critical time. It is amazing when you see a child who is so sick, and yet manages a smile when they receive one of our blankets. It is such a powerful thing to know that you have brought comfort to a sick child — to know that they feel that they are not alone."

For Meehan, being able to contribute to her mother's cause is a source of pride and love. "My mom has the biggest heart in the world," Meehan said. "It's such a great cause, and it's so rewarding to be part of what she does. It's wonderful to be able to contribute to her life's work and her labor of love through Harvard."

Harvard has established a user-friendly website where individuals can select their charity and donation amount. For more information and to make a donation, visit the [Harvard Community Gifts website](#). You must have a Harvard ID to access the site.

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President Faust sustainability message

Harvard University President Drew Faust speaking on the University's commitment to sustainability and the release of its first Sustainability Impact Report (<http://www.green.harvard.edu/report>).

 Video

2:17 run time
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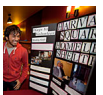
Imagine if everyone gave

The Harvard Community Gifts campaign launched on Nov. 7. Faculty and staff can choose to donate by payroll deduction by Dec. 7, or may elect to give by check or credit card through Jan. 15. Harvard has established a user-friendly website where individuals can select their charity and donation amount.



A season of helping

The 2011 campaign for Harvard Community Gifts is under way, with a blend of Harvard traditions and new opportunities.



Aid groups that make a difference

The Harvard Community Gifts Giving Fair brought to campus many local organizations whose missions are helping those in need.



'100 Reasons To Give'

The Harvard Community Gifts campaign, which kicked off in December with a new theme — "100 Reasons To Give" — is accepting donations via payroll deduction until Jan. 21.

