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New Year, Better You: Give Back in 2011

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The holiday season may be almost over, but there are still plenty of ways to give in the new year. Throughout San Diego, you can donate food, build homes for those in need, tutor children and more -- and that's much better than any gift one can unwrap. Contact one of the organizations below to give back and get 2011 off to a promising start.

Meals-on-Wheels Greater San Diego: Volunteers deliver meals to the homes of senior citizens, many of whom live alone. The mission of this nationwide organization is to provide human contact and reduce the isolation experienced by so many elderly. Read about the different ways you can get involved.
2254 San Diego Ave., Ste. 200; 619-260-6110



San Diego Food Bank: This local food bank distributes more than 15 million pounds of food annually to individuals, families and a network of nonprofit organizations. In addition to providing food itself, the organization advocates for the hungry and educates the public about hunger-related issues. The San Diego Food Bank relies entirely on volunteers to clean and package fresh produce, inspect and sort food donations, assemble food packages for various programs and more.
9850 Distribution Ave.; 858-527-1419

St. Vincent de Paul Village: St. Vincent de Paul got its start handing out peanut butter sandwiches to the hungry in 1950. Today, the center, a partner of the local Father Joe's Villages, serves three meals daily and helps people earn GEDs, train on computers, find jobs at employment fairs, receive medical and dental care, and much more. There are several ways you can help: make a contribution online, shop at their partner clothes store City Digz (sales benefit programs for homeless youth), prepare and serve food, tutor children through children's services, assist residents in the residential programs and more.
3350 East St.; 1-800-HOMELESS

Nika Water: Want to make a difference, but don't have enough time to volunteer? Buy Nika Water and help stop the global water crisis. La Jolla-based Nika Water donates 100% of profits from its bottled water to bringing water and clean sanitation into underdeveloped countries. In just over a year, Nika has raised more than $350,000 to alleviate the world water crisis through sales of its product in more than 350 retailers in Southern California - most recently signing on with Whole Foods. In March, a Nika-funded well was completed in Nicaragua, where they turned on water to 600 people. The company has also been certified as CarbonFree® by Carbonfund.org through their investment in carbon offsetting programs such as a reforestation project in Nicaragua.
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