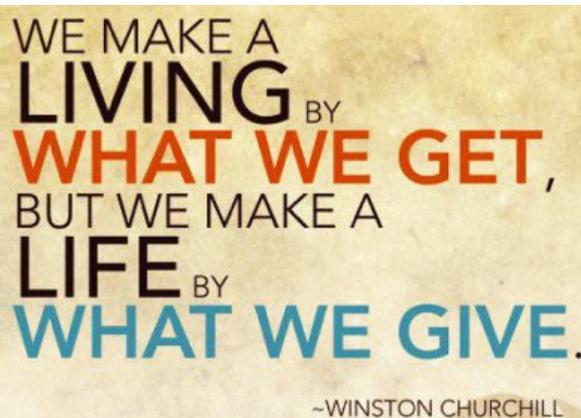


## The Power of Giving !

By Dr. Margaret Rea

It seemed fitting to follow the November theme of gratitude with a December wellness theme around the power of giving. As I am writing, today is Tuesday November 28th, and it is Giving Tuesday—a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. This day follows two days focused on acquiring —Black Friday and Cyber Monday. I am aware of course that Giving Tuesday has a practical function as it is a way to remind people to make their charitable donations before the end of the year. However, I do not want us to lose sight that Giving Tuesday is also a reminder for us all to consider how we can give back to our community and globally. You might be asking how this concept fits into the theme of wellness— the answer is very directly.



Research has shown that giving of oneself, whether it be with time, money or kindness, has great impact on the giver as well as the greater community. Using functional MRI, researchers have shown that giving actually activates areas of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust  
<http://www.pnas.org/content/103/42/15623.full>

Giving can increase your sense of social connectedness as you come to realize that you are part of a larger social context and that your giving can help put into motion a chain of positive outcomes. By giving of oneself to others, you can feel connected to something beyond your immediate concerns, worries or stress. By giving monetarily, or volunteering your time, or simply helping a neighbor with a project, you can build a sense of belonging that fosters greater emotional well-being, decreases depression and improves feelings of self-worth. Giving also can have an impact on your physical well-being. Studies, have shown positive impact on blood pressure, stress level and chronic health conditions. Interestingly, older adults who gave support to friends and family had decreased mortality.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9280.14461>



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## Wellness Events

### Living Fit Forever Classes

[http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living\\_fit\\_forever.shtm](http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtm)

### Work Life and Wellness Events

<http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/discounts.html>

### UCDMC Yoga

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gz23GMJbZJDI-wzn9g8NxUnia4lFuVsHah4ola-v7Ow0/edit#heading=h.ey7tt6v51js4>

### Giving Opportunities:

The angel giving tree in the Student Commons in Education Bldg. to help kids in need

### PRIDE Donation Drive for SPCA

Food, Blankets and Medications for furry friends. Donation box in Education Bldg. Lobby

### Penny Drive

Please consider dropping off spare change for Children of Oak Park Preschool. Education Bldg. 4101

### Hands On Sacramento

Full list of Dec. volunteer needs around town: <https://handsonsac.to.secure.force.com/servlet/>

There has been great focus on how random acts of kindness can have impact on you personally and your community. I encourage you to visit the Science of Kindness webpage where you can review the findings regarding the impact of kindness:

**TEACHABLE** :*"It's kind of like weight training, we found that people can actually build up their compassion 'muscle' and respond to others' suffering with care and a desire to help."* DR. RITCHIE DAVIDSON , UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

**CONTAGIOUS**: *The positive effects of kindness are experienced in the brain of everyone who witnessed the act, improving their mood and making them significantly more likely to "pay it forward."* This means one good deed in a crowded area can create a domino effect and improve the day of dozens of people!

**OXYTOCIN**: *Witnessing acts of kindness produces oxytocin, occasionally referred to as the 'love hormone' which aids in lowering blood pressure and improving our overall heart-health. Oxytocin also increases our self-esteem and optimism, which is extra helpful when we're in anxious or shy in a social situation.*

**ENERGY**: *"About half of participants in one study reported that they feel stronger and more energetic after helping others; many also reported feeling calmer and less depressed, with increased feelings of self-worth"* CHRISTINE CARTER, UC BERKELEY, GREATER GOOD SCIENCE CENTER

**HAPPINESS**: *A 2010 Harvard Business School survey of happiness in 136 countries found that people who are altruistic—in this case, people who were generous financially, such as with charitable donations—were happiest overall.*

**LIFESPAN**: *"People who volunteer tend to experience fewer aches and pains. Giving help to others protects overall health twice as much as aspirin protects against heart disease. People 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have an impressive 44% lower likelihood of dying early, and that's after sifting out every other contributing factor, including physical health, exercise, gender, habits like smoking, marital status and many more. This is a stronger effect than exercising four times a week or going to church."* CHRISTINE CARTER, AUTHOR, "RAISING HAPPINESS; IN PURSUIT OF JOYFUL KIDS AND HAPPIER PARENTS"

**PLEASURE**: *According to research from Emory University, when you are kind to another person, your brain's pleasure and reward centers light up, as if you were the recipient of the*

*good deed—not the giver. This phenomenon is called the "helper's high."*

**SEROTONIN**: *Like most medical antidepressants, kindness stimulates the production of serotonin. This feel-good chemical heals your wounds, calms you down, and makes you happy!*

**KINDNESS DECREASES**: *pain by producing endorphins and stress by decreasing cortisol*

**ANXIETY**: *A group of highly anxious individuals performed at least six acts of kindness a week. After one month, there was a significant increase in positive moods, relationship satisfaction and a decrease in social avoidance in socially anxious individuals.* UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA STUDY

**DEPRESSION**: *Stephen Post of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine found that when we give of ourselves, everything from life satisfaction to self-realization and physical health is significantly improved. Mortality is delayed, depression is reduced and well-being and good fortune are increased.*

**BLOOD PRESSURE**: *Committing acts of kindness lowers blood pressure. According to Dr. David R. Hamilton, acts of kindness create emotional warmth, which releases a hormone known as oxytocin. Oxytocin causes the release of a chemical called nitric oxide, which dilates the blood vessels. This reduces blood pressure and, therefore, oxytocin is known as a "cardioprotective" hormone. It protects the heart by lowering blood pressure.*

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/the-science-of-kindness>

*As you head into the holiday season, also often called the season of giving, I encourage you to reflect upon the power that giving your time, your kindness, and your care can impact not only your community, but your own well-being. Wishing you all much joy, good health and much laughter in 2018- may you not only be the giver of kindness but a recipient as well.*

## Wellness Tip: Giving

It seemed fitting with the theme of this newsletter that the wellness tip would be the powerful act of giving as a strategy to foster your well-being. For your wellness tip for December, pause in your day and bring intention to how you would like to give. You might decide to:

- donate to a cause for which you are passionate,
- volunteer an extra shift at the clinic,
- take time, even though you are busy, for a phone call with a friend in need
- compliment someone
- make someone else's need or priority yours
- bring a treat to share during exam time

The options are endless. From these acts of giving can come a greater sense of happiness and peace for you and your community.



### Monthly Recipe: Sweet Potato Chowder

This month Dr. Oliveira from the UC Davis Department of Integrative Medicine also highlighted the importance of giving. She focused on the how giving and caring for our animals can influence our health and happiness. She highlighted several important events in December. One specific program is Operation Santa Paws an event which benefits shelter and rescue dogs and cats. Running from December 1st to December 17th, the goal is to encourage people to donate money, time, toys, or supplies to local shelters. Please check out Dr. Oliveira's site for other opportunities for giving back. <http://ucdintegrativemedicine.com/2017/11/operation-santa-paws/#gs.yzOJYzo>

In the meantime enjoy her new recipe: "Our Sweet Potato Chowder is a perfect 'warm me up' medley of sweet potatoes, onion, celery, garlic, and spices. With simple prep and quick cook time, you can whip up this soup to feed your family a flavorful and comforting plant-based meal during the colder months."

<http://ucdintegrativemedicine.com/recipes/sweet-potato-chowder/#gs.r6gldaw>

### Wellness App: One Today



One Today makes it easy to support the nonprofit causes you care about. Quickly give \$1, or more. Get a real-world photo, short story, and simple explanation of what your dollars actually make better. Choose from a number of causes, browse new projects, and get inspired by others' generosity. Double your impact by inspiring others to match your donations. Generosity is contagious. So, share your projects. Spread random acts of kindness by paying it forward. You can even pay for someone else's donations.

- **BENEFITS:** U.S.-based nonprofits — Validated by the IRS and Google for Nonprofits; No transaction fees — 100% of the donation goes to the nonprofit
- Tax-deductible — Get a convenient, year-end tax receipt for all your donations
- Discreet — Your private contact info is not given to the nonprofits, just your kindness
- Better you — Science shows that generosity can improve health and reduces stress.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/one-today/id740270200?mt=8>