



## INTRODUCTION AND PARTY INVITATIONS

Have you ever wondered how the people at the animal shelter feed all of those dogs and cats? And what about the food bank, where people in need get food baskets? How do they collect so much food?

They rely on good people to donate most of what they need—and your child can help by holding a charitable birthday party. Sit down with your child and have him/her write down a few of the organizations he/she would most like to help. Instead of exchanging gifts at the birthday party, ask your guests to help your cause instead.

### Here Are Some Easy Ways To Help:

- Ask friends to bring dog or cat food for an animal shelter.
- Have friends bring canned or long-lasting food for a food bank.
- Ask friends to bring all the coins they can spare. Provide a huge container where guests can dump their contributions. As part of the party, ask everyone to roll the change and tally up the total that will go to your charity.

Your invitations are important when having a charitable party. The best invitations are handmade with the reason for the party included. For example, if you are raising money for an animal shelter, use pictures of animals; to benefit a local art museum, add stickers of famous artwork.

Have your child carefully explain that instead of gifts you are asking everyone to donate something for a good cause. A sample statement might read: "Instead of receiving gifts, I would like everyone to bring a bag of dog food. I will take all of the bags of dog food to the Main Street Animal Shelter to help feed the stray dogs. I love animals and this is my way of celebrating my birthday and helping dogs without homes."

It is true that you won't get a pile of gifts for this birthday. You will, on the other hand, have a good feeling from taking an idea and seeing it through to the end. By giving up gifts and investing in a project, the charitable party will give you a feeling greater than any toy, game, or thing. And it will last much longer.



## DECORATIONS

There are a couple of ways to organize a charitable birthday party. One is to plan a party at your home with a traditional theme that highlights your charity. For example, if you are helping your local humane society, you can have a puppy-themed party with invitations, decorations, activities, menu, and favors that match the theme, and you can request that your guests bring an item for the animals.

Alternatively, you can host your party at the charity you have chosen if this is allowed. Call the organization well in advance of your party and let them know your intention to raise money or donate goods. Ask if they have room to host the party at their site. If so, see if you can decorate an area for the party. If not, given the charitable nature of the party, just a few decorations will do nicely.

## ACTIVITIES

### Visiting The Charity

One possibility is to volunteer your time at a local shelter, soup kitchen, or other charitable organization that your child is interested in helping. This is something you would want to coordinate with the other parents—both for permission and to see if they would like to help as well.

### Delivering the Donations

Either during the party (if the party is being held at the organization) or when the party is over, your child and you can personally deliver the donations you have collected. Whether it's taking boxes of dog food to the animal shelter or delivering rolled coins to a homeless shelter, you will feel good about the impact you have made. What if you could donate more than \$100 to help clean streams in your area, or to help orphans in other countries?

## PARTY FAVORS

### Making Goody Bags for those you are helping.

Instead of handing out favors to the guests attending your party, have them create small goody bags filled with treats and small toys for the animals they may be helping. Alternatively, if you are supporting a homeless shelter, little goody bags filled with candies, crayons, coloring books, and small toys would be greatly appreciated by the children at the organization.

If you are able to hold your party at the organization, make sure to take pictures of the kids helping out at the charity. Send these pictures to your guests with a note thanking them for taking time to give to others to celebrate your child's birthday!

