

This is Lieutenant Roger McCort from The Salvation Army in Eureka with today's Community Comment.

If you're hearing my voice, then you've survived this year's shopping apocalypse. You braved Black Friday; sailed through Super-Sale Saturday; lounged your way through Sofa Shopping Sunday; and have arrived at Cyber-Monday. Congratulations! You are a tribute to that great American characteristic: Saving a buck.

I am a huge fan of saving money. Why spend big on this year's Tickle-Me-Barbie when you can snatch it off a sale table? And why break the bank to trim the tree when you can pinch a few pennies and still toss tons of tinsel? I commend your thriftiness and hope you have scratched the holiday shopping itch while saving enough to cover your rent or mortgage, put a few dollars away for the future, and still have something left over to celebrate tomorrow's communal pre-holiday event: Giving Tuesday.

A relatively recent movement, Giving Tuesday is a global phenomenon of charitable efforts. Almost one-hundred-seventeen million trackable dollars were raised worldwide on Giving Tuesday in 2015. Which is an exciting amount of money given to charities! But, honestly, compared to over Fifty Billion – that's billion with a B – fifty billion dollars spent on Black Friday, it's not a large enough number to even create a comparison.

Frankly, I don't expect anyone to give as much to charitable causes as they put towards a new wireless thingamajabber or this season's hottest whatchamacallit. But as we enter into this so-called "Season of Giving," I would like to think that we in Northern California have a better awareness of our blessings and more willingness to share them. Here are a couple of guidelines for giving which could turn this into a great holiday season which will make a lasting impact on our community.

First, I'd like to ask you to think small. Don't get me wrong; there's nothing bad about large gifts! If you have a million dollars to donate, I have an addiction recovery program that's just waiting for your gift to launch! However, most of us can't make that kind of contribution. What we can do is buy a duplicate of the toy we got for a nephew and put it in a collection barrel to help a family who can't afford to give gifts to their kids. If you duplicate and donate every tenth toy you buy for your own family, it will make a difference in our community. When you grocery shop: every tenth item, throw in one more of the same, then give those extras to your local food bank. Clothes shopping? How about an extra pair of gloves or a sweater which you

can drop off at a local shelter? These may seem like small things, but if we all did them, we would be able to meet all of the physical needs of our region.

Second, as we approach the end of the year people start to think about making financial donations. Before mailing that check, check them out. There are plenty of sites dedicated to identifying charities who direct your dollars to those in need instead of overpaid CEOs. I am proud of the fact that my own beloved Salvation Army lands at or near the top of the best category in most of those lists, but if there is a cause nearer to your heart, find a good organization to support it. And if you only have ten or twenty dollars you can give, please know that most organizations could not survive without a host of those smaller gifts. You are the donors who make it possible for us to serve our communities and make a difference that lasts.

Thank you for your help this season and all year long. This has been Lt. Roger McCort for today's KINS Community Comment.