

Charitable Wedding News

A forum connecting weddings, communities, and philanthropy

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1) In Focus: Serving More than Your Guests
- 2) Industry Leader: Ken Weber, President of Network for Good
- 3) Links: City Cares and Volunteer Match
- 4) Nonprofits Spotlight: American Red Cross
- 5) Couples Profile: A Different Kind of Garden Wedding
- 6) Recent Press about Charitable Weddings

Charitable Wedding News is sponsored by the I Do Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps couples share some of the joy and generosity of their weddings with the charitable organization of their choice. Comments or written contributions can be sent to Eric Colchamiro, editor, at Eric@idofoundation.org.

1) In Focus: Serving More than Your Guests

Engagement parties, bridal showers, bachelorette parties, bachelor parties, rehearsal dinners, bridesmaid breakfast, and brunch the day after. What used to be a one-day celebration has now turned into the “Year of the Wedding.” While all the parties surrounding a wedding give engaged couples a great chance to introduce and enjoy friends and families, some couples are looking for alternatives to party games and sit-down dinners. Many of these couples are organizing service projects as an integral part of preparing for and celebrating their weddings.

This issue of Charitable Wedding News focuses on how couples can incorporate service into their weddings.

Habitat for Humanity: No matter the location, a wedding weekend can unite around a Habitat for Humanity project. As part of a meaningful wedding experience, couples can join a Habitat group in providing decent, affordable housing to families in need across the nation. For more information and to find a local project, couples can visit Habitat’s website at: <http://www.habitat.org/local/>. The website helps couples find their state and local offices; these offices can help couples coordinate a day-long project as part of their wedding memories.

Foodbanks and Soup Kitchens: Did you know that, according to America’s Second Harvest, 3,044 pounds of food are wasted per second across the United States? Most

foodbanks and soup kitchens are run with the help many volunteers, so it is easy for couples to coordinate a morning of service for a large or small group. The following links can help couples find a place to volunteer.

- To find a local food bank, visit the “Go Local” section of America’s Second Harvest at <http://www.secondharvest.org>
- To find a soup kitchen, visit: http://4homeless.hypermart.net/soup_kitchens.html

Exercising for Charity: For a chance of pace, couples can shift the focus of their wedding events from eating to exercising (and giving back). Almost every weekend of the year, thousands walk or run for causes like the Susan G. Komen Race for a Cure, participate in one of the hundreds of AIDS Walks held across America, or join in for a local race like Boston’s Walk for Hunger. Join as a wedding team, raise donations from families and friends, and make even more lasting memories from a wedding weekend. Check local newspapers or online for details.

A wedding-related service project may not be for everyone, but couples may find that it adds a unique aspect to their celebration. If a couple is interested in this idea, they should talk with their loved ones early on to share the idea. Their friends and families are sure to find that community service projects lead to creative events that are a great fit for the couple’s personality.

2) Industry Leader: Ken Weber, President of Network for Good

The following is a brief interview with Ken Weber, President and Chief Operating Officer of Network for Good. Network for Good, founded in 2001, is an online network that fosters participation in social causes by offering information and tools to donate money and volunteer time. Visitors to www.networkforgood.org can take direct action on issues they care about, whether it’s by contributing money or volunteering. Ken Weber spoke with Charitable Wedding News about how couples can make a difference by making service projects a part of their wedding memories.

CWN: How can couples use Network for Good as a part of their wedding planning?

KW: Couples can go to <http://www.networkforgood.org> and set up an account with us. They can then use that account to choose different charities to donate to, to make even more of an impact from their wedding. Network for Good in turn records and passes the money to the organization, and stores their history of giving. If they want to volunteer their time, or organize a volunteer project as part of their wedding experience, Network for Good offers a comprehensive database with tens of thousands of volunteer opportunities nationwide.

CWN: How can couples use your site to incorporate a volunteer project into their wedding?

KW: Our database offers a way to volunteer for everyone. Couples can search through their area of interest, where they live, or the time they have to volunteer. After making this decision, they can then send an email to their guests, letting them know of this opportunity. I encourage couples to choose themes or causes that are particularly important to them. They can choose a variety of options, and then present this to their guests and loved ones as a way to enrich their wedding experience.

CWN: As couples are planning their weddings, what other advice do you have about incorporating a charitable focus?

KW: I urge couples and guests to become aware of the alternatives in gift giving, most prominently giving to charity. Wedding spending is the fastest growing area of charitable giving, as people are starting to look away from giving consumer goods. Besides traditional gift-giving approaches, couples should consider how they can give their guests options about how to give to charity. I assure them that they will have guests who will appreciate this option. Charitable giving is a trend in wedding spending that is swiftly on the rise.

For more information, visit www.NetworkForGood.org.

3) Links: City Cares and Volunteer Match

As more weddings turn into weekend-long marathons, couples are looking for fun outings that give friends and family a chance to meet and greet. For a unique wedding event option, there are several online resources that can help couples learn about volunteer opportunities in their area. Using the links below, couples can tap into an existing service project or find out how to organize one of their own.

City Cares: <http://citycares.org/national/network.asp?siteid=4&wrapid=4>
Volunteer Match: www.volunteermatch.org

4) Nonprofits Spotlight: American Red Cross

There are many organizations that run ongoing volunteer projects in which couples and wedding guests can get involved. One of the most well-established groups is the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross was founded in 1859 to provide relief to victims of disasters and to help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. Today, it reaches out to communities worldwide, as well as being a dominant presence in cities and towns across the United States. As part of their wedding experience, couples may wish to consider getting involved with their local Red Cross chapter.

For more information about volunteering with the American Red Cross, visit:
<http://redcross.org/donate/volunteer/>.

5) Couples Profile: A Different Kind of Garden Wedding

Lorin Kleinman and Ian Fisk

For most couples, the day after they trade their wedding vows is usually one of rest and relaxation. Ian Fisk and Lorin Kleinman of Brentwood, MD, took a slightly different approach for their wedding in August 2002.

After putting away their dancing shoes from their wedding the night before, guests of Ian and Lorin donned their best straw hats and work gloves and convened at Urban Oasis to clear brush and pick weeds in its organic vegetable garden – one of the few sources of fresh fruit and vegetables in that part of Washington, DC.

The couple mobilized their closest friends to help organize the service project. While gardening supplies, sunscreen, and a first-aid kit aren't normal wedding supplies, the couple also organized a lunch buffet for guests once the work was done.

The service project was a perfect reflection of the couple's shared values and interests. Ian is a long-time community organizer, and Lorin is a baker and organic food connoisseur. The couple offered the following advice to couples who would like to bring a community focus to their wedding planning:

“Involve your guests. Emphasize the community aspects of the wedding rather than presents for the couple. There are many ways to give back to the community through your wedding. These range from buying food or services from companies that are socially responsible, to having a community service project as part of your wedding, to—if people ask what sort of presents you want—suggesting charitable donations.”

6) Recent Press about Charitable Weddings

San Francisco Chronicle. “Gifts for Good: Some soon-to-be newlyweds are thinking about charity instead of china patterns.” 21 September 2003.

“Robin River and her fiance, Ken Henderson, will be helping refugees in Iraq this weekend, but they won't be going to Southwest Asia to do it.

The Novato couple is marrying in Vancouver, and their bridal registry asks friends to donate to Doctors Without Borders and Human Rights Watch rather than buy toasters, crystal stemware or other traditional gifts.

Their efforts fall in line with a budding trend toward incorporating charity or philanthropy into wedding ceremonies. One of the leading proponents of the trend is the online I Do Foundation (www.idofoundation.org), whose assistance River and Henderson enlisted in their cause.”

For the complete text of the article, see:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/09/21/LV251019.DTL>

Inc. Magazine. “What is the good life? An A-Z guide to living large.” October 2003
“A [Altruism].

Set up a registry of your favorite charities at **WhatGoesAround.org**, the first online database of every recognized nonprofit organization in the U.S. At

www.idofoundation.org, couples-to-be can create a donation registry or gift registry from which partner stores donate up to 10% of money spent on goods.”

Silicon Valley Biz Ink. “Charitable Donations? ‘I Do.’” Sept. 19-25, 2003

“Weddings in the United States generate tens of billions of dollars each year – and that doesn’t include the presents, estimated at \$19 billion per year, according to a 2000 Brides Magazine survey. But while younger couples often consider wedding gifts the best way to replace thrift-store toasters and bachelor-era dishes, a new trend in charitable donation registries is taking root.”

Charitable Wedding News is sponsored by the I Do Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps couples share some of the joy and generosity of their weddings with the charitable organization of their choice. Comments or written contributions can be sent to Eric Colchamiro, editor, at Eric@idofoundation.org.

I Do Foundation

The I Do Foundation is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, whose mission is to bring a charitable focus to special life events. The Foundation helps engaged couples raise charitable wedding donations through three channels:

Gift Registry: When couples register with our partners—including Target, Linens 'N Things and Amazon.com—up to 8% of all spending is donated.

Travel: The I Do Foundation's partner, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, donates 5% of all honeymoon packages.

Donation Registry: With our flexible Donation Registry, guests can make a donation directly to charity in place of, or in addition to, traditional gifts.

Favors for Charity: The Favors for Charity program allows couples to make donations in honor of their guests in place of (or in addition to) traditional favors.

To learn more, visit www.idofoundation.org or contact info@idofoundation.org.

To unsubscribe, send a message to newsletter@idofoundation.org with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

I Do Foundation grants readers permission to distribute this issue in its entirety to colleagues, students, and friends. To receive a free copy of Charitable Wedding News or to change your address, send an e-mail to newsletter@idofoundation.org.

For related services, subscription questions, and technical support, send an e-mail to info@idofoundation.org.

NOTE: If your e-mail system does not support Web linking, or you are having difficulty linking to a news item, you can copy and paste the URL into your browser's location bar to go directly to the specified article.