

Making the Holidays Special

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I love the holidays: going to the mall and seeing the children sitting on Santa's lap; decorating my home and the clinic. But what I especially love is the spirit of giving that radiates throughout the holiday season in communities all over our great nation.

So, my question is for you CAs:

What is your clinic doing this holiday season to give back to the community that gives so much to you through the year?

Most families have holiday traditions. Your clinic's "chiropractic family" can do the same. In this article, I am going to give you different approaches that you and your clinic can use to get involved in the spirit of giving. First, I will focus on giving back to a charitable organization within your city or town. Then I will focus on giving back to your own patients.

Finding a Charity for Your Clinic and Patients to Support

It is not difficult to locate a charity in your community. I suggest finding one that usually does not get a lot of local attention by other businesses in your community. Usually, these are the ones that are more needy for support, and could also use a public relations boost. Since this is a November article, I realize that time to bring this together is short, and planning must be made soon.

To find a local charity, I recommend calling local civic groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, places of worship - even the local newspaper, and ask for suggestions of a local charity for your clinic to support. I recommend a charity that is in need of one of the following types of items: nonperishable foods, toys or winter clothing (gloves, hats and scarves).

Once your clinic has chosen a specific charity, for legal reasons you must do the following prior to promoting the event:

- Arrange for drop-off and collection before the onset of your community promotion.
- Post the name of the organization your clinic has chosen at the drop-off point.
- Donate all of the collected goods to the organization your clinic has chosen during the month of December.

Now that your clinic is legally ready to begin the collecting for the charity your clinic will need to promote the event in the local newspaper; radio stations; your church's newsletters; and within your office. Be sure the charity your clinic has chosen will aid you in the PR of the charity drive. Ask the charity who they will be sending as their representative to the clinic for photo opportunities, then make arrangements with the local newspaper to have their photographer be there for the event kick-off. A press release will then need to be prepared by the clinic to accompany the photo for the paper. Be sure you have a large container in which to place the collected items. And be sure it is visible to all that enter the clinic.

Many clinics use these types of drives to give new patients the opportunity to exchange donated items for exchange of services (such as chiropractic evaluation) at the doctor's expense. This is up to your individual clinic.

"Chiropractic Family" Appreciation

The second holiday focus is on appreciation to those in a clinic's "chiropractic family."

To promote a family practice, why not have a "breakfast with Santa." Invite all of the patients of the clinic to come and bring their children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors (along with their children) for a Saturday morning breakfast. These invitations can be slipped into a clinic's Christmas cards to save on additional mailings. Serve simple "continental breakfast" foods such as: rolls, bagels, fruit salad, milk, juice and coffee. I also recommend having one person from each family in attendance sign up for holiday door prizes to be given away at the end of the gathering. Clinics do not have to be extravagant. You could give away movie passes, gift certificates to local merchants and family restaurants, etc.

Before Santa arrives, have all attendees gather around in a circle and have the clinic's director thank everyone for attending and invite them to stay until the door prizes are given away at the end of the gathering. Encourage the attendees to stay to the end by announcing that they must be present for the drawings to take home door prizes. Then, arrange to have someone play Santa. Use an instant camera to take a photo with of each family with Santa. This makes a nice holiday memento to take home. And instead of having Santa give candy canes, have him give "chiropractic coloring books" to the children as favors. Use the breakfast to promote family chiropractic wellness and patient appreciation for your clinic.

CAs - make the holidays special! They only come around one time a year.

Until next time: Go out and make a difference.

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