

## Giving can be painless - Lethbridge Herald

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Southern Albertans, and Canadians in general, are renowned for our generosity, especially in times of natural disasters and the like. Whether it's a tsunami in Malaysia or something a little closer to home - like the devastating fire that ravaged the community of Slave Lake - when a need is identified we're usually quick to step forward and open up our pocketbooks.

We can all do a little more, however, and not just when the spotlight is focused on a particular plight.

That's the thought behind a new campaign called GIV3, which is encouraging Canadians to give three per cent of their income to the charity of their choice - and with some 80,000 charities registered with the Canada Revenue Agency there should be something for everyone - volunteer three hours per month and encourage three friends to do the same.

Think you're already doing your fair share? Well, according to figures supplied by The Hallmont Foundation - a private initiative which relies on donations and endowments and is the thrust behind the GIV3 program - Canadians only give half as much to charities as Americans on a per capita basis, even though the average Canadian is wealthier.

And while their surveys have shown the majority of Canadians feel donating three per cent of their income to charity is reasonable, the average level of donation is only .72 per cent.

"At this time of great uncertainty for the non-profit sector, we invite all Canadians to show their support for the great work Canadian charities are doing," writes John Hallward, chairman of GIV3, in a release. "If Canadians gave just one per cent of income to charity on average, it would result in an additional \$2 billion, annually."

Most charity comes from just 10 per cent of Canadians and they give 60 per cent of all dollars and 52 per cent of all volunteer hours.

In fact, just one in four Canadians volunteer more than one hour a week, according to the campaign.

For those wanting to help but unsure what might be reasonable in their case, the GIV3 website ([www.GIV3.ca](http://www.GIV3.ca)) also includes a donation calculator.

The late great Mother Teresa once encouraged the masses to "give until it hurts" and many charitable campaigns have put their own special spin on that theme over the years. The GIV3 claims that the lowest income groups in Canada give three times more than the rate of the highest income groups.

If that's the case, even in a society where many of us want to spare both ourselves and our children from feeling any level of discomfort, for most of us giving just a little bit more shouldn't even cause us to wince.