

Why Charity is Good for Business

A Charitable Path

By Karrie Osborn

The primary reason why most of us do charitable work hinges on one very simple motivation—the desire to help others. It's what drives the philanthropic spirit. But by helping others, you can also grow your business and reputation as an extra benefit.

Business Benefits

In addition to the feel-good opportunity to give back to your community, doing charitable work can strengthen your business as well.

Just ask massage therapist Jeneen Todd. With her Lomi Massage Therapy business open just less than a year, Todd has been working with others in the New York area to plan her Massage for Life event, which piggybacks with the American Cancer Society's national Relay for Life fundraiser to support cancer research. Her goal is to offer chair massage to the relay walkers, with all proceeds going to the nonprofit. Todd initially chose the charity because of family members who've been touched by cancer. "But, in addition to wanting to participate in such an amazing event, I also wanted my business to be in the public eye as a business that's reaching out to the community," she says. "Marketing yourself with charitable events is a fairly inexpensive way to reach out to a large number of potential clients, while still helping others."

Whether you believe in karma or not, doing good work in your community comes back to you. Here are a few of the business benefits you might reap from being involved in charitable efforts:

- Gets your name and your business name out in the community.
- Creates goodwill for you, and goodwill for the profession as a whole.
- Builds a stronger community, which means a stronger business for you.
- Lets you introduce massage to a whole new group of people, and oftentimes to those who need it most.
- Allows you to spread your wings, get hands-on time, and see new bodies in unique client situations you might not otherwise see.

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Thinking about starting your own nonprofit?

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From the Heart

ABMP member and Minnesota massage therapist Colleen Barriere has decided to put her charitable efforts into helping fund a local community project—a year-round playground that can safely accommodate any child with a physical or mental disability. She says the project is the first of its kind in her region and she is excited to support it. She will utilize EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week to help promote her efforts.

"I feel I have been given an opportunity, with the talent I have, to give back to the community. Sure, it gets my name out there in the public eye, but it means much more than that," she says. "It's a great way to educate people on the benefits of massage, it gives nurturing touch to some who may never get touch otherwise, it can open doors for more opportunity, but mostly I have found that I receive more than I give."

Barriere, who has owned her own practice for nearly a decade, says doing charitable work is a rewarding experience. "It's very gratifying to know that I may have made one small bit of difference in someone's life. It's not about what I provide them, but what they provide me ... a sense of humility."

Charitable work need not be just a once-a-year event. Think of it as part of your business plan to not only fill the charitable needs in your heart, but to build the spirit of your business.

Karrie Osborn is editor of Different Strokes. Contact her at karrie@abmp.com.

How Do I Start?

Whether you donate hands-on time or give a monetary gift, there are many ways to be involved in charitable works in your community. Start by asking yourself what issues are important to you. Identify who could benefit from your charitable endeavors and narrow your list. Determine how you can best help this cause, then get to work.



EveryBody

Deserves a Massage Week July 15–21, 2012

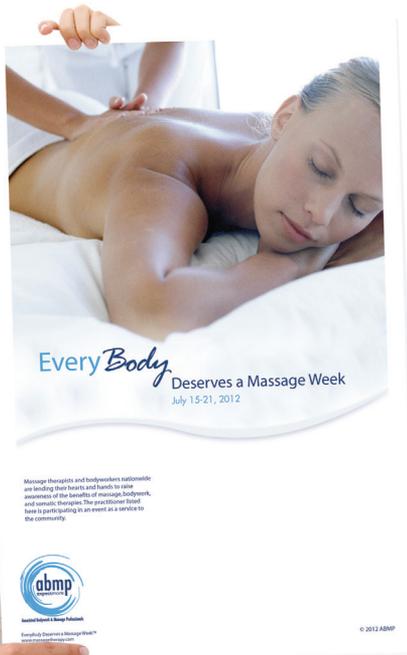
Since 1995, ABMP has helped members celebrate *EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week*, a weeklong event that focuses on bringing the message of massage to the masses.

By lending your hands to this event, you help educate the public about the value of therapeutic massage, why it is beneficial, and what it can do to relieve pain and stress. But even more importantly, you'll simply be doing good work.

Over the years, ABMP members have organized massage week efforts both big and small. While some MTs have collected food items from their clients for the local food bank, others have donated a percentage of their week's earnings to a favorite charity or donated massage time to members of the local firehouse. Whether these efforts involve many folks (like setting up a massage tent at a local fun run) or just a few, the impact can be equally powerful.

We have lots of tools for you to make your massage week event successful. Log in to ABMP.com, and go to "EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week" under the Marketing Center tab. There you will find ideas on how to prepare for and market your event, considerations for success, as well as customizable posters, coupons, and postcards you can print. If you can't print the materials, you can contact us at 877-208-7546 and we'll send you a sample packet you can take to a professional printer. Use the same secure voice mail to reserve a massage week banner with a \$150 refundable deposit.

Want to find someone in your area to team up with for a massage week project? Want to talk with other therapists doing their own events in other cities? Then make your way to Massageprofessionals.com and look for the *EveryBody Deserves a Massage Week* group to start a conversation. Start planning today and have a great massage week.



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