

The image features a spiral-bound notebook with a dark blue cover and silver-colored metal rings on the left side. The pages are white and framed by a blue border. The text is centered on the page in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.

**13 essential  
items you never  
thought to  
donate to those  
in need**

ESSENTIAL ITEMS YOU  
NEVER THOUGHT TO

*Donate*



**Giving back is important, but all those canned pineapples and piles of forgotten T-shirts aren't really doing the trick.**

**Take Hurricane Sandy as an example: When the superstorm hit the northeastern United States in October 2012, clothing donations flooded into relief areas across the region. Only, clothing wasn't what people needed in the storm's aftermath. Sandy survivors needed flashlights, batteries, supplies to stay warm — not old high school T-shirts donors found in the backs of their closets. Much of the donated clothing was tossed aside to give more attention to the donations people could actually use.**

**The lesson: We have to fill a need we actually see.**

It's true that whatever you donate — as long as it's gently used, unexpired and socially acceptable to donate — is probably doing some good. But we all need to think critically about our donation practices, and wonder whether there's an overlooked, unfilled need when it comes to what *isn't* being donated.

There are items we all use daily that we would never think to donate. Besides the resilient canned food items and secondhand clothing, think about those extras that are necessities to many of us, yet luxuries to those who frequent donation centers for their basic needs.

Along with your regular donations of food and clothes, consider dropping off one of these essentials next time you hit the donation center. Consider it added insurance that your donation definitely made an impact on someone's life.



# Toilet paper



## Toilet paper

**No butts about it! Our pantry is in need of toilet paper, diapers and basic hygiene items.**

**— The Salvation Army (@SA\_TraverseCity)  
February 5, 2015**

**Toilet paper is often the first item to go at donation centers. It's a constant need that is rarely ever filled. Bring a couple of wrapped rolls on your next giving trip, and you're guaranteed to make a difference.**

**Consider donating: Unscented rolls of toilet paper in large and small quantities.**

# Small bottles of bath essentials



## 2. Small bottles of bath essentials

Bathroom products such as shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and deodorant are toiletries many of us take for granted. Small bottles save space and make it possible for someone without regular shelter to stay clean while relying on public rest areas for bathing. Just make sure the products you purchase still have an intact seal.

Consider donating: Allergy-friendly brands of soap and deodorant.



# Dental hygiene essentials



### 3. Dental hygiene essentials

**Smile, it's Toothy Tuesday! BIG thnx  
2 #OCF14 @OurCityFestival #Cambodia & @genivaldoam  
orim for toothbrush donations!  
[pic.twitter.com/7gz77zOKOU](http://pic.twitter.com/7gz77zOKOU)**

**— FriendsInternational (@Friends\_Intl) May 27, 2014**

**Dental access is often blocked for those who can't afford health insurance. To help people in need keep their teeth healthy and pain-free on their own, donating dental supplies is a must.**

**Consider donating: Toothbrushes and toothpaste for normal and sensitive teeth.**

# First-aid items



## 4. First-aid items

Especially for people impacted by homelessness, bandages are often needed but not easily accessible. Help those in need keep their wounds properly cared for by donating sealed first-aid essentials.

Consider donating: Band-Aids, ointments, medicated wipes and ace bandages.



# **Pads and tampons**



## **5. Pads and tampons**

**An astounding 1,439 boxes of fem. hygiene products collected in 28 days! YOU did this! Thank You! #pei #28DaysPEI [pic.twitter.com/GWv076dTMS](https://pic.twitter.com/GWv076dTMS)**

**— TakingCareofBusiness (@28DayCampaign)**

**March 30, 2015**

**When period products go on sale, buy a few extra boxes to donate. These necessities get to be an expensive, unavoidable monthly cost for many families, making them ideal donations. Plus, no one should ever have to worry about access to feminine hygiene.**

**Consider donating: Pads and tampons for all scenarios and body types. Think heavy, light and moderate needs.**

# Diapers



## **6. Diapers**

**Babies get plenty of love in the clothing donation department. But other non-recyclable needs, such as diapers and the extra accessories needed to make a happy baby bottom, are few and far between. Even assistance programs like WIC and SNAP don't cover diaper costs, so they are in constant demand.**

**Consider donating: Diapers for all ages, especially for older children, as well as baby wipes and baby powder.**



# Underwear and socks



## **7. Underwear and socks**

**We are hoping to collect 500 pairs of socks and underwear. Will you donate?**

**<http://t.co/fdvH38g5iD> [pic.twitter.com/VPOos3iC5U](http://pic.twitter.com/VPOos3iC5U)**

**— West Side Catholic (@wsccenter) March 23, 2015**

**Sure, you donate your gently used clothing to charity, but underwear and socks don't get a second life. Consider spending a few bucks to help out those who can't afford the cost.**

**Consider donating: Large packs of plain underwear and socks to get more impact for your buck.**



# Spices





## **8. Spices**

**If someone is solely shopping at a food pantry for necessities, his or her food may end up bland without something to spice it up. Accidentally buy two containers of pepper? Donate one. The extras matter.**

**Consider donating: The most common spices, such as salt, pepper, thyme, paprika and cinnamon.**



# Blankets



## 9. Blankets

Opening our doors again tonight to **ANYONE** seeking shelter. Blanket donations still needed pls: 639 W. Central Blvd. [pic.twitter.com/LUjctvx7EF](https://pic.twitter.com/LUjctvx7EF)

— [cfl\\_homeless \(@cfl\\_homeless\)](#) February 19, 2015

Blankets are are strategic items to donate, even when it's not the dead of winter. Check your local temperature at the coldest point of the night — if the weather reads a temperature you wouldn't want your thermostat reading, consider donating a blanket.

Blankets are a much-needed necessity for those living without proper access to heat, including those sleeping on the street.

Consider donating: All-weather blankets, or blankets made of wool or fleece.



**School supplies in the middle of the school year.**





**10. School supplies in the middle of the school year.**

**Donation centers get a surplus of school supplies at the beginning of every school year, but in the middle of the year, supplies run low. Pencils become stubs, math notebooks are on their last pages and backpack seams rip.**

**Help out by donating school essentials when kids need them most.**

**Consider donating: Notebooks, pencils, erasers and sturdy backpacks.**

# Gently used bicycles



# 11. Gently used bicycles

Thanks to Lake Express Ferry for helping us get more than 700 donated bicycles! Amazing!

<http://t.co/HqPCI4J3Qx> [pic.twitter.com/88OIVqrAiP](http://pic.twitter.com/88OIVqrAiP)

— MKE Bike Collective (@bikecollective)

April 28, 2015

Have an old bicycle in good condition? Consider donating it as a form of transportation. A reliable bicycle could mean a free and fast commute to and from work for a person struggling to make ends meet.

Consider donating: A bicycle that is already in running condition, with a bike lock for security.



# Old cellphones



## 12. Old cellphones

If you're on a regular cellphone plan, chances are you upgrade your device for a fee every year or two. Instead of piling up devices in a drawer, consider donating all but one backup phone. Your old phones still have a little life in them for people who can't easily get an upgrade or don't have a phone for emergencies.

Consider donating: A modern phone with little wear and tear.

**Sturdy bags and boxes to easily carry goods.**





## **13. Sturdy bags and boxes to easily carry goods.**

**BG Students: Awesome job making reusable grocery bags to donate to the food pantry!**

**#CommunityofService #CSW2014 [pic.twitter.com/OewtHnWyW4](http://pic.twitter.com/OewtHnWyW4)**

**— BG Principal (@bgprincipal) January 31, 2014**

**If you have too many reusable bags piled in your closet, donate a few to your local food pantry. Bags make carrying items a lot easier for families who might rely on public transportation or walking to get their donated essentials.**

**Consider donating: Large bags with some integrity and strong stitching, or boxes with built-in handles.**