**Giving Back**

The Holiday Season is here! It is the season of giving, and Mental Health America *of* Porter County would like to remind you of the importance of giving back, and the many ways in which you can do so. Giving back not only helps out those in need, but it also can provide you with a sense of pride and fulfillment. There are many ways, large and small, in which you can lend a helping hand to improve your community.

* **Volunteer at your local animal shelter:** Animal shelters are always in need of extra help, and this is a great way to give back while having fun with some cute animals.
* **Tutor a student:** There are many after school programs, day care centers, and other places looking for volunteers who want to work with kids and serve as a positive influence in their lives.
* **Donate baked goods:** If you enjoy baking, you can always donate a batch of cookies or other baked goods to your local fire department, police station, or other first responders.
* **Visit with seniors:** You can spend some time at your local retirement community playing cards, listening to stories, or teaching the members new arts and crafts projects.
* **Share your pet:** Animals are a great way to improve someone’s mood. If you have a friendly pet, consider taking him or her to your local hospital, college campus, or veteran’s club.
* **Volunteer at a Theatre:** Smaller local theatres are always looking for help behind the stage. They are always happy to have crafty volunteers help paint sets, sew costumes, or build props.

These are just some of the few ways in which you can lend a helping hand. Giving back is a great way to help others, especially those less fortunate or those who have helped you in the past. When you give of your time and energy, you will not only improve the lives of others, but you will improve yours as well.