



Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

Fresh perspectives from the world of philanthropy

Finding philanthropy and generosity around the world

Posted on [July 17, 2019](#) by [Abby Rolland](#)

Philanthropy is everywhere.

I spent two weeks in England and Scotland on vacation, and even though I was on a break from work and school, I couldn't help but notice philanthropy and current news/debates on it everywhere I went.

To begin with though, it's not necessarily called philanthropy. I asked a British friend, who claimed she didn't know the term "philanthropy" until I told her I worked and studied at a school solely devoted to learning and teaching it.

I did ask her about the prevalence of shops that sell secondhand clothing to raise money for organizations, and she identified the terms charity and generosity.



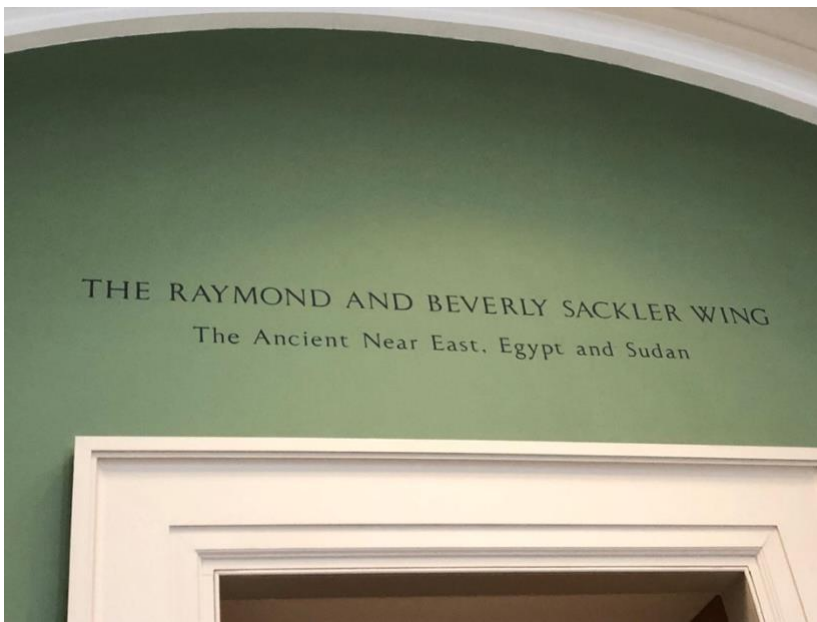


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Maybe you've found some of these shops in the U.S., but I never have (unless you count places like Goodwill or The Salvation Army, but they have many purposes beyond hosting clothing donations). In fact, I'd never seen one specifically dedicated to selling clothes until I went to the U.K. and Ireland. Then, it seemed like there was one on every street! It made me wonder how much money these shops raise for their various causes. Going back further, how do these shops collect clothing – through drives? Through one-off donations? Are they as well-known as Goodwill or The Salvation Army? Who donates their clothes? And how often do they do it?

It gets back to Dr. Pamala Wiepking's [points](#) about what we call "philanthropy," how we define it, and how we measure it. I don't record the number of clothes I donate to Goodwill, and I don't keep a receipt for itemization on my taxes. Regardless, it's philanthropy, albeit more informal than how some define it. In the wake of a [decline of formalized giving*](#) by individuals in the U.S. (not of the total amount of giving, but by how many people in the U.S. give), is this aspect of philanthropy growing? If so, how do we provide a firm number for these donations? Do we need to find ways to quantitatively describe these donations?

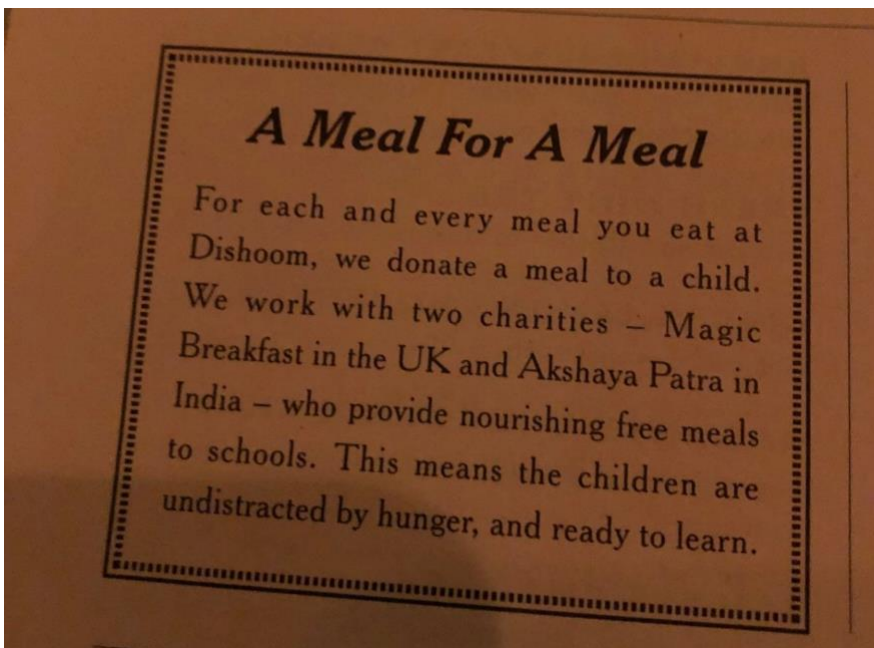




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This wasn't the only philanthropy connection I found. At the British Museum, I noticed one wing titled "The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Wing." As I'm sure you're aware, the Sackler name has become [quite contentious](#), and many museums and other institutions have distanced themselves from the family by refusing or returning donations. Interestingly, I couldn't find material on if the British Museum will keep or return Sackler donations. In addition, its website still lists "[The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Rooms](#)" and "[The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology and the Annual Egyptological Colloquium.](#)"



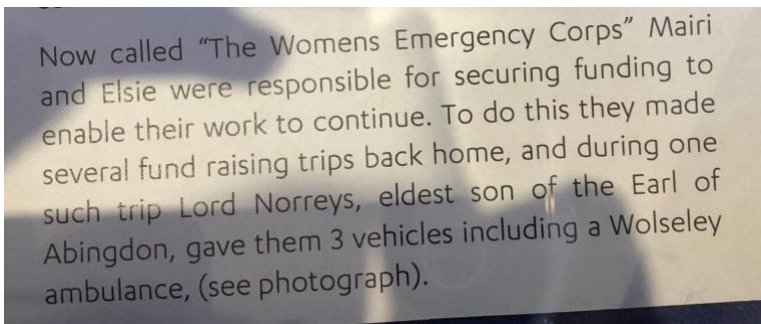
So, I saw a very "small" form of philanthropy (anonymous clothing donations) to a very prominent feature of philanthropy. I also found evidence of philanthropy (specifically giving) in a 1:1 meal donation at a local Indian restaurant, at the Wimbledon tennis tournament (they donate money from resold, unused tickets to The Wimbledon Foundation), little donation jars/containers in shops, three museums that fundraised to help support their missions and collections, and an educational institution fundraising to help it with building costs. I also met a fundraiser for St. Andrew's University and a human resources officer for Cancer Research U.K., which for me was quite exciting (I tend to



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become excited whenever I meet someone working or studying philanthropy outside of my normal sphere of school and work).



Philanthropy is not new in the U.K., either. I found that two Highlander women raised money for "The Women's Emergency Corps" during World War One in order to enable their work to continue. One lord gave them three vehicles, including an ambulance, to continue their work!





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Throughout these multiple interactions and experiences, I was reminded again that philanthropy is everywhere. Learning about it is not just learning about a small, unconnected segment of culture. Instead, it plays an important role in our lives and helps support institutions that form cornerstones of our society. Having these experiences in the U.K. (and previous ones in Germany and the Netherlands) reminds me too, that philanthropy doesn't just exist in the U.S. It's important to think about philanthropy in different contexts, how it's different from U.S. philanthropy, and how it's similar. I think we can learn something from one another in our efforts to improve a field that many of us are passionate about and that can improve the world.

*This article references *Giving USA 2018*, which published results about 2017.