



# TrueGift Donations

## 2013 Annual Report For TrueGift Donations

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January 2014

TrueGift Donations was founded with the mission of filling a critical need – the need for ordinary supplies such as pencils, glue and construction paper in our nation’s schools. Our research indicates that this need is only superficially addressed in the budgets of school districts nationwide. Nearly every teacher we surveyed spent substantial amounts, sometimes 5% of gross salary, simply to supply their classroom with the basic implements of their trade. Some teachers can’t, or won’t, bear this expense. Their students simply live without. TrueGift believes that our children can be better served.

TrueGift provides, as a service to the community, an internet-based registry of the supplies needed most urgently by each participating classroom. The teachers articulate these needs to form the registry, and the registry is updated as supplies are delivered. The TrueGift business model provides two ways for donors to contribute.

Primarily, TrueGift functions as a conventional charity. Cash donations are made to TrueGift as a 501 (c) (3) corporation<sup>1</sup>. These contributions are then used to purchase and deliver school supplies. The donor’s wishes, if expressed, are generally followed whenever possible. For example, the donor can select a particular classroom, subject, or city<sup>2</sup>. Sometimes, the registry itself may provide the inspiration.

This is working well. In 2013, cash donations totaled \$7256 from 7 individuals, 2 of whom donated through PG&E’s Campaign For The Community. This compares to \$3140 in 2012 and \$7891 in 2011.

TrueGift purchased supplies in 2012, but did no fundraising and served only one teacher. Things have changed however, and TrueGift is once again supplying schools. In the current school year TrueGift will supply every teacher that has registered.

TrueGift continues to look for ways to purchase larger quantities of goods at lower prices, ship them most efficiently, and simplify the company recordkeeping. Figure 1 shows contributions by source in 2013. Over half of the contributions came from TrueGift’s founders. That figure can be changed with more energetic fundraising. Figure 2 shows contribution and delivery levels over the last several years (contributions on the left, deliveries on the right).

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<sup>1</sup> TrueGift received 501 (c)(3) authorization in 2005. The advance ruling letter was received in April of 2002, and applies retroactively to all donations made since August 8, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Although TrueGift generally respects the wishes of donors, it retains the final decision about where to place the donations. For example, when a list is filled by several donors, TrueGift selects nearby classrooms and schools to receive the excess donations.

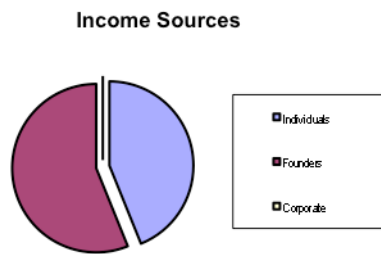


# TrueGift Donations

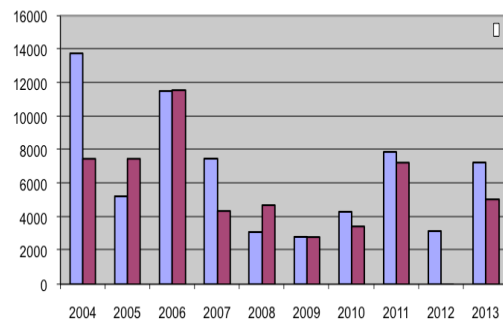
TrueGift converts most of its funds into supplies, with small amounts (< 5%) devoted to packing materials and fundraising. Since its inception, TrueGift has delivered supplies totaling over 90% of total contributions. No one at TrueGift is paid.

Funds obtained in 2013 were used to purchase, pack and deliver supplies to 88 teachers in 30 schools, most of which were in the San Francisco Bay Area. TrueGift provided or facilitated donations of approximately \$5054 worth of school supplies in 2013. Many of this year's donations were shipped in the fall when supplies were cheaper and the needs were acute. The balance were shipped in the spring of the previous school year. In 2014 we are planning one round of deliveries in the January, and the usual deliveries in the fall.

Part of our process involves packing parties at which volunteers pack the supplies for 50 teachers in a few hours. Its always fun and makes an impressive pile of boxes in our front hallway. Several donors have developed an affinity for particular schools or school districts. Some come by to help with the packing.



**Figure 1. Founders Contributed 56%.**



**Figure 2. 2013 marks 14 years in Operation**

The cost of packaging and postage for deliveries made through the US Mail has increased and can exceed the cost of the supplies. With this in mind, the bulk of all donations went to schools in the San Francisco Bay Area where deliveries could be made in person. We will travel anywhere within two hours of San Jose.

TrueGift also facilitates, through its online registry, in-kind donations of supplies directly to classrooms. Donations to accredited schools are usually tax-deductible. By delivering supplies themselves or via U.S. mail, donors can make certain that 100% of their contribution reaches the desired classroom(s). By informing TrueGift of their donation, they can help keep the registry up to date. TrueGift likes this approach because it accomplishes our mission without requiring any effort from us, and it promotes more communication between donors and teachers.



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We are unsure of the reasons for the substantial preference that donors have for simply writing a check instead of shopping. Certainly convenience is a factor. Perhaps efficiency is too. Due to our seasonal sale shopping and bulk purchases, TrueGift can often get twice as many supplies for the same amount of money.

Both donation methods rely on an accurate registry and a reliable way of keeping it up to date. Since TrueGift is an all-volunteer organization, the registry must be more or less automatic. It was up and running at the start of the school year, thanks to the continuing efforts of Charles Merriam. The website also works as an effective way to explain TrueGift's mission and provides a tangible presence for the organization. With this in mind, Jennifer Merriam was kind enough to bring frequent updates to our site this year. At year end, the site had registered 97 teachers from 39 schools in 6 states. Because of our emphasis on local delivery, out-of-state registrations benefit mostly from local donors delivering directly.

Calendar year 2013 marked the 14th year of operation for TrueGift Donations. We expect TrueGift to continue operations in 2014. The challenge is to provide maximum efficiency for our donors while continuing to provide critically needed supplies to America's schools.



# TrueGift Donations

## Financial Statement 1/1/2012-12/31/2012

### Source of Funds

Opening Balance	1809
Direct Contributions	3140
<hr/> Total funds Available	<hr/> 4949

### Uses of Funds

Supplies Delivered	43
Fundraising	0
Packing Supplies	0
Year End Balance	2290
<hr/> Change in inventory (presumed) <sup>1</sup>	<hr/> 2616
<hr/>	<hr/> 4949

1. No physical inventory was performed. The presumed \$2616 increase in inventory looks plausible. Supplies were purchased for Fall 2012 but were not delivered until spring of 2013.



# TrueGift Donations

## Financial Statement

1/1/2013-12/31/2013

### Source of Funds

Opening Balance	2290
Direct Contributions	7256
<hr/>	
Total funds Available	9546

### Uses of Funds

Supplies Delivered	5054
Fundraising	0
Packing Supplies	56
Year End Balance	4184
<hr/>	
Change in inventory (presumed) <sup>2</sup>	252
<hr/>	
	9546

2. No physical inventory was performed. The presumed \$252 increase in inventory looks plausible. That is, the shelves are about a little more full than they were at the beginning of the year. Total inventory is over \$2500 as of 12/31/13



## Corporate and Non-Profit Sponsors

supporter since 2003.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company- PG&E has been a strong