

It is now December (can any of us believe it?) and we are blasting from one holiday to the next. For the occasion, I want to open up a holiday giving option that can help out people who really want to be on the blog but cannot afford the membership fees.

As many of you know, for the past three of years, thanks to a number of generous donors, we pulled this off in a big way. It has happened in two stages. It started off when two anonymous donors proposed that they provide some funds to pay for memberships for a few people who wanted to be on the blog but because of personal circumstances, could not afford the membership fees. I put out the offer on my Facebook page, asking if anyone was in that boat, and within twenty minutes I had thirty requests -all from people who were eager to join but simply did not have the means to do so. I had to shut down the offer nearly as soon as I made it. This made me suspect that there were a lot more people out there like that.

And so then it occurred to me that we could do more, in a big way, and I made an appeal to you, the users of the blog, to make gift donations. By doing this, in our first year (and comparably in the second and third) we were able to give out over 70 gift memberships. To qualify to receive one, a person had to send me their contact information and to tell me a bit about their circumstances, why they could not afford membership fees. I provided gift memberships only to people who really needed them. And let me tell you, some of the stories were heart-breaking. Luckily, virtually everyone who contacted me has been able to be given a gift membership.

I would like to do the same thing this year, right now. Would any of you be willing to donate one or more memberships during this we're-moving-to-the-holiday season? Each new (year-long) membership would cost \$24.95 - so let's just say \$25. You could donate to the blog any increment of \$25 that you want - so if you want to give one membership, it would be \$25; two \$50; four \$100; twenty \$500; 2153, \$53,825. You get the idea.

This would be a win-win-win situation. You would be giving a tax-free end-of-the-year donation to the foundation (win for you); every penny would go to charities fighting hunger and homelessness (win for them); and each membership would go to someone who really wanted one, as a very nice present at this giving time of year (a win for each and every one).

If you are interested in participating in this membership gift program, you need to do two very simple things: (1) send me an email at [behrman@email.unc.edu](mailto:behrman@email.unc.edu) (do NOT comment here, on the blog) indicating your intention to make a donation and specifying how many memberships you would like to donate; and (2) make the donation on the blog (just click on the "Donate" tab). I will be collecting these donations over the course of the next week, until December 8, so that I can then know how many memberships I can give out - all to happen before the real Christmas rush.

Many many thanks to those who have already made donations to the Blog, and for all who are willing to do so now!



[Response to my Newsweek Article on Christmas](#)  
[Newsweek Article on Christmas: Part 2](#)