

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Season of giving

This is the time of year when people give the most to charities. We've paid the annual household bills, and now we decide how much we have to spare for others.

Overall, Americans donated \$390 billion to charity in 2016, which is an enormous figure, but still only 2% of our gross domestic product.

Two-thirds of Americans give at least something to charity. Ironically, lower income Americans who donate give a higher percentage of their income to charity than wealthier Americans (see the chart, below right).

Although Pottstown is considered a poor town, there are plenty of residents with substantial incomes (see the chart at right).

Nearly 1,350 households have incomes of \$100,000 or more. That does not include people who have grown up in Pottstown, or

have otherwise benefited from our town, but live in the suburbs.

My wife and I belong to a group who should be giving a lot to charity: older people with a guaranteed income (pension and Social Security) and paid-off homes and other possessions.

Last spring, we spent about \$54,000 removing dead street trees and stumps, planting 48 replacement trees, and treating 130 ash trees to protect them from the emerald ash borer.

This has positive impact on the quality of life in Pottstown and

our personal quality of life.

We are constantly talking about revitalization efforts in Pottstown, attracting new businesses and looking for government grants.

But if the affluent people who already live here would invest more of their surplus income in Pottstown, we — and they — would be a lot better off.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton



One of 48 replacement trees we planted last spring on High Street and other major Pottstown streets.

Pottstown household income	
Total households	9,317
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,029
\$150,000 to \$199,999	221
\$200,000 or more	93
Total households above \$100,000 in income	1,343 (14%)

U.S. Census, 2016

Charitable giving Percentage of income given	
Income	
\$0 — \$25,000	12.3%
\$25,000 — \$50,000	6.8%
\$50,000 — \$75,000	4.8%
\$75,000 — \$100,000	3.8%
\$100,000 — \$200,000	3%
\$200,000 — \$500,000	2.6%
\$500,000 — \$2,000,000	3.2%
\$2,000,000+	5.6%

IRS, 2014