

# Change for Good



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As hard as it may be to believe, this is my final column of the decade. That a decade has come and gone so quickly seems odd, almost unsettling. Then again, it has been an unsettling 10 years in many ways. Certainly for American Airlines, there has never been another decade when our airline has encountered — and overcome — so many threats to its future. So I want to take this opportunity to salute and thank my colleagues for the resilience, stamina, and ingenuity they have shown in helping us meet one extraordinary challenge after another over the past 10 years. Our team has, out of necessity, become very adept at managing change. What I want to talk about this month is an opportunity you have to take the change in your pockets and make a big difference in the lives of children who are in desperate need of help.

It is heartbreaking and maddening that every day, 24,000 children die from preventable causes. And without a determined global effort, millions more will die in the years to come. Fortunately, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) makes it almost effortless to play a role in such an endeavor to help. A recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, UNICEF provides medicine, immunizations, clean water, and other lifesaving assistance to vulnerable children in more than 150 countries around the world. UNICEF is the official charity of the oneworld alliance, and since 1999, the oneworld carriers have raised tens of millions of dollars to help children in need. Much of that money has come from the Change for Good program, one of UNICEF's best-known and longest-running campaigns. Those of you who travel internationally may already be familiar with the program, whereby any unused currency you care to donate is collected by our flight attendants and then passed on to UNICEF. American Airlines has been the proud partner of the Change for Good program in the United States since 1994.

A handful of coins or a few loose bills may seem like a small contribution, but the impact is anything but small. A \$3 donation to

UNICEF is enough to provide a large wool blanket to keep a child warm during a cold-weather emergency. A \$5 donation could pay for the syringes used to immunize 100 children. And if you want to aim a little higher, a \$244 donation is enough to buy an emergency health kit stocked with basic drugs, medical supplies, and equipment for 1,000 people for three months.

Change for Good works — and by “works,” I mean it saves children's lives — because customers like you give generously and because our flight attendants, who are the driving force behind the program, are passionate and committed to its success. But Change for Good is not the only opportunity we have to help. I'm sure you are, as I am, on the lookout for meaningful gift ideas this holiday season. So I hope you'll visit [www.unicefusa.org/shop](http://www.unicefusa.org/shop), where you will find not just an array of cards and gifts but also an opportunity to honor your friends and loved ones while helping children in need.

As we embark on a new decade, there are so many big challenges in the world, it is easy to feel overwhelmed or powerless. But the old Talmudic saying, “To save one life is to save the world,” reminds me that we cannot let the enormity of the world's problems blind us to the many opportunities we have to reach out and help our fellow man. To me, that's what the holiday season is all about. I want to thank UNICEF, our flight attendants, and, of course, all our customers for taking action on behalf of our most vulnerable neighbors. By the way, you certainly don't have to be an international traveler to get involved. If you would like to contribute to or learn more about UNICEF, please visit [www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org).

Thanks for flying with us today. Have a great trip, and happy holidays!

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