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Businesses up charitable acts during holidays

Phoenix Business Journal by Mike Sunnucks, Senior Reporter

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Local businesses got into the holiday spirit this year by giving away everything from new air conditioning units to raising money for a fifth-grade class and visiting sick children in the hospital.

In Phoenix, **Hobaica Services Inc.** is giving away eight new heating and cooling systems during November and December to needy families.

It is the third year the family-owned HVAC business has given away free systems. Hobaica will have given away 23 cooling and heating systems during that time. The company estimates the systems' cost at more than \$148,000.

That's just one example of how smaller and mid-sized local businesses are doing charity and community work this Christmas and Hanukkah holiday season.

Big companies also are doing seasonal charity work. [Kelly Balthazor](#), community relations director for Tempe-based **US Airways**, said the airline does charity work all year around but has programs geared towards the holidays. Those include participating and promoting the **Salvation Army's** Christmas Angels program in which provides presents to needy children.

Balthazor said US Airways is one of the largest corporate partners from programs. That includes US Airways workers and managers helping deliver presents to children and families in need.

Balthazor said US Airways also expanded its work with Wreaths Across America. That Maine-based

nonprofit group puts holiday wreaths on military veterans gravestones. US Airways originally helped WAA in the Washington market, which is home Arlington National Cemetery.

The airline expanded its involvement in that program to its other hub markets — Phoenix, Philadelphia and Charlotte, N.C. That includes US Airways employees putting wreaths on scores of tombstones of those killed in combat as well as deceased veterans.

Charities, churches and community organizations are seeing plenty of demand for help this holiday season as the national and state economies still are rebounding from the recession and housing slump and job growth limited by still stagnant business spending. That same economic dynamic has also challenged some businesses giving.

Some businesses are taking a more focused approach picking a cause or project and donating towards that.

The Allison+Partners PR agency adopted a fifth-grade class at the JB Sutton Elementary School in west Phoenix as part of its community work this month. The agency raised money for supplies for the school and class and agency employees are serving as mentors to the students.

Private businesses are not alone in holiday support. Law enforcement agencies, including Phoenix Police and Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, are taking part in Christmas toy drives. Sports teams, including the **Arizona Diamondbacks** and Arizona Cardinals, also have their players, coaches and front office staff out as part of holiday charitable programs.

That includes players visiting sick children in hospitals and helping with toy drives. Former Cards quarterback [Kurt Warner](#) and his family are also doing their annual charity work including donating presents and items to two needy families.

Mike Sunnucks writes about politics, law, airlines, sports business and the economy.