The Best Way to Celebrate a Wedding

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I am incredibly blessed. Among other things, I met my soul mate and I'm about to get married. My mom says it is about time. My fiancée Bethany also feels very lucky... she gets to marry me, after all.

Bethany is a public health statistician with Partners in Health and volunteers at a local soup kitchen every week. I'm an energy manager and green building educator and a member of USGBC's Board of Directors. One way we've chosen to celebrate our upcoming marriage is to support Project Haiti. We would like to share our good fortune with others and we passionately support the goal of addressing the health and emotional needs of orphaned children and providing a pathway to adoption in that country. We've also found that our friends and family are equally inspired by this worthwhile cause.

Here's what we've done:

Personal Donation: We ended 2011 by making a donation to Project Haiti to help fund the orphanage and children's center being built there. We dedicated the donation to the 2011 USGBC Board and staff in recognition of the great work they do promoting the vision of buildings and communities to regenerate and sustain the health and vitality of all life within a generation. We found that giving to Project Haiti added to our holiday festivities and we are confident our money is being put to good use. You can make a donation online, and even give to the cause on behalf of a family member or friend.

Matching Funds: My employer, Jones Lang LaSalle, is committed to being a good corporate citizen and puts significant efforts into environmental sustainability. After a quick check of our website, I found that they offer matching charitable donations up to $250 per employee per year. With very little effort from us, a portion of our initial donation to Project Haiti was instantly doubled. Check in with your company or organization to find out if you have a donation matching program. A small contribution can go a long way when it's doubled.

Wedding Registry: Bethany and I reminded our loved ones that we do not need anything for our wedding beyond their support, yet more than one still asked us what they could get us as a gift. As a result, we've posted on our wedding website that if somebody is so inclined, we suggest making a donation in our honor. We've picked "his" and "hers" charities for this purpose. Bethany selected the Friday Night Supper where she volunteers and I selected the Project Haiti Orphanage and Children's Center as a USGBC effort dear to my heart. Now our friends and family have an opportunity to support our favorite causes.

We're scheduled to get married on Jan. 28. I can't wait. While I'm not sure where our adventures will take us, I know Bethany will be an excellent partner on the journey. I'm also certain that donating to Project Haiti is a wonderful way to celebrate our big day. I just hope that going forward, there is more we can do to support the effort. Oh yeah, I hear it is acceptable to get somebody a wedding present up until a year after the ceremony, so there is still time to donate under our name if you're interested. Or you can make your contribution at any time.

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