



2 SERENITY

WHEN MICE WERE fed a strain of probiotics found in some yogurt, they became calmer under stress, Irish and Canadian scientists observed. They were less likely to panic like their broth-fed brethren, and they produced fewer stress hormones—effects similar to those brought on by antidepressants. Look for yogurt that has active probiotic cultures, and say, “Mmmm.”



7 CREATIVE THINKING

VOLUNTEERS WHO WORKED in rooms lit by a lamp with an incandescent lightbulb instead of overhead fluorescents solved problems requiring novel thinking more successfully. Scientists say the symbolism of the bulb (not its light spectrum) led to the subjects' bright ideas, and cited “a growing body of research showing that perception of objects...can subtly influence our behavior.”

SPEND A LITTLE, *Give a Lot*

Twenty bucks buys movie tickets or a weekend's worth of lattes. But you can do a world of good—from feeding an endangered animal to educating a child—for even less.

BY **Lauren Murrow** AND **Rachel Mount**

\$1

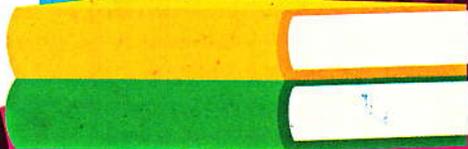
Two books shipped to a classroom in Africa. In many schoolrooms on the continent, 20 children share one textbook. BOOKSFORAFRICA.ORG

\$12

Twenty pounds of multipurpose soap to help keep families germ-free around the world, through Oxfam. OXFAMAMERICA.UNWRAPPED.COM

\$4

Two hours of prepaid phone time for a soldier stationed overseas to call home. Started by teen siblings in 2004, Cell Phones for Soldiers has since mailed more than 1.5 million calling cards to American troops. CELLPHONESFORSOLDIERS.COM



\$2

A set of drumsticks for a low-income public school student learning to play the drums. LITTLEKIDSRock.ORG

\$14

Two nutritious meals delivered by volunteers from Meals on Wheels to a housebound senior citizen. MOWAA.ORG

\$5

A one-burner kerosene stove for a family that would typically rely on an open fire. The stove is reusable and less environmentally taxing than the cutting of timber. FOODFORTHEPOOR.ORG

\$3

A field trip to a museum, concert, or theatrical production for a high-risk youth. CREATENOW.ORG



4 BELONGING



UNDERGRADUATES WHO considered chicken soup a comfort food and then were fed some scored higher on a psychological test of social connectedness than those who weren't given any soup. When given a word fragment like *incl*, they converted it into a "relationship word" such as *include*, instead of a neutral term like *incline*, because the dish stirred a sense of connection.

5 FITNESS



A REMARKABLE EXPERIMENT with mice showed that eating a small amount of the compound epicatechin (the quantity found in about five grams of dark chocolate) prompted physical changes similar to those caused by exercise, even when they weren't active. Their muscles resisted fatigue better, and they could run farther on a treadmill without training.



\$6

Measles vaccinations for 15 children in a developing country. [DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS.ORG](http://DOCTORSWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG)

\$11

Eleven trees to be planted in Alabama communities devastated by the April 2011 tornadoes. ARBORDAY.ORG

\$8

A medical teaching doll, to be used in educating a child about his or her cancer treatment. STJUDE.ORG

\$7

A week's worth of food for an abandoned dog or cat at a shelter run by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. ASPCA.ORG

\$10

A box of nails used to adapt a disabled veteran's house, from Homes for Our Troops, an organization that provides full accessibility to the injured at no cost. HOMESFOROURTROOPS.ORG

A day's worth of fresh fruits and vegetables to feed two chimpanzees—most of which have been orphaned by poachers—at the Jane Goodall Institute's Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Center in the Republic of Congo. JANEGOODALL.ORG/OPRAH

Two specialized bottles for babies born with a cleft palate, who otherwise might suffer from malnutrition before receiving corrective surgery. OPERATIONSMILE.ORG

\$15

A backpack and school supplies for one homeless or low-income urban child. CRADLESTOCRAYONS.ORG

\$10

Cloth and tools so an Afghan woman can become self-sufficient by taking a six-month tailoring course through Creating Hope International and the Afghan Institute for Learning. GLOBALGIVING.ORG