



Donations Must Go Through Headquarters Office
Document Last Updated April 9, 2008

Families, friends and the general public often ask photographers if there is any way they can “give back” to NILMDTS. Such donations allow the organization to better support the photographers who are members and in the field volunteering each day.

As IRS law states, all donations that are provided to a 501(c)3 non-profit must be accounted for and documented at the headquarters office. Formal tax receipts including a written statement of acknowledgement must be provided to the donor for all donations over **\$250**. NILMDTS’ individual policy is to provide a formal thank-you card for all donations that come in, however we provide the formal written acknowledgement statement for donations of **\$100** and greater. In addition to monetary donations, NILMDTS also receives “in-kind” donations such as furniture, computers and services for which we provide a written statement with the estimated value on the receipt.

IRS charitable tax law changed as of January 1, 2007, making the guidelines for record keeping from both the donor and recipient much more strict. **All donations that individuals make to NILMDTS therefore must go through our headquarters office where the funds will be used for the greater good of the organization.**

This means that **photographers may not accept donations on behalf of NILMDTS for their personal or area use.** Any photographer found to be accepting funds in violation of IRS laws will be subject to dismissal from NILMDTS volunteer duties and membership immediately.

We certainly understand that you give of your time, talent and materials to make every session possible. It is important to remember however, that this is completely volunteer work and you are not allowed under the law to accept money in exchange for your volunteer work on behalf of this 501(c)3. If a parent or community member wants to donate an item to you – such as blank DVD’s – they may do so knowing that their donation will not go on record as a donation to NILMDTS, instead, their gift to you is simply that, a gift from one individual to another and not deductible.

Below are the answers to some questions commonly asked:

Q: I have a donor that would like to make a monetary donation to NILMDTS, but has requested that the money be used locally only? Is there a mechanism by which we can honor this request?

A: Unfortunately, as mentioned in the summary above, currently we do not have a mechanism in place to accept donations at the local level. Unlike other larger national organizations, we currently do not have local or regional chapters that can maintain and manage these types of donations. Thus we can not accept funds to be used exclusively in a specific local area. We are currently trying to determine how we can best administratively manage this type of request in which a proportion of donated funds can be earmarked to honor a donor’s wishes to be used in a specific area and also maintain compliance with the IRS laws and regulations. We are working on a solution that will take time to develop policies and procedures.



Q: If someone (individual or organization) would like to make a local donation, can I accept the monies if I just tell them that it would not be considered a charitable donation and they won't receive a donation receipt?

A: No volunteer should accept any donations in the form of money. It is not appropriate for cash to be exchanged and the donor to be told that because it is to be used locally they will not receive a charitable donation receipt. Even if the donor doesn't care about the receipt, it is NILMDTS' obligation under the IRS charitable laws and regulations to track all donations, large or small. As a volunteer of the organization, you represent NILMDTS, which is a national organization recognized by the IRS. If you knowingly accept funds in the form of a monetary donation and do not forward those to the headquarters, you are violating the IRS charitable laws because the organization is not able to record and track those funds. You are putting yourself at risk, as well as the organization's charitable organization status. A good metaphor to explain this would be if you accepted payment in your business and did not record it in your books to avoid paying taxes. This is essentially the same.

We understand that some of our dedicated volunteers have taken on some of their own growing expenses related to NILMDTS to cover costs related to their greater area or region (i.e. brochures on behalf of the area photographers, materials for meetings, etc) and donations would be helpful to offset this expense, but at this time, until we have instituted a mechanism by which donations are able to directly benefit areas for specific costs such as these, it is preferred that the expense be shared with those photographers in their area. You may accept "items" as donation assistance as mentioned above instead. For example, a donor can directly pay for (i.e. pay Kinko's) the cost of copying materials needed for a photographers' meeting. They can sponsor a meal for your meeting, offer a facility, provide you with CDs or DVDs that are used for family images, but you are not able to accept monetary donations to then pay for these costs.

We hope that this information is helpful. We do understand that there are a growing number of requests for locally related donations and need for photographer support. Our goal is to be able to provide a mechanism by which we can administratively manage these types of requests without substantially increasing the organization's administrative costs.

For more details on IRS charitable laws, please see the following web site:
<http://www.irs.gov/charities/index.html>