More giving to charity to mark events
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$2m donated last year through SG Gives site during occasions such as birth and marriage

More people are donating to charity while marking occasions from birth to marriage to death.

About $2 million of such donations was raised last year on SG Gives, the largest donation website here, up from $1.6 million the year before.

This was from more than 3,300 donors last year, up from 2,844 in 2013, going by figures given to The Sunday Times by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC), which runs the website launched in 2010.

Experts said Singaporeans have been more generous as they get more affluent.

"As society gets richer, people are able to afford their wants, so more people look for more meaningful ways to mark their special occasions," said research associate Pauline Tan of the Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy at the National University of Singapore Business School.

There is no breakdown of how much was donated for different occasions.

But there are figures for the amount of condolence money, or "pek kim", given to charity - and it has gone up.

SG Gives partnered Singapore Casket in 2013, and began working with Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors last year.

Through an online memorial page on the Heaven Address website, people can click to donate to charities picked by the dead person's family. They are directed to the SG Gives website, where they can donate via credit card or Internet banking.

About $44,000 in donations were channelled to 20 charities in 2013 through the partnership between Singapore Casket and SG Gives.

Last year, this tie-up led to more than $82,000 donated to about 40 partner charities. "The increase in amount could be due to family members of the dead in previous years continuing to donate on their subsequent death anniversaries," said an NVPC spokesman.

For the collaboration between SG Gives and Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors, nine charities are involved and more than $16,000 has been raised.

"Technological advancements have offered people another platform to express their condolences, and to further the causes that they or the dead person's family feel for," said Mr Ang Ziqian, chief executive of Ang Chin Moh Funeral Directors.

Earlier this month, NVPC announced that SG Gives raised a record sum of more than $13 million in total last year, up from its previous best of around $11 million in 2013.
As in previous years, the festive month of December is traditionally the top month for giving. About $5 million was raised last December. NVPC hopes people will also donate during the festive season of Chinese New Year. "We encourage parents to explore with their children the meaning of sharing in our abundance," said NVPC chief executive Melissa Kwee.

"As children discover the joy of giving from a young age, they will grow up learning the spirit of giving."