

On December 15th, 2022, famous singer and songwriter, Abel Tesfaye, more widely known as The Weeknd, won the 2022 Allan Slaight Humanitarian Spirit Award For Social Activism. The Weeknd is known to be very philanthropic,* giving large donations to charity and being vocal about important social issues.* food aid to educational support to social justice, The Weeknd uses his fame and fortune to help those in need.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, The Weekend began creating facemasks under his brand XO. With the proceeds, he donated \$500,000 CAD to his hometown of Scarborough, Toronto's Health Network. Tesfaye donated every dollar raised from the XO facemasks* matching every dollar raised. His donation efforts helped to support the community of Scarborough's frontline workers at the height of the pandemic * fund the purchase of medical equipment for those admitted.

The Weeknd * gives back financially, though. He also uses his platform to spread awareness. In 2020, at the beginning of June, there was an upsurge of the Black Lives Matter movement after the public murder of George Floyd. Tesfaye, a black man himself, spoke up on this matter on his Instagram, which has almost 50 million followers. Using his immense influence, he said to both fans and bystanders alike, "keep supporting our brothers and sisters out there risking everything to push for actual change for our black lives. Urging everyone with big pockets to give and give big, if you have less, please give what you can, even if it's a small amount." In his post, Tesfaye * showed receipts totalling \$500,000 to charity organizations * National Bail Out, Know Your Rights Camp, and the Black Lives Matter Global Network.

The Toronto native also offers a helping hand in the field of education. At the University of Toronto, there is an Ethiopic Language and Culture program, led by the Bikila Award organization, which is the only one of its kind in the entirety of North America. In 2016, The Weeknd, of Ethiopian descent* , donated to the university's Ethiopic studies initiative to help support Canadian students of Ethiopian descent with both academic and professional achievements.

In March of 2022, The Weeknd launched the XO Humanitarian Fund to help the fight against world hunger. Tesfaye is a Global Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations World Food Programme, and his XO Fund was able to raise \$5,000,000 to aid in providing food for those in need. To honour his culture, he decided to send the first portion of the donation to nutrition programs in Ethiopia.

While creating his own humanitarian trust, Tesfaye has also provided food aid to the region of Tigray during a politically unstable time. The conflict in the Tigray region led to thousands of deaths and over two million people being displaced from their homes, which has caused severe food crisis. Because Tigray is a region within Ethiopia, The Weeknd felt a deep connection to this cause and donated \$1,000,000 to the United Nations World Food Programme in order to provide millions of meals to the people of Tigray.

The Weeknd not only donates to his own home countries, but he* helps the home countries of the people he cares for. In the summer of 2020, there was a bombing in the capital of Lebanon. The Weeknd donated a total of \$300,000 to the Global Aid for Lebanon, * Slaiby had created.

* the incredible support that Tesfaye has provided to thousands — if not millions — of people around the globe, it's not a wonder he earned such prestigious recognition as the 2022 Allan Slaight award. With all the tragedies, downturns, and greed in this world, it is a light of optimism to see such an influential and affluent figure care so much for those who need it most.

