Gifts of the Heart

Tis the Season for Genuine Holiday Giving

The holidays are a time of good cheer and togetherness with friends and family. Gift-giving is one of the most fun parts of the holidays, bestowing beautifully wrapped packages to our loved ones, letting them know how important they are to us. We try and find the perfect gift, something that will make their eyes light up with happiness. Gift-giving can also become stressful and impersonal, purchasing yet another tie for Dad or coffee cup for Grandma. While there is nothing wrong with ties or coffee mugs, sometimes gift-giving results in a plentitude of "stuff".

The following are ideas for giving "Gifts of the Heart". This may mean something you have created, something you and the person will do together, or something nice that you can do that takes your time (and maybe a little elbow grease).

Gifts of Handiwork
Baked goods and candies
Compile a cd of songs
Crafts or artwork
Gift packaging
Plants you have grown
Potpourri, candles, soap, etc.
Salsa, jam, canned veggies from garden

Gifts of Experience
Card to driving range
Concert tickets
Day at a museum
Favorite restaurant
Gym membership
Movie tickets
Sporting event tickets
Theater tickets

Gifts of Time
Babysitting
Back massages
Car detailing
House cleaning
Manicure
Painting
Petsitting
Run errands
Shoveling snow

Gifts of Necessity
Cleaning service
Food basket
Gas card
Oil Change
Salon/barber certificate

Gifts of Charity
Donate to a food pantry or shelter
Give to a favorite organization in a loved one's name
Volunteer your time at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, animal shelter, food pantry, residential home for seniors, children's organization, school or to conservation efforts

Remember, you do not have to buy a gift to give a gift!

If you do find yourself in a position to purchase a gift, be sure to check out SWANCC's Eco-Friendly Marketplace guide. It features companies with goods or services pertaining to sustainability, recycled-content or fair trade items that promote self-sustainability in small villages around the world and have less of an impact on our environment's resources. Earth911 has also created a Holiday Gift Guide with many eco-friendly options for the gift giving season.