



C COMMUNITY

Director's Corner



The holidays are coming! Do you know what to get everyone on your list this year? Time is limited and budgets are increasingly smaller. As consumers, humans tend to gather a whole lot of "stuff." This stuff, while meant to make our lives better, tends to make them more cluttered and in reality, more stressful. Clutter is an energy drain and causes stress, making your home less of a haven than it should be.

Why not find ways to really show how much you appreciate your friends and family? How do you find that most wonderful gift that truly expresses your sentiment and saves resources – time, money, and natural resources?

There are several ways!

Gifts of time

Offer the gift of your time. A friend of mine offers to plant spring flower bulbs in the yard of newlyweds as a wedding gift. Gifts of time to help with cleaning, organizing, or other do-it-yourself home projects can not only save the recipient money, but can motivate them to tackle that next big project with your help! Offer a young couple an evening of baby sitting and maybe a gift certificate to a nice local restaurant. Gifts of time are truly meaningful because the time you give of yourself helps make the recipient's life easier or allows a relaxing evening out without the stress of paying for a sitter and dinner.

Gifts of memories

If you have children, providing grandparents, aunts and uncles with small photo albums of pictures from the past year of your child's life is a memorable and meaningful gift. Including pictures of each relative makes a difference. Keeping one for your child also allows you

to create a keepsake for your child's memorabilia, too. They are small, and do not take up much room and can be easily stored from year to year in photo boxes.

You may also want to present a gift that will make memories. Planning outings and experiences for friends and family members are a great way to spend more quality time with each other. This absolutely means more to your loved ones than a new sweater will. Plan a date for a family picnic or an outing to see a play together or have dinner. Maybe it is a simple family hike on your local trails followed by a pitch-in picnic. Family gatherings that are not focused on a holiday allow for a great time with less stress. Make it simple, and make it fun!

Gifts in honor of your family members

The interests of your family members will span a wide spectrum. It is safe to say that each of your family members has a cause or an organization that is near and dear to their heart. Maybe they volunteer or participate on the board of a local non-profit organization. Giving a donation in honor of that individual makes you feel good, the recipient feel good, and it helps an organization in need. Most non-profits are set up to easily receive gifts in honor of individuals and are able to send or create a letter or certificate that you may present to the gift recipient.

In Wayne County, the Alternative Gift Fair makes holiday giving an easy task. The Alternative Gift Fair brings together a variety of non-profit organizations on one day. "Shoppers" visit the gift fair and receive a shopping list of all the different "gifts" offered by each organization. Donate \$25 to help maintain one mile of CEC trails and habitats or spend \$50 to buy smoke detectors for Habitat for Humanity families. The prices and gifts vary. You can shop for your entire gift list in one afternoon. The Alternative Gift Fair also offers free wrapping of the donation recognition certificates, refreshments, childcare, and chair massages. Talk about a stress-free holiday! **The Alternative Gift Fair is December 4th from 12-3pm at Morrisson – Reeves Library.**

Either way you spend it, making the holidays less stressful, more meaningful, and more sustainable can be very easy! For more green – gifting tips, visit www.CopeEnvironmental.org.

-Stephanie Hays-Mussoni
Executive Director