

Spread goodwill this season

The holiday season is a magical time and there are some simple ways to share in the season's spirit of goodwill and generosity.

Let this season of giving take on a new form by participating in a simple act of kindness. Whether you want to give back locally or on a larger scale, there is never a shortage of people in need of your com-

As part of their annual "Believe" campaign, you can visit your local Macy's store and drop a stamped letter, addressed to "Santa at the North Pole," into the special Santa Mail letterbox. Letters to Santa can also be created and sent online at macys.com/believe, making it easier than ever to give back. For each letter collected in-store and online through December 24, the retailer will donate \$1, up to \$1 million, to Make-A-Wish, helping to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. Since the campaign was introduced seven years ago, it has raised more than \$8.7 million to benefit the organization.

One of the world's leading children's charities, Make-A-Wish serves children in every community in the United States and its territories. The organization grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

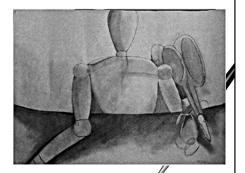
Since its inception in 1980, it has granted more than 254,000 wishes. According to a 2011 U.S. study of wish impact, most health professionals surveyed believe a wish-come-true can have positive impacts on the health of children. Kids say wishes give them renewed strength to fight their illnesses, and their parents say these experiences help strengthen the entire family.

Generosity Comes in Many Forms

There are many ways to embrace the giving spirit of the season. Other ways to take part include helping at a local soup kitchen, "adopting" a family in need or even writing letters of appreciation to mail carriers, servicemen and others who help you throughout the year. For more information about this year's campaign or to learn more about helping make children's wishes come true, visit macys.com/ believe.

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Things just got easier with these handy holiday tips

Here are some ways to save time and make the holiday season more manageable.

- If you don't have plastic clips to hang lights around windows and to the eaves of your home, inexpensive clothespins will work just as well. If you're concerned about the color of the wooden clips, paint them holiday hues before stringing the
- · Put a bath mat, rug-side down and rubber-side up, beneath your Christmas tree stand. This allows you to spin the tree as you hang lights and ornaments without damaging the floor underneath.
- · Squeeze artificial tree portions into concrete form tubes for storing. First wrap the tree portions in twine and then slip them into the concrete sleeves. Each tube can be stowed in attic or garage rafters, freeing up precious space.
- · Use empty squirt bottles to make baking and cooking easier. Pancake and cookie batters can be squirted from the containers for less mess.
- Store one or two strings of lights in a plastic shopping bag to keep the strands from getting tangled. Hang the bags from a hook in a garage or stack them in a stor-
- · Use plastic zip ties to attach garland and lights to banisters. They're easy to use and will not damage the banisters.
- · A paper towel holder can be screwed to the wall in a craft room to neatly hold spools of ribbon.
- Mount a tree stand to a piece of wood with screws or glue. This prevents spills from reaching the floor while stabilizing
- Old maps make interesting gift wrap and are a nice change of pace from commercially produced paper or newsprint.
- · Wrap duct tape or another type of sticky tape around your hand. Pat over fallen pine needles that accumulate

around the tree. In hard-to-reach areas, wrap the tape around a broom or a floor sweeper.

· When traveling for the holidays, use a brightly colored suitcase or flashy tape to make your suitcase stand out from others



at the airport.

- Place hardened brown sugar in a baking dish, cover it with a moist paper towel and either microwave it on high for 20-second intervals or place it in a 300 F oven for five minutes. This will soften the sugar, making it easier to use the sugar to prepare your favorite holiday cookie recipes.
- · Measure the inside of your picture window and construct a wooden frame to its dimensions. Staple holiday lights to the frame and then easily slip the frame in and out of place each year.
- · Color-code storage containers so you can easily find holiday decorations in the attic or basement.
- · Pack for a holiday excursion using a collapsible clothing storage hanger for closets. Fold clothes on each fabric shelf and then collapse it into your suitcase. When you get to your destination, unfold and hang it in a closet so all of your clothes will be at the ready.





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Giving "green" & buying local for the holidays

Choosing earth-friendly gifts is not only generous, but gift-givers also can rest assured they're doing their part to safeguard natural resources for future generations. The following are some gift ideas for the eco-conscious people on your holiday shopping list.

Locally made products

Locally made products make great holiday gifts. Such gifts are not produced half-way around the world, meaning they don't contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming like products that need to be flown or driven across the globe. Local craft fairs and artisan shops are good sources for locally made gifts, which also are a great way to support businesses in your community.

Gifts of service

A massage or music or tutoring sessions are examples of gifts of service. These gifts do not require much use of natural resources, and recipients find their personal nature very thoughtful. Gifts of service also can include tasks you do yourself for the gift recipient, rather than paying another person to handle. For example, teach a senior member of your family how



Inside the newly-opened Newburgh Mercantile store on Broadway in Newburgh.

to navigate their new smartphone or agree to help them shop for groceries.

Recycled goods

When many people think of recycling, they tend to picture piles of discarded plastic bottles, glass jars and aluminum cans. While the end product of many of these recycled pieces is new cans, bottles and jars, recycled materials also can be turned into new and unique pieces. Trivets and spoon rests made from recycled and

melted wine bottles make for clever and attractive gifts. Recycled fire extinguishers have been turned into vases, and you can even find bike parts that have been used to make wind chimes and belts if you know where to shop.

Natural gifts

Natural gifts are among the most environmentally friendly ones you can give. Foodies may appreciate an herb-growing kit that enables them to experiment

with freshly picked basil or thyme in the kitchen, while tree-growing kits and flower seed packets are nice stocking stuffers for budding gardeners. Offer to purchase a living Christmas tree for a relative, so that he or she can plant the evergreen after the holidays have come and gone.

Antiques

New, shiny gifts are not the only ones that have

appeal. Gifting a sentimental piece of family history is an earth-friendly way to share the holidays. Pass down a cherished piece of jewelry or, if you do not have anything in your own collection, browse antique shops for items that have interesting histories.

The holiday season is often a time of excess, but giving doesn't have to be detrimental to the environment. Givers can seek out earth-friendly gifts and share even more this time of year.



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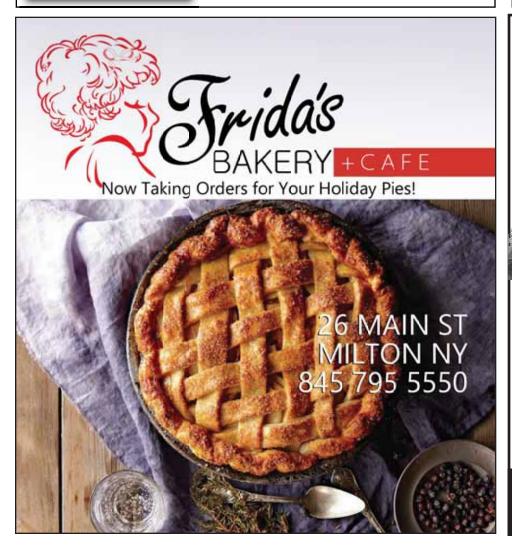
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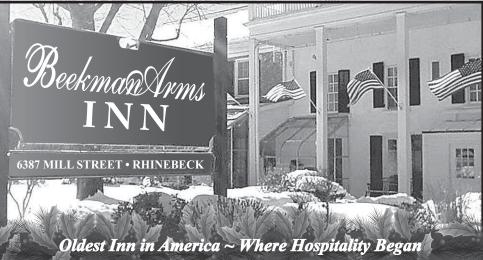
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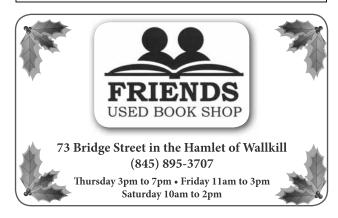
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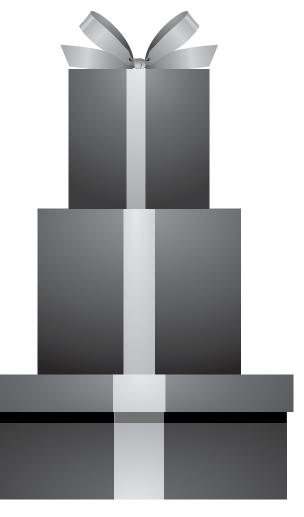
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