

HEALTHFUL TIPS



Outside the Box

'Giving' Tips for Meaningful Holiday Moments

Participate in local food, blanket, clothing, or gift drives knowing that people in your community will have their needs met.

Pick a holiday and create a tradition by volunteering on that day every year. Ask your family and friends to join in.

Be a secret Santa. The key to this one is to keep it a secret — only you will know. Look around you for a need (or several). You may want to give flowers to a co-worker who is experiencing difficulty, mail a pre-paid gas to a laid off friend, have a meal delivered to an elderly neighbor, or pay for the car behind you at the drive through. You may find this so much fun that you want to keep it up all year long.

There are many opportunities to help in nursing homes. A quick call to the activity director should give you lots of ideas of what needs you can meet. Simple things like spending an afternoon talking to residents, making Christmas cards, painting their fingernails or playing board games can mean so much.



Invite someone in need to a Christmas program or service at your church.

Organize your family, friends or co-workers to adopt a family for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas.

Put more meaning in your gift giving by selecting gifts that benefit charities. Feed My Starving Children (<http://www.fmscmarketplace.org>) and other organizations offer gifts made by artists in the locations they serve. World Vision and Samaritan's Purse have catalogs of life-sustaining gifts (chickens, goats) you can give in someone's name—after all, how many ties can you give? Many shelters offer gifts made by residents with the proceeds benefiting the on-going work of the shelter.

I hope that this has sparked a bit of inspiration and that you truly go outside the box this year to make it the most meaningful holiday season ever.

The upcoming holiday season brings with it many opportunities to look, think and act outside the box (look beyond your needs, think of opportunities to reach out to others, and give of your time, talents and resources). It doesn't take a lot to make a difference in others' lives. Not only will you be blessed when you reach out to others, but it will help to shift the emphasis of the holidays away from overindulging to connecting with others.

Schedule a Christmas card party. Have family or friends gather to make holiday cards for people in a local shelter, nursing home, military or elderly neighbors.