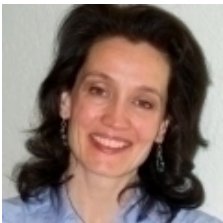


Consider a local gift or one that keeps on giving

By Mandy Kendall

We are definitely at that time of year where our thoughts turn to the giving of gifts and what to give everyone. In this era of technology it is so easy to log onto the computer, browse the Internet and buy all your gifts online. However, that might not be the best for your local economy or show that you gave much thought to the gifts you were buying.



Mandy
Kendall

How about making some of your gift purchases at your local businesses or with charitable organizations? Keeping it local gives the economy a boost and gets you and your loved ones more involved in your town.

When the New Economics Foundation, an independent economic think tank based in London, compared what happens when people buy locally to purchasing through big box stores it found that twice as much money stayed in the community when people bought from local businesses. The study also found that money circulated much faster when kept in the community, passing through many more hands and ultimately impacting multiple businesses.

So here are a few holiday *Qwik-e* tips to help your gift giving make a real difference this year:

Coupons and vouchers – Most businesses will offer a gift voucher for their goods or services but if they don't, ask them to make one up for you. Think of something the gift receiver might not necessarily treat themselves to. It could be a movie ticket, a mani/pedi, a house clean, a gym membership, a car valet, a spa treatment, a yard tidy or a visit to their favorite restaurant or salon.

Do it yourself – Time is a precious commodity for lots of people so offering to do something that will help free up some time for them might be the best gift of all, especially if you don't have much of a budget for gift buying. It is a great way for kids to give gifts that don't cost any money too. It could be anything from babysitting, dog walking, making a meal or maybe just painting that room they've been meaning to do for ages.

A new experience – Giving someone the chance to do something they would never do for themselves, and sharing it with them, makes for a great gift experience. A dance class, a sky dive, a horse riding lesson, a cooking class, an art class or offering to be the designated driver on a wine tasting tour might be just the ticket.

Donating time – There will be many organizations in your area that would really appreciate some extra hands, especially around the holiday time. Christmas tree lots, food drives, deliveries, warehouse or admin duties require lots of people power. It's a great way to give back to the community and get out and meet people too.

Donating money – I know donating money at a time when you need every penny for gifts might seem a bit counterproductive but there are many ways to divert money to great causes especially during the gift giving season. With the advent of e-cards you can send free electronic Christmas cards to all those people you know with email and then send your favorite charity the money you would have spent on cards and postage. You can go a

step further and donate the money you would have spent on some of the gifts you were going to buy and let your friends and family know that their gift has instead gone to a worthy cause this year. You could split your donations between local organizations and overseas charities if you want to spread the love. You could also soften the blow to the person you haven't given a gift to by letting them know their gift money has gone to something they are passionate about. A dog lover couldn't possibly be mad at you for sending their gift money to a dog rescue could they?

There are many other opportunities for doing good this holiday season, but far too many to list in this article so here is a link to some more ideas.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe, which aligns wellness seekers with their ideal wellness provider. If you have questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and well-being topic, drop her an email at connect@healthconnective.com or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.