

Resident Reporter



Western
Manufactured Housing Communities
Association

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All I want for the holidays . . .

"It is better to give than to receive."

Now is the "most wonderful time of the year" to show your loved ones – family, friends, neighbors, and even pets – that you care. Go out of your way to give truly great gifts this holiday season. From traditional homemade sweets, to the less personal but very practical gift card, you will take delight in the giving spirit. Following are some sure-fire ideas for the lucky recipients in your life.

Inspired by the heart, made with love in the home

No-Bake Spruce Cookies

Supplies:

- 36 large marshmallows
- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 1 to 2 teaspoons green food coloring
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 4 cups corn flakes
- Red Hots candies
- 12 Tootsie Roll Midgees, cut in half (optional)



Instructions:

1. In a heavy saucepan, combine the marshmallows, butter, food coloring and almond extract. Cook and stir over low heat until smooth. Remove from the heat; gently stir in corn flakes until well coated. Drop by spoonful onto waxed paper.
2. Using a 3-inch Christmas tree cookie cutter, shape into trees. Add Red Hots candies for ornaments. Press a Tootsie Roll half into the base for tree trunk, if desired.

Yields about 2 dozen

French Memo Board

Supplies:

- Bulletin Board
- Approximately 6 yards ribbon
- Hammer
- Fabric to cover board
- Glue gun and replacement sticks
- Paint and brushes



Instructions:

1. Using a hammer, remove the frame from the bulletin board.
2. Cut enough fabric to cover board with a 2-inch overlap. (*Tip: Cut notches out of the corners to make the fabric fold around the board easier.*)
3. Glue around the edges of the board and stand it on its side.
4. Smooth the sides down well to ensure that the frame will fit back on.
5. Create diagonal criss-crossing stripes with the ribbon, gluing down every 6 inches.
6. Paint the frame, if desired. Hot glue it back on bulletin board when dry.

Festive Napkins

Supplies:

- Felt
- Scissors
- Fabric Glue
- Set of machine-washable napkins
- Sequins
- Mini pom-poms

Instructions:

1. Cut decorative shapes from the felt (examples: tree, reindeer, stocking)
2. Glue shapes to a corner of each napkin and decorate with sequins and pom-poms.

Practical Information for Residents of Manufactured Home Communities

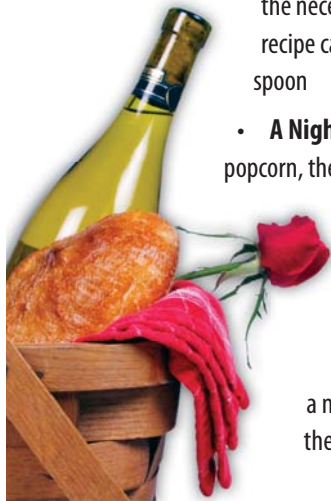


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Basket o' Joy

- **Romantic Basket** – includes scented candles, love songs, Champagne and glasses, and chocolate
- **Gardener's Goodies** – includes packets of seeds, hand tools, gloves, plant markers, a small terra cotta pot, and foe flowers!
- **Spa Day** – includes bath salts, lotions, a loofah sponge, bath mitt, scented candles, and a "Do Not Disturb" sign for the door
- **Baker's Basket** – includes a few favorite recipes, along with all the necessary pre-measured ingredients, a pack of recipe cards, a bottle of vanilla extract, and a stirring spoon



- **A Night at the Movies** – includes bags of popcorn, theater candy like Milk Duds and Dots, soda, and a video
- **Happy Housewarming** – includes a welcome sign, a welcome mat rolled up and tied with a dish towel, an indoor plant, a picture frame, a movie, a game, and homemade goodies, for the new family on the block

"A hug is a great gift – one size fits all, and it's easy to exchange." -- Anonymous

If homemade isn't always appropriate, there are still lots of other ways to show your appreciation. For your budding teenage granddaughter, who's discovering her style, vintage jewelry and accessories straight from your old treasures in the attic will make her just what she's dying to be – unique! Or for your rocker son, old concert tees.

Year after year, gift cards become more and more popular and are ideal for those difficult to shop for, or for those who like to shop for themselves. Some ideas include three months of Netflix, tickets to the theater, a magazine subscription, a dinner at a favorite restaurant, Starbucks, or Toys 'R' Us.

If bearing wicked winter weather and stubborn crowds makes you nervous, don't fret. Online shopping is also becoming the way

of the future. Sites such as Amazon and eBay, in addition to traditional department stores like Macy's and Sears give you the opportunity to purchase anything from music to jewelry to auto parts – all from the comfort and convenience of your own home.

To really maximize holiday generosity, donate to your recipients' favorite charities – in their name. This is a common practice in offices and can become common in your family, too. Be it the Make a Wish Foundation, Food for the Poor, Red Cross, or the American Cancer Society, there are many worthwhile charities grateful for your time and donations.

"It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages boxes, or bags!" –The Grinch

Now that you've got your presents, it's time to wrap 'em up! Gift wrap can get pricey, so purchase paper at the most economic time of year: just after the holidays when clearance sales take 50-75% off the retail price. Recycle gift bags. Don't be ashamed to use the bag that once contained your gloves and scarf set to wrap your niece's new socks.

"It isn't the size of the gift that matters, but the size of the heart that gives it."

--Eileen Elias Freeman, The Angels' Little Instruction Book

