



Between Friends

Thoughts on Caregiving

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Making a List and Checking it Twice: Gift Ideas for Caregivers and Care Receivers

Can't think of what to get for the aging family members, caregivers or care receivers in your life? Here are a few gift ideas for the holidays, birthdays and other special occasions.

For care givers:

- Gift certificates for a monthly massage or a relaxing "spa" day (assuming the person enjoys massages – some people don't).
- Gift certificates to pay for hours/days of adult day services, in-home or out-of-home respite care services
- Time away from care demands – handmade "love coupons" offering to provide care for a few hours, an afternoon, a day, a weekend or a week, for the caregiver to redeem whenever she or he needs a break
- Or, a coupon book for family members to provide (or pay for) help with things like lawn mowing, snow shoveling, picking up medications, grocery shopping, preparing meals, transportation to and from medical appointments, etc.
- CDs of relaxing music to enjoy alone or with their care receiver
- Humorous books, cartoon books, and videos

- Entertainment gift certificates – for video stores, movies, or local theaters, as well as restaurants

Here are a few gift ideas for the aging family members or care receivers on your list:

- A soft shawl with pockets – older shoulders are often colder shoulders. A shawl is much easier to get on and off than sweaters or tops with sleeves, particularly for those with limited arm mobility or those in wheelchairs. Pocket-shawls provide warmth as well as convenient storage places for kleenex, chapsticks, hard candies, etc.
- Organized family photo albums (see Family Gifts)
- Scrapbooks or a collage of "favorites" – family photos, (especially of grandchildren and great-grandchildren), the old family home, flowers, pets, etc.
- Favorite foods – especially teas or special coffees, flavored hot cocoa mixes, chocolates, crackers or cookies.
- Bird feeders and food – with an offer to keep the feeders filled on a regular basis

- Leg warmers and slippers or slipper socks with non-skid soles.
- CDs or DVDs of favorite music from the 30s and 40s (big bands, crooners, etc), patriotic or religious hymns, or DVDs of favorite movies or old TV shows (preferably humorous ☺)
- A coupon book for family members to provide help with activities such as lawn mowing, snow shoveling, picking up medications, grocery shopping, providing transportation to and from medical appointments, preparing meals, etc.

Family Gifts

Looking for a good time as well as a great intergenerational activity? Try organizing family photo albums.

If yours is like many families, you have albums (or boxes) of old family photos with few, if any notes indicating who is who and where or when the photos were taken.

When my mother celebrated her 90th birthday several years ago, I took a couple of her old photo albums to a family party. Not only did we all enjoy hearing her reminisce about her very active social life as young adult, but we were also able to finally put names to many of the faces in the photos. Family, fun, funny, and functional – a perfect combination!

Merry Christmas! And Best of New Years to you and those you love!

A Friend's House Adult Day Services

A program of Catholic Services of Macomb

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