

Gifting 4 Good

Youth groups happy to receive BY SUZI STEFFEN

Thinking about last-minute stocking stuffers? Wondering how to feel good about your consumption patterns while still goosing the local economy? Hey, yeah, we are too! Of course, you could do something like give your partner, kid or parent a carbon credit for car and airplane use this year (cute gift climate tags available at www.carbonfund.org), and that would be awesome.

But maybe you ride your bike and buy wind power from EWEB, so you'd like to keep your dollars local. You know how people are always freaking out about young people downtown? Well, the LEAD teens are doing something about it. These young people founded the **Nuestro Lugar/Our Place Teen Center**, and, with the city's help, are setting it up in Oak Alley's over-park. But they're mostly grant and donation funded, and, like any nonprofit, they've got a wish list for the center. Another super youth group is **Juventud FACETA**, for Spanish-speaking immigrant teens. FACETA operates out of Amigos Multicultural Services Center in the old Whiteaker Elementary School, and these energetic young people could also use a few generous Santas to help downsize their wish list. Both groups emphasize teen leadership and encourage outdoor activities, community building and ending oppression.

Nuestro Lugar/Our Place and other LEAD programs need outdoor equipment like internal frame backpacks and three season sleeping bags. They also need laptops to help out the teens and families who don't have access to computers and volunteer time to help the teens whip the repainted and newly muraled space into even better shape.

For those who don't have a ton of money, a new copier or a fax machine lying around, small gifts could be Nalgene water bottles, maglights, bike lights (front and back) or, for flexibility, gift certificates to grocery stores and places like Freddie's or Jerry's. FACETA is looking for similar items along with bikes, gift and movie certificates, a CD player, sleeping bags, 2-3 person tents, bus passes and gas money (gift certificates would work here as well). On both lists, the teens and their mentors say, are scholarships for the teens so they can fulfill their educational goals. And really, what could be better at the holidays than feeling like you're in the true holiday spirit - giving to those who are in need to help them achieve their dreams?

To find the entire wish list or to donate to Nuestro Lugar, call 342-TEEN (8336); for more information about FACETA's wish list and to donate, call Amigos at 746-6037.



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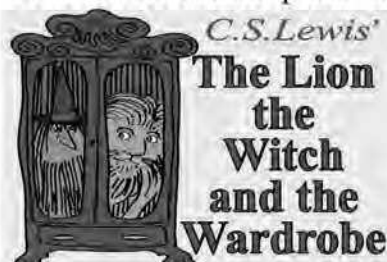
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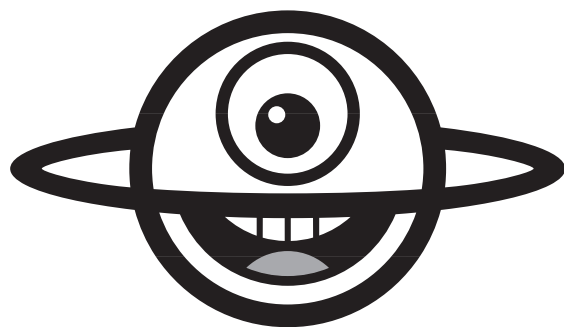
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