

# You can help your children learn the value of all the holiday gifts

by the American Counseling Association

This holiday season will be a financial challenge for many families. But, while the shaky economy has Moms and Dads paying closer attention to holiday costs, our kids are still being buried by the barrage of advertising for toys and games they "just can't live without."

Helping your kids successfully navigate the holiday "buy, buy, buy!" season requires more than simply saying "no." Keeping the holidays special, memorable and enjoyable means re-directing your children's enthusiasm and energies beyond all the hottest toys

and into areas that will help generate warm, long-lasting memories.

Start by creating a realistic holiday budget. Set limits within a budget that won't bankrupt the family and that will limit January bill-paying stress.

Next, help your kids create their own budgets for holiday gift giving. Set an example by talking about your budget, how you've saved for holiday gifts and how you want to find gifts that will mean something special to the recipient.

One option to help get a child's emotions involved is to talk about personal, homemade gifts. Help your child write a

holiday poem or story. Or look to gifts your child can make. A drawn picture, an art project, a series of digital photographs, some cookies or other holiday treats you make together – the list of meaningful, personal gifts that don't have big price tags is a long one.

You also want to minimize the stress that the commercial merchandising of the holidays always brings. Let your kids develop a wish list, but make clear it's just wishes, not a shopping list. Let them know it's your right to choose their gifts in order to make their presents special. For older kids, let them research the cost of desired gifts

so they can begin connecting a dollar figure with their wants.

One final suggestion is to focus some of the holiday enthusiasm on those less fortunate than your own family. Local agencies offer many ways for you and your family to volunteer or provide help while gaining memories that truly make the holidays special.

While it's tempting to be su-

per-parents who can fulfill their children's every wish, it isn't a healthy reaction to the season. Focus on decorating and cooking and having everyone give a little something of themselves, and you'll find your holidays can be not only more affordable, but less stressful, and more memorable, loving and valuable than just the buying of gifts.



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Email me at [wakandlak@yahoo.com](mailto:wakandlak@yahoo.com) or message at 503-816-9810.  
Round up your order for the Oregon Food Bank!



This year the Vernonia Schools' Food Drive provided 1,379 pounds of food and \$170 to benefit Vernonia Cares. Vernonia Middle School, Washington Grade School and Mist Grade School donated 1,086 pounds. Vernonia High School added another 293 pounds, plus the \$170. An additional 35 pounds of food was donated by Kala Cota's preschool. Photo courtesy of Sandy Welch, Vernonia Cares.

## Pet of the Month

Columbia Humane Society in St. Helens has a variety of wonderful pets available for adoption. Find the pet that's right for you in the shelter at 2084 Oregon Street. Phone 503-397-4353  
Open Mon - Fri 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 11 am. to 5 pm.

### Limited time offer, adult cat adoption special \$20



Sheba is sponsored, her adoption fee is now only \$50! Sheba came to the Humane Society in July 2007. This girl needs a home after spending over a year looking for one! She is here because her owners didn't have the time to give her attention. Sheba has been waiting for someone who can give her the time and love she deserves. She is fixed, current on all shots, is house broken and is good on a leash. A sweet girl, she loves attention, gives kisses and likes to consider herself a lap dog. But due to her dominant nature she shouldn't go to a home with young toddler children or other dogs.

The Columbia Humane Society is a No-Kill non-profit shelter dedicated to helping friends find each other since 1985.

This Adopt a Pet is Sponsored by:

**Senator Betsy Johnson**