

Give the gift of peace of mind

Every year millions of American lives are disrupted by natural disasters ranging from earthquakes and severe storms to floods and wildfire. But all disasters, large or small, share a common theme, focusing attention on the importance of disaster preparedness and the critical need to take action before disaster strikes. The trick is to convert good intentions into good deeds, and according to FEMA Regional Administrator Ken Murphy, there's no time like the holidays.

"Disaster-ready gifts can save lives, and are a wonderful way of welcoming in 2012," said Murphy. "Helping to better prepare neighbors, friends and families for emergencies is a great way to say 'I care.'"

Emergency and preparedness items that might make great gifts this Holiday Season include:

- NOAA Weather Radios and extra batteries.
- Enrollment in a CPR or first-aid class.
- GPS units for vehicles.
- Smoke detectors.
- Emergency cell phones.

- Appropriate fire extinguishers (kitchen, garage, car).

- Disaster kits for homes, offices and vehicles (first aid kits, food, water and prescription medications for 72 hours, extra eyeglasses or contact lenses, extra clothing, blankets, flashlights and spare batteries, heavy-duty work gloves and sturdy shoes).

- Foldable ladders for second-story escape in a fire.

- Car kits (emergency flares, shovels, ice scrapers, flashlights and fluorescent distress flags).

- Pet Disaster Kits (food, water, leashes, dishes and carrying case or crate).

- A camp stove with extra fuel.

- The gift of a gardener to cut back combustible vegetation from wildfire-vulnerable homes.

- National Flood Insurance.

A wealth of information and preparedness tips is available from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's website at <http://www.ready.gov> and from FEMA at: www.fema.gov.

Oregon Zoo has many ideas for last minute gifts

If you're hoping to track down some truly wild and inspiring holiday gifts, look no further than the Oregon Zoo. The zoo offers many unique and eco-friendly gifts, and purchases help raise funds for the zoo's animal care, conservation and education programs.

Are your loved ones hard to shop for? Make gift-giving easy and "adopt" an animal in their honor through the ZooParents sponsorship program. With the zoo's special \$75 black rhinoceros sponsorship, the "parent" receives a plush toy, a personalized certificate, a color photo of a black rhino, and more.

ZooParent packages begin at \$25 and are available online at <http://bit.ly/ZooParents>. Dozens of species are available for sponsorships, and all ZooParent packages support the zoo's Future For Wildlife program and the many conservation projects it finances.

Oregon Zoo memberships are always an appreciated gift. Memberships include unlimited zoo admission for a full year;

admission benefits at more than 150 zoos nationwide; invitations to member-only events; a one-year subscription to ZooTracks member magazine; and discounts on zoo train rides, camps, classes and Zoo Store purchases. Memberships begin at \$49. For more information and to purchase, go to <http://bit.ly/OZmembership>.

Zoo gift certificates are available at all entrance kiosks in \$5 increments up to \$100. Certificates can be used toward admission, for food and retail purchases, or for camps and classes. Regular admission tickets are valid for one year from date of purchase and make great stocking stuffers.

And, of course, the Zoo Store is bursting with unique animal-themed gifts, from intricate handmade ornaments to cuddly plush toys. Offerings include a wide variety of eco-friendly and fair-trade products. Shoppers can visit the store without paying zoo admission or shop online at www.oregonzooshop.com.

Christmas TOP TEN LIST



In the spirit of the season, here are some suggestions that might make Christmas a little brighter for everyone.

1. Volunteer your time at a local charity, nursing home, hospice or senior center.
2. Invite someone who is alone to Christmas dinner.
3. Donate clothing, food or toys to a family in need.
4. Cook a meal for an elderly or homebound neighbor.
5. Craft homemade holiday decorations with your kids.
6. Replenish your spirit. Visit your local house of worship.
7. Create a family tradition and fond memories by starting a holiday scrapbook.
8. Call, write or plan a get-together with a friend you haven't seen in many years.
9. Spread holiday cheer. Smile and be kind to others.
10. Show appreciation to all the people who have made your life a little brighter.

*Wishing you a
Merry Christmas*

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