

# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink and Rejoice

## Illinois Waste Management and Research Center's Greening Schools wishes you a Jolly Green Holiday This Year!

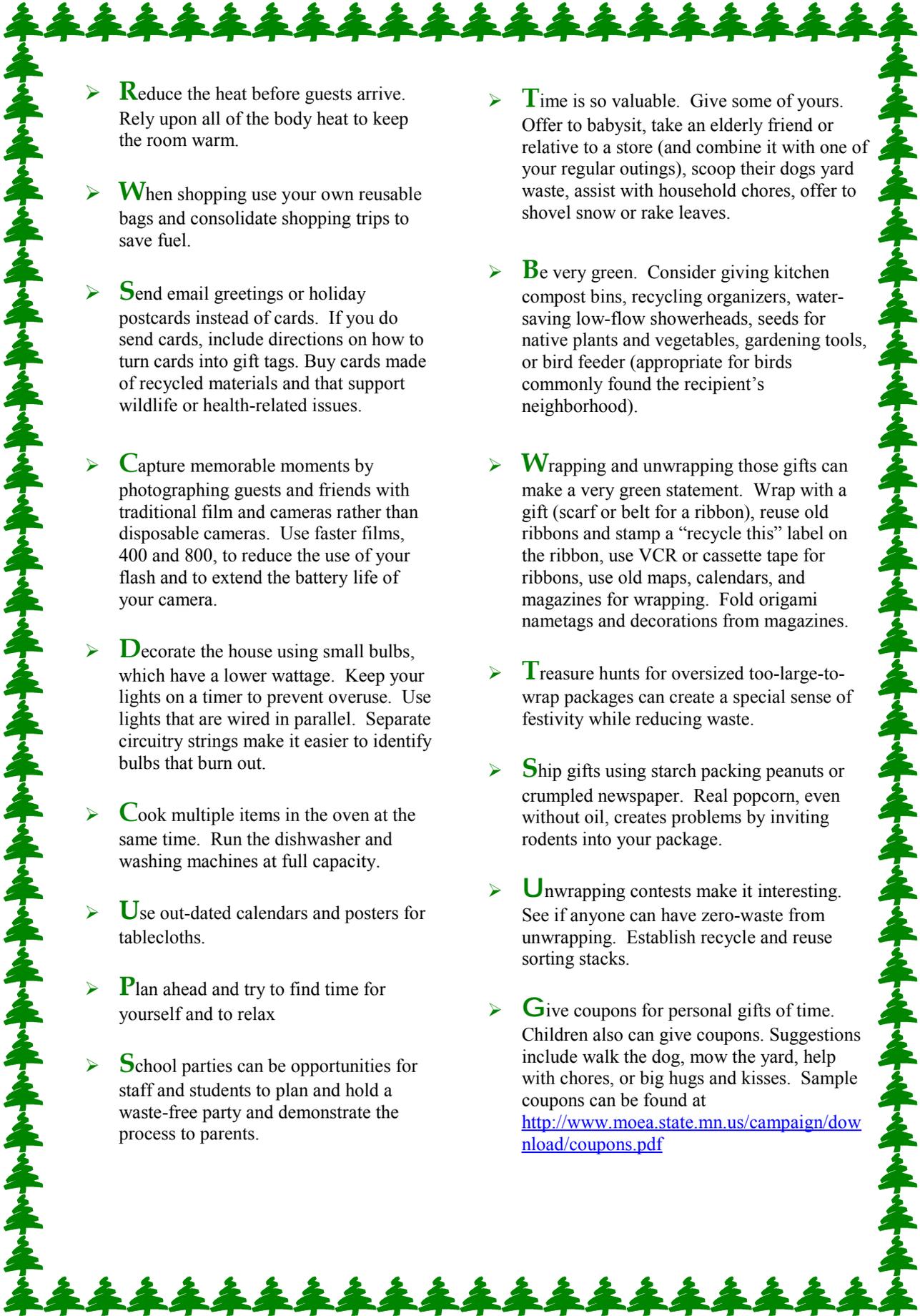
If you find the season's waste getting you down and you are disturbed by the growing mountains of debris outside your house each trash day throughout the holidays, you too can now begin to enjoy the season. This does not involve being Scrooge, nor does it mean foregoing the entire holiday. You CAN "unplug" the holiday and exchange the frenzy for a more enjoyable and environmentally friendly event. We offer more tips at [http://www.greeningschools.org/resources/view\\_cat\\_teacher.cfm?id=122](http://www.greeningschools.org/resources/view_cat_teacher.cfm?id=122)

### Celebrate Green

- **P**urchase a live tree (appropriate for your community) and either plant it in your yard after the holidays, or donate it to a park or youth center.
- **I**f you must buy a tree, purchase a high quality artificial tree that will last decades. Avoid pre-lit trees that have not proven durable as long-lasting items.
- **U**se recyclable (washable) plates, dinnerware, glasses, tablecloths, or rent rather than buying new.
- **S**et up recycle bins for parties and be certain your guests understand your recycling process.
- **P**lan carefully for the numbers of people invited. Provide ALL of your guests with reusable plastic containers for leftovers.
- **B**uy fresh unpackaged foods where possible and avoid over-packaging.
- **S**ore leftovers near the front of the refrigerator to prevent waste.

### Give Green

- **G**ive durable, long lasting items and avoid disposable gifts. Consider gifts that can be reused and washed such as coffee mugs, special wine glasses, handkerchiefs, dish clothes, and towels.
- **E**ncourage green lifestyles by giving refillable pens and pencils, non-disposable razors, canvas shopping bags, rechargeable batteries and chargers, loose tea and tea ball, fun lunch boxes, or commuter bicycle with basket and light. (What about a collectable or vintage lunch box or bicycle?) Consider environmentally friendly gifts made from recycled materials.
- **E**ncourage energy efficiency by giving compact florescent light bulbs and long-life light bulbs, a solar watch or calculator, or motion sensor for lights.
- **M**emberships, gift cards, tickets, and donations in their names provide waste-free gifts. Give an experience such as a massage; give a gift certificate to a restaurant, plant nursery, or a tai chi class. If they read and don't have a library card, provide them with a library card and information about their local library. Give coupons.



- **R**educe the heat before guests arrive. Rely upon all of the body heat to keep the room warm.
- **W**hen shopping use your own reusable bags and consolidate shopping trips to save fuel.
- **S**end email greetings or holiday postcards instead of cards. If you do send cards, include directions on how to turn cards into gift tags. Buy cards made of recycled materials and that support wildlife or health-related issues.
- **C**apture memorable moments by photographing guests and friends with traditional film and cameras rather than disposable cameras. Use faster films, 400 and 800, to reduce the use of your flash and to extend the battery life of your camera.
- **D**ecorate the house using small bulbs, which have a lower wattage. Keep your lights on a timer to prevent overuse. Use lights that are wired in parallel. Separate circuitry strings make it easier to identify bulbs that burn out.
- **C**ook multiple items in the oven at the same time. Run the dishwasher and washing machines at full capacity.
- **U**se out-dated calendars and posters for tablecloths.
- **P**lan ahead and try to find time for yourself and to relax
- **S**chool parties can be opportunities for staff and students to plan and hold a waste-free party and demonstrate the process to parents.
- **T**ime is so valuable. Give some of yours. Offer to babysit, take an elderly friend or relative to a store (and combine it with one of your regular outings), scoop their dogs yard waste, assist with household chores, offer to shovel snow or rake leaves.
- **B**e very green. Consider giving kitchen compost bins, recycling organizers, water-saving low-flow showerheads, seeds for native plants and vegetables, gardening tools, or bird feeder (appropriate for birds commonly found the recipient's neighborhood).
- **W**rapping and unwrapping those gifts can make a very green statement. Wrap with a gift (scarf or belt for a ribbon), reuse old ribbons and stamp a "recycle this" label on the ribbon, use VCR or cassette tape for ribbons, use old maps, calendars, and magazines for wrapping. Fold origami nametags and decorations from magazines.
- **T**reasure hunts for oversized too-large-to-wrap packages can create a special sense of festivity while reducing waste.
- **S**hip gifts using starch packing peanuts or crumpled newspaper. Real popcorn, even without oil, creates problems by inviting rodents into your package.
- **U**nwrapping contests make it interesting. See if anyone can have zero-waste from unwrapping. Establish recycle and reuse sorting stacks.
- **G**ive coupons for personal gifts of time. Children also can give coupons. Suggestions include walk the dog, mow the yard, help with chores, or big hugs and kisses. Sample coupons can be found at <http://www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/download/coupons.pdf>



# LOOKING FOR MORE?

## More Green Holiday Tips!

GLRPPR's "P<sup>2</sup> for the Holidays" offers a lot of good resources.

[http://www.glrppr.org/docs/p2\\_for\\_the\\_holidays.htm](http://www.glrppr.org/docs/p2_for_the_holidays.htm)

Noteworthy resources found at the above include:

- **Deck the Halls with Less Waste This Year!** California Integrated Waste Management Board, <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/PublicEd/Holidays>
- **No Waste Holiday** Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance Reduce.org, <http://www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/holiday/index.html>
- **Tips for a Cleaner, "Greener" Holiday** INFORM, Inc., [http://www.informinc.org/greener\\_holiday.php](http://www.informinc.org/greener_holiday.php)
- **Use-Less-Stuff - 42 Ways to Trim Your Holiday Wasteline,** <http://use-less-stuff.com/ULSDAY/42ways.html>
- **Holiday Waste Reduction Tips** Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/LUESA/Solid+Waste/Residential+Waste+Reduction/holidaytips.htm>
- **Buy Nothing Christmas,** <http://www.buynothingchristmas.org/index.html>

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Learn more about Illinois Waste Management and Research Center's Greening Schools at <http://www.greeningschools.org/>

or call 217 333-8940 to learn what Greening Schools can offer your school at no cost. Greening Schools is an Illinois project available through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Waste Management and Research Center and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.