

SORTING IT OUT

Good gift giving is the best way to avoid waste

There's an enormous amount of pressure to buy lots of stuff for friends and family this holiday season, but with gift giving comes a lot of waste. One study found that 80% of items bought on Black Friday ended up in the landfill after one or no uses. Fortunately, there are many ways we can give gifts without adding to the landfill.

It's not exciting but ask the person what they want. When you give someone exactly what they want, there's a better chance they'll use it, and the item and your money won't go to waste.

Try giving experiences or services, not stuff. Gift cards for restaurants, museums, and classes are easy to get at the last minute and produce

less waste. Consider treating someone to a service that might make their life easier like car detailing, a fancy haircut or closet organization. Or just plan a fun day together. Isn't quality time what it's all about?

When looking for physical gifts, secondhand options are plentiful and often just as good as new. Explore thrift stores, Facebook Marketplace or the Rose Hill Book Shed. For new items, shopping at local small businesses keeps money in the community. For every \$100 spent at a local business, \$50 stays in the local economy, compared to only \$15 returning to the community when spent at a national chain.

Lastly, talk to your friends and family about whether they even want to get gifts. Maybe you all can save money by doing a Secret Santa or just skipping the gifts and focusing on time together. You may be surprised that opting out of the shopping season is the greatest gift of all.

Seasonal Waste Tips:

- Christmas Trees can be brought to the Rose Hill transfer Station December 26-January 28 for free disposal or sign up with the Matunuck 44 Christmas Tree fundraiser at troop44trees.com
- Gift wrap can be reused year after year if kept in good condition. Paper-based gift wrap is recyclable and should

be flattened. Mylar or cellophane wrapping is trash. For a low-waste option, opt for using newspaper or brown paper from packaging, that can later be recycled.

- Holiday light strands can be brought to e-waste at the transfer station, remove large bulbs.

Questions? Call the Recycling Coordinator at 401.789.9331 x2259.

'Sorting It Out' is a recurring column of The Independent Newspaper that features recycling and composting tips from Charlotte Canner, the Recycling Coordinator for the towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett it will appear monthly in the newspaper.