

ENTER YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

26th Stouffville Outdoor Christmas Display Contest

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PRIZES

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SHOPPING

Five ways to give gifts with meaning

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The Black Friday weekend kicked off the annual stampede for holiday gifts - but there may be a way to avoid the mall crowds and feel good about your gift-giving, too.

This year, why not pick a theme for your holiday shopping and focus on meaningful gifts? Here are some ideas for gifts that give back:

- Look for sustainable gifts that are good for the environment. Choose products with fair trade certification. This represents products that support fair wages, fair working conditions and fair terms for trade. You can also look for the bluesign label to find textiles that are produced with minimal environmental impact. Stores like Mountain Equipment Co-op stock bluesign products that are manufactured responsibly, with lower water and air emissions and a reduced eco footprint.
- Shop local. Try following Danna Schaubel's lead. The York Region mom posted her vow to buy as many holiday gifts as she can from Facebook friends who own small businesses, and she invited her friends to post links to her page and share on theirs, too.



Metroland file photo

Christmas doesn't have to be a commercialized shopping frenzy.

- Support your community's creative industries. Seek out gifts at local wineries, craft breweries, local art studios, or check out the Holiday Artisan Pop-Up Market at the Aurora Cultural Centre, on Saturday Dec. 10.
- Consider gifts that give twice. L'Arche Daybreak's craft studio, for example, sells high-quality artisan gifts such as candles, ornaments and prewrapped hostess gifts that are handmade by adults with intellectual disabilities. Raising the Roof is a national charity to fight homelessness and sells tuques and mittens each year to raise money for long-term solutions. Proceeds

bought in a community stay in that community. If animals are your thing, you can symbolically adopt your favourite species with a gift of a stuffed animal from WWF-Canada. Check out your favourite charity to see if they have gift options.

- Give your time. Purchase tickets to attend a local theatre production together, or a season's family pass to Scanlon Creek Conservation Area. Bake a cake or cookies, or make a handmade gift. Alternatively, give your time to those who are in need. For more volunteer opportunities, visit civicyork.ca

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