

Gift Giving to Seniors

By Laila Pera, CSA

It's that time of year again. What do we get for Grandpa or Great Auntie who are in a nursing home? They are in their own small home but it's full of stuff! What can we get them that they can use and will enjoy? Another tie or scarf? They have drawers full of those already and don't go out and have the opportunity to wear them very often. So what to get....

When thinking about gifts for seniors, take a moment to look at their lifestyle and how they spend their time. Think about things that will make their life more comfortable and enjoyable. Most are past accumulations of "stuff" and are more concerned with down sizing and getting everything organized.

Your time is the greatest gift you can offer but when we are all so busy, sometimes this isn't possible. Consider gift certificates for care giving, taxis, hair dressers, food and other delivery services. Pedicures and home visits from a trained foot nurse are very good for both sexes as feet can be troublesome for older folks. Massage therapists will also travel to their homes and treat them to a massage. Think about the challenges your seniors have and what may help them.

If buying books, be sure to check the print size and the weight of the book so that it will be comfortable for them to enjoy. If purchasing music, be sure that they have the equipment to play it and are confident in using it.

If your senior is struggling with a home computer, consider a gift certificate for in home lessons. Many seniors would enjoy the new technology available but are nervous to get it home and have to install it. Offer your help in doing so or hire a professional for them. Telephones are important tools for seniors and the ability to have handsets in every room (Including the bathroom) would be a wonderful gift for not only their peace of mind but for yours as well. Just be sure that help is offered to install and program any equipment given.

Almost every business offers gift certificates so think about something they may want or a service they can use and inquire about a gift card or certificate. Many seniors don't want to indulge themselves as they are concerned about how long their money will last – so if you can help them enjoy those indulgences, they will be very grateful. Although many don't think of it – cash discreetly tucked into a card gives the senior the opportunity to choose something for themselves or help with costs for medication or daily living.

As with giving a gift to anyone, just acknowledging them and their importance in your life is the greatest gift that you can share. Slow down and appreciate the moment with them, the lessons you will learn will be their greatest legacy and gift to everyone. Happy Holidays, everyone!