

real solutions

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Real Solutions is a periodic newsletter produced by Susan Stewart designed to provide practical organization tips to simplify your life.

Santa Claus is Coming To Town

"You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why..." Cindy hums along as she pushes her cart through the store. Shopping, shopping, shopping- her favorite part of Christmas. And the bargains make it even better! Gifts for the kids, gifts for family, teacher gifts, a gift for the babysitter, stocking stuffers and the list goes on. Oh, the joy of shopping!

December passes in a whirlwind and before she knows it, Christmas Eve has arrived. Panic sets in as she realizes she hasn't wrapped any of the gifts yet! After the kids are in bed, Cindy makes a mad dash to the closet in search of holiday wrapping paper. Of course the scissors and tape are no where to be found! During her search and destroy mission, she uncovers a few gifts she forgot she had bought so now she has even more to wrap. Moments into the wrapping, Cindy realizes that the bike from Santa still needs to be assembled. With her wrapping gifts and Mike playing handyman, it made for a long night!

Christmas morning the floor beneath the tree is piled high with gifts. Cindy can hardly contain herself. She can't wait to watch the kids open their gifts. An hour later, the living room is looks like a bomb went off and the kids are bored. Cindy asks the kids to take the gifts up to their rooms. As she's getting the kids in bed that night, she starts lecturing the kids about cleaning up their toys. Her lectures are to no avail because there is no where to put all of the new things. Their closets and drawers are already crammed full.



Make room for gifts...
Santa is coming.

It is the beginning of December and Tracy is running errands at Target. As she passes the toy aisle, she sees the Rescue Heroes Command Center she knows 4 year old Brandon would love. She looks at it for a moment and then snaps back to reality. The toy is huge! Where in the world would they store it? She pulls the holiday organizer out of her purse, looks at the list under Brandon's name and realizes she is already finished

shopping for him. Back to errands it is.

Saturday rolls around in a heartbeat and Tracy has planned a "make room for Santa" time with the kids. Every year before Christmas they go through the toys together and "let go" of toys they've outgrown or no longer play with. These things are donated to the less fortunate. With visions of new toys and games dancing in their heads, purging doesn't seem to be such a difficult task. And, as mom always says, "If there isn't room in here, Santa won't be able to leave presents."

After the kids are in bed, Tracy and Kevin rent a movie and wrap gifts together while watching. It's a tradition they've had for years that eliminates one piece of the holiday stress. All of Tracy's holiday gift wrapping supplies are in a portable organizer which makes wrapping up the gifts a snap. During their wrapping, they realize that Brook's bike needs to be assembled so they get that done too.

Christmas morning arrives and the tree has a moderate amount of gifts beneath it. Christmas traditions include opening gifts one at a time - youngest to oldest. As Tracy watches the kids open their gifts, she is reminded of the abundance their family has been blessed with.

*Go to the next page for
Tips for a Happy Holiday.*

Destination Organization

Each January the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) promotes GO Month, or Get Organized Month, by doing a service project for the community. I am privileged to be on the planning team this year. We are calling our project “*Destination Organization*”, and our mission is to completely transform one disorganized family room into a functional, organized space in 24 hours for a well-deserving family. We will be donating our time and resources and we need your help! We are looking for more volunteers to help with this project which will take place on February 17, 2007. If you would like to participate or donate anything, please contact me asap. Stay tuned for more information coming in January.

Tips for a Happy Holiday

It is the simple things that often mean the most. Turn out the lights and sing Christmas songs under the tree as a family instead of trying to attend every party and program.

Keep a database of friends and family on your computer. As new addresses come in, update the list. When it comes time to send out the Christmas cards, print labels and *Voila!*

Use a holiday gift organizer like [this one](#). It is small enough to fit in your purse and will make Christmas shopping much easier.

Designate a place to keep gifts you buy throughout the year. Shop from your stash instead of going out and buying more.

Give your kids the gift of giving. Have them earn the money by doing extra chores to buy the gifts they give to family members.

Give a gift to someone in need instead of adding to someone's clutter. One year we purchased a sheep for a child we sponsor in Lesotho instead of exchanging gifts with extended family members. It was very rewarding.

For large or extended families, suggest drawing names instead of buying for everyone.

Shop online. The price you pay for shipping may well be worth skipping the crowds and lines of the stores.

Spend time with your child before Christmas going through their toys to make room for new things. Purge, purge, purge!

Don't buy gifts that are bigger than you have room for. Ask yourself, “where will I store it?”, before you buy.

Set up a wrapping center for the month of December. Keep everything close at hand so you don't go searching for lost scissors.

As you are wrapping gifts, think ahead. Does anything need to be assembled or tried out before Christmas? Does anything need batteries? You don't want to spend Christmas day putting a bike together or running out to a convenience store to buy batteries.



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www.perfectlyplaced.org