



# Neat Freak News

Bimonthly organizational tips for home, work and life.

[www.neat-freak.com](http://www.neat-freak.com)

Neat Freak News: October 2007

Holiday catalogs are starting to trickle in at my house, which always makes me feel like I SHOULD shop early this year (never mind that my kids haven't even settled on Halloween costumes yet!). I've decided to simplify my holidays this year by purchasing alternative gifts in honor of most friends and family. Not only does this help a great cause, it keeps me out of the mall AND doesn't add clutter to the lives of people I care about. If you're looking for a creative way to show you care this year, check out a few of these resources for ideas.

## GIFTS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD

This site lets you change the world in exactly the way you want. For just a few dollars, you can provide a child with her first book; fund an hour of cancer research; protect an acre of the rainforest; or restore a blind person's sight with cataract surgery. You're sure to find something that moves you or a loved one, no matter what cause you most care about.

<http://www.changingthepresent.org>

## TO HONOR THAT SPECIAL TEACHER

DonorsChoose.org is a simple way to provide students in need with resources that our public schools often lack. At this web site, teachers submit project proposals for materials or experiences their students need to learn.

[www.DonorsChoose.org](http://www.DonorsChoose.org)

## FOR THE BUDDING ENTREPRENEUR

Kiva lets you connect with and loan money to unique small businesses in the developing world. You can "sponsor a business" and help the world's working poor make great strides towards economic independence. Throughout the course of the loan (usually 6-12 months), you'll receive email journal updates from the business you've sponsored. As loans are repaid, you get your loan money back to keep or reinvest in another business.

[www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

## HELP A WOMAN A WORLD AWAY

Women for Women International helps women survivors of war move toward economic self-sufficiency with a year-long program of direct aid, rights education, job skills training and small business development. Since 1993, they've distributed direct aid, micro-credit loans, and other program services to more than 125,000 women in 105 countries worldwide.

[www.womenforwomen.org](http://www.womenforwomen.org)

#### FOR THE “HELP! I’M BURIED IN PAPER” PERSON IN YOUR LIFE

Raise your hand if you like receiving junk mail. Anyone? Anyone? You might be sick of hearing me talk about these people, but I can’t help myself. I now receive NO MORE junk mail and I love them for it. For a \$15 one-time fee, Greendimes will reduce your junk mail (really...it works!), plant trees on your behalf, AND they’re lobbying congress to create a “Do Not Mail” registry that let’s US decide what mail we receive. Sign up a friend this holiday season...it’s truly the gift that keeps on giving!

[www.greendimes.com](http://www.greendimes.com)

#### FOR THE FREQUENT TRAVELER

I’m a little evangelical about Terrapass, too. We purchased a minivan this year and I just couldn’t justify that big honkin’ car without my Terrapass. This company allows you to offset the carbon from your vehicle (also from your home and air transportation!) and all funds go to support clean energy initiatives.

[www.terrapass.com](http://www.terrapass.com)

#### FOR THE KIDS

Share a goat, chicken or cow with a kid in your life and you’ll be the coolest grownup in town! You’re probably familiar with Heifer International (recently featured in Bill Clinton’s new book “Giving”). Their mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth by giving families a source of food rather than short-term relief. Their website offers great tools for children to follow their “gift” and see where it is really having an impact.

[www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

And of course, there are always LOCAL organizations in great need of donations this time of year. So if you’re torn between the coffee mug, the fruitcake or the gift certificate to the mall, perhaps one of these sites will simplify your shopping, help you avoid last minute gift-wrapping frenzy AND leave you feeling good about your holiday purchases this year.

#### NEAT FREAKIE FREEBIES

Get your daily dose of uncluttered lifestyle tips from the blog at Unclutterer ([www.unclutterer.com](http://www.unclutterer.com)). It’s filled with resources and ideas for simplifying life and ridding your home or office of the clutter that holds us all back. Even this Neat Freak is inspired by their creative ways of living with less!