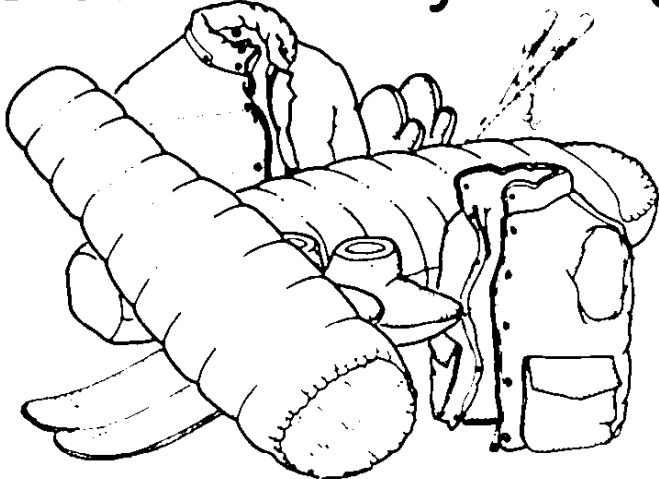


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Cheers! Give the The best present is your presence

People who live in institutions believe in Christmas, just like everyone else. Whether they are living in a nursing home, a hospital or another kind of institution, they love being remembered with gifts.

Convalescent home residents, for example, can use all kinds of clothing and toilet articles. High on their lists for Santa also are small lap-robes made of knitted or crocheted material that is machine washable. Their knees often need warming.

A director of one of these homes suggested that residents would respond favorably to individually wrapped scented soap, talcum powder, perfume, hand cream, deodorant or tooth paste. Jewelry is also very popular, she added, especially beads.

"Men like dark stretch socks and shaving lotion," she said. "Candy and cookies are always popular with everyone, and diabetics enjoy fresh fruit. Slippers and heavy knee socks also go over big."

Spokesmen for several nursing homes said that groups wishing to add something to the quality of life to patients might consider donating small prizes that could be used at bingo games.

For the relative or friend who must spend his holidays in a hospital bed, your presence would doubtless be of greater value than any purchased presents.

But to cheer up these people try a book, crossword puzzles, games, magazine subscriptions,

or stationery. To keep hands busy take puzzles or craft kits involving needlepoint, macramé or painting.

If they are collectors, it might be possible to come up with a interesting coin or stamp. If they are tired of candy, try gifting them with nuts or fruitcake, with their doctor's permission, of course.

Institutions such as Northville State Hospital and the Plymouth Center for Human Development have a number of suggestions for organizations which like to share their Christmas joy with others.

If your organization wants to donate gifts, Peter Schwetzer of the Plymouth Center suggests grooming items for men and women, as well as purses, billfolds, tote bags and comb and brush sets.

For children, crayons, balls, finger painting sets, small cars, dolls, wooden puzzles and educational toys would be just the thing. Wagons, Krazy Cars, Big Wheels are popular among the younger patients, who can ride these vehicles in the hospital play area.

For the mental patients at the Northville facility or any other such institution, Jean Batchelder advised stretch gloves, scarfs, homemade cookies, candy or cupcakes.

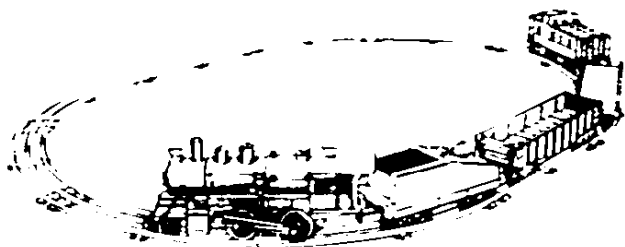
Decorative items would also be appreciated by most institutions to brighten up halls and rooms in the Yule season.

—SHERRY KAHAN

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