



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**What do you Want for the Holidays? - A Piggy Bank, Say Fed Up Americans**  
*Materialism, High Cost of Living Has Public Focusing on More Meaningful Holiday*

**Takoma Park, MD** – An increasing number of polls indicate voters' biggest concern in the upcoming election is the economy. It's no surprise, then, that Americans are also showing signs of financial anxiety about the upcoming holiday season. As the 2008 season approaches, Americans are looking for gifts that will allow them to save money for the future and avoid excessive spending and increased debt.

"This holiday season let's focus on what matters. You don't need to break the bank to have a meaningful holiday," says Lisa Wise, Director of the Center for a New American Dream, a non-profit group based in Maryland that helps Americans consume responsibly.

The Center for a New American Dream has a variety of free resources for Americans who long for a simpler, debt-free holiday this year. New American Dream's website, [NewDream.org](http://NewDream.org), has suggestions for saving money, giving innovative, low-cost gifts, and connecting with friends and family.

Visitors to New Dream's site have already downloaded more than 60,000 copies of the popular Simplify the Holidays booklet. It's online "Living Green Below Your Means" column shows individuals how to reduce their environmental footprint by being thrifty, and its Conscious Consumer Marketplace helps consumers support a sustainable, green economy and find products that are better for people and the planet.

Here are a few alternative ways to save money on gifts this year while still giving generously to friends and family:

- Give the gift of time – design a gift certificate that offers babysitting, a home-cooked meal, a tennis lesson or a monthly lunch date for someone you love.
- Create a calendar of family photographs and artwork for relatives.
- Collect favorite recipes from aunts, grandparents and cousins and assemble them as a book of family recipes.
- Focus on fun rather than gifts. Host a skating party, an evening of board games, or a theme party. Make the gathering a potluck so nobody shoulders too much work but everyone enjoys scrumptious food.
- Kids often expect at least one store-bought gift. But consider giving time, skills, or homemade gifts as well. How about an afternoon of football with Dad and some other guys? Maybe a box of dress up clothes for a young child, purchased for less than \$10 from the local thrift store, an afternoon knitting lesson from a favorite aunt, or the promise to repaint a bedroom.
- Give to charity. Alternative gift fairs are a fun and inspirational way to do your holiday shopping. At an alternative gift fair, you can make donations to charities in honor of a family or friend. Donations support a specific service or item to help individuals, communities and environments in need.

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The Center for a New American Dream helps Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life, and promote social justice. We work with individuals, institutions, communities, and businesses to conserve natural resources, counter the commercialization of our culture and promote positive changes in the way goods are produced and consumed. [www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org).