

Seize The Spirit

Four Easy Ways to Make the Holidays Brighter

(NAPSA)—For an increasing number of people, the true holiday spirit is in giving—and not just giving presents to loved ones, but giving time or money to help complete strangers.

Here are just a few tips to make the holidays a little bit brighter, for you and for those less fortunate:

Bring a holiday feast to the needy. Children learn by example. Take the whole family down to a soup kitchen and volunteer together. They'll learn the importance of giving to those in need and you'll spend much needed time with each other. Look for food banks, shelters or volunteer centers that provide free, warm meals to those in need. You can help prepare the meals or serve them, but be sure to check age requirements for children to volunteer. You can also recruit a few other parents and kids to make the volunteer time a group, neighborhood or community activity.

Wear your heart on your sleeve. Pressed for time during the holiday season? Many charities offer unique, inexpensive gifts as fundraisers for their cause during the holidays. This year, the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation offers the Lucky Stars



Happier holidays may mean giving back and giving of yourself.

bracelet at all Embassy Suites Hotels for only \$2.00. One hundred percent of the proceeds benefit Starlight Starbright. The organization touches the lives of more than 180,000 children and families each month, empowering them to take charge of their illness, play a more active role in treatment and better cope with the challenges that accompany prolonged illness. According to John Lee, vice president of brand management for the hotel chain, wearing the Lucky Stars bracelet is a great way to “wear your heart on your sleeve,” and show support for the cause.

Make a list, check it twice. Not all families can afford to create a holiday season that will

light up their children's eyes. You can bring excitement to children by contacting a volunteer center, food bank or school to participate in Adopt-A-Family programs. Through such a program you will learn about your adopted family, including their names and clothing sizes, as well as the items they are wishing for to make the season bright. Then, you can make a list, check it twice and provide gifts that will make one family's holiday season jolly.

Sing, sing a song. Few things can brighten a day like singing a song, especially a holiday tune. Consider visiting a senior living community to spread yuletide cheer to those who may not be going home for the holidays. Contact your local senior living community to inquire about a good time to visit and share the gift of song.

With these volunteer ideas, you'll be able to give back to the community by yourself, with a friend or with your family, making the holiday season jolly and bright.

For more information about Starlight Starbright and the Embassy Suites Hotels Lucky Stars bracelet, visit www.embassy-suites.com or go to www.slsb.org.