



## Gift Ideas for Seniors *especially those living in long-term care facilities*

*If your loved one lives in a long-term care setting it's probably best to ask about gifts and get an O.K. before you bring them, especially if you wish to bring food/beverages or appliances. You will also want to have an understanding with the facility about what/how items should be marked, so they are not lost before your loved one can enjoy them.*

### The Gift of Presence:

- ❖ The best gift that a resident in a long-term care facility can get is the gift of your time and presence! This cannot be emphasized enough!
- ❖ If they can leave the facility, plan an outing for a meal, a movie, shopping, a visit to a museum or another activity they enjoy.
- ❖ If they cannot get out, see if you can bring in one of their favorite meals, a movie, a favorite game or another activity to enjoy with them.
- ❖ Work on a puzzle together.
- ❖ Ask your elder to teach you a skill such as knitting, crocheting, etc. Maybe you can teach them to use a computer, ipad or iphone!
- ❖ Work on a family genealogy or oral history project together.
- ❖ Promise to come and go to Mass or Sunday church service with your loved one.
- ❖ If you or another loved one live far away, arrange connection via technology if they are capable of learning new technology or there is a local relative or friend who can help set up visits.
- ❖ Adopt another resident if you notice there are residents who have no family or visitors, especially someone who is compatible with your loved one.

### Entertainment:

- ❖ Hire an entertainer for the facility for a party, or visits with a therapy dog (Check with activities staff first; the budget for this type of thing is often quite limited so your offer will most likely be appreciated!)

- ❖ Throw a party for your loved one and their companions in the facility.
- ❖ A DVD player and some favorite movies
- ❖ A preloaded Ipod shuffle
- ❖ Board games they enjoy (even better, come and play with them)

Items for your loved one's room:

- ❖ Visible mementos of family members such as framed photos or a digital photo frame
- ❖ A custom photo book with family pictures (such as Shutterfly).
- ❖ A bulletin board you can keep updated for your loved one
- ❖ A seasonal decoration for their room or door. Something for the door is especially good if they have trouble finding their room. In this case you might want to add their name to it.
- ❖ A calendar pre-marked with dates of family birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- ❖ A clock with large numbers; a talking clock or watch for those with visual deficits
- ❖ An aromatherapy diffuser or automatic air freshener
- ❖ A nice blanket or shawl, especially fleece or otherwise machine washable; a new bedspread
- ❖ A window bird feeder (if your loved one lives on the ground level)

Personal items:

- ❖ A favorite item of clothing; it is recommended that anything be machine washable.
- ❖ Subscription to a favorite magazine or newspaper
- ❖ Puzzle books
- ❖ A lap desk with a book holder
- ❖ Books or audio books
- ❖ A walker bag with pockets, if they use a walker
- ❖ A small purse for tissues etc.
- ❖ Coloring supplies (adult coloring books are very popular)
- ❖ For men: a good electric razor
- ❖ Lotion, body wash, cologne, after shave, chap stick, etc. in their preferred brands
- ❖ Facial tissues
- ❖ Gift certificates to the facility's beautician
- ❖ For women: nail polish and other manicure supplies
- ❖ Book of the Month Club (or Fruit of the Month, Dessert of the Month, etc.)
- ❖ Candy, cookies or other snack foods; fresh fruit (with food it's a good idea to accompany it with storage containers or tins so the resident can keep it without attracting bugs or rodents☺)
- ❖ Ethnic food if this is important to your loved one; special items are not often available in a care facility.
- ❖ Wine or a liqueur if your loved one enjoys this (check with staff; this often has to be kept by the nurse and portioned out, but we allow it in our homes)

## **Things to Do in a Nursing Home**

*Don't know what to do when you visit the nursing home? Giving the gift of time to someone you loved also means you should do something fun together. Depending on mobility and other limitations, ideas for spending time together are:*

- ❖ Completing crossword puzzles or word searches together
- ❖ Eating dinner together and meeting friends in the dining room
- ❖ Enjoying a homemade dessert you brought along
- ❖ Working on a project together, like a craft or puzzle
- ❖ Talking about family members or shared memories
- ❖ Getting details about other family members by sorting through old photos
- ❖ Writing down a life chronicle
- ❖ Playing board games with family members or other residents
- ❖ Reading a book or magazine aloud together
- ❖ Browsing through a catalogue together
- ❖ Watching a movie or TV together
- ❖ Listening to a podcast on a topic which interests you both
- ❖ Attending events together, like church services or planned entertainment
- ❖ Praying together, esp. the rosary
- ❖ Learning a new skill (like knitting) or a new language from your loved one
- ❖ Going to the nail salon for a manicure or pedicure
- ❖ Listening to music and discussing memories associated with songs
- ❖ Going for a walk around the grounds, or inside the building
- ❖ Spending time together straightening out your loved one's closet or drawers; set aside those out of season, or those that no longer fit.