

## NOVEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER



Carson Tate, Owner

### STREAMLINE YOUR HOLIDAYS. LEARN FROM THE GRINCH!

The holidays will soon be here. At this especially busy time of year, remember, less is more.

If you're exhausted and stressed by the time the holiday arrives...  
If you swore last year to simplify and establish more sustainable holiday traditions...

If you don't want to break the bank this year...

Let Living Simply's holiday BELLS guide you!

**B**e prepared.

**E**mbrace simplicity.

**L**et others help.

**L**isten to your inner voice.

**S**treamline your holidays.

### Be prepared:

Start early, make a plan, create a gift-giving list and honor it. Part of the plan is establishing a budget and sticking to it. Think of the relief when January rolls around and all those credit card bills do not. Before you even think about holiday shopping at the mall or online, shop your home inventory. All those unused gift cards, coupons and after-season bargains you stashed last January will be unearthed. Discounts go to the early bird on things like custom printed greeting cards. Often the envelopes are

available when the order is placed so you can begin the task of addressing and stamping. Purge playrooms and closets in anticipation of the onslaught of gifts from Santa, friends and family. Start a holiday notebook. This might include current and archived gift lists, card list and addresses, recipes for holiday favorites, clothing sizes of family members, coupons for area retailers, receipts for purchases, a to-do list with timeline... the possibilities are enormous.

## **Embrace simplicity:**

Not every nook and cranny of your house has to be decorated. Not all decorations have to be perfect. When decking the halls feels more like a chore than a joy, you know you're trying to do too much. A single festooned tree, a wreath and the smell of fresh-baked cookies will say happy holidays as much as pulling out all the stops.

Make next year's decorating even easier by sorting and purging unwanted decorations when you're undoing things this year. Be careful about saving children's handmade decorations if they contain any foodstuffs that will attract insects. Buy sturdy, lidded containers designed for decorations, lights, wreathes and wrapping supplies. Remember that most stores only carry holiday containers for a limited time. Label containers before storing for the next year. You can purchase holiday containers anytime of year at: [www.simplify-organize.com](http://www.simplify-organize.com).

## **Let others help and help others:**

The holidays are not the time to be supermom. Divide and conquer! Trimming the tree, addressing cards, baking cookies and delivering gifts will morph from duty to delight when everyone helps. The more polished results that might come from adult hands only is not nearly as important as the memories of togetherness you all will cherish when the entire family is involved.

Adopt a needy child or family to let your children experience the spirit of giving rather than receiving. Shopping,

wrapping and delivering gifts and food are great family activities.

Help children make their holiday wish lists to keep expectations in line with reality. Draw the line on spending. Especially now, setting a realistic budget and sticking to it is important. Consider giving consumable gifts or gift certificates so that the clutter and chaos you've attempted to tame doesn't come roaring back. A Living Simply gift certificate might be just the thing for someone (including you) whose New Year's resolution is to finally get organized.

### **Listen to your inner voice:**

If you're thinking that it's all too much, rethink your gift giving habits. Vow to give the gift of time this year. Whether it is an IOU for help in an area where you have skill and expertise, or a certificate to enjoy a meal, golf round or spa treatment together, giving of yourself to another is the best gift of all. If your extended family is large, consider name drawing for gift-giving. Some families find that gifting only to children and not adults is a workable plan. But truthfully, baby doesn't care and won't remember his first Christmas. Toddlers are happy if you're happy and even older children can be overwhelmed by too much at once. Remember, less will be more.

### **Streamline your holidays:**

How many rolls of wrapping paper and ribbon do you own? When you add in gift bags, tissue, tags, embellishments, scissors and tape, the wrapping supplies can quickly get out of control. Consider purchasing one or two large rolls of paper. White and brown craft paper are versatile choices. Seasonalize your packages with different ribbons - raffia, grosgrain, curling and French wire - to cover a multitude of occasions. This approach saves money (giant rolls of plain paper can be found at craft stores) and tons of storage space. Learn from the pros and buy a dispenser with cutting edge to make wrapping a snap.

Eliminate traditions that no longer give satisfaction and replace them with ones that do. If thoughts of constructing another gingerbread house make you weak-kneed, admit that a

batch of gingerbread boys is a fine substitute. If addressing hundreds of greeting cards is overwhelming, take a hiatus this year or reduce the workload by sending only to out-of-town friends and family. Use printed labels from your computer address book. Brainstorm with friends over coffee and bagels about ways to reign in the holiday chaos. Finally, take care of yourself with some scheduled "me" time. Head to the gym or yoga class. Take a walk with a loved one. Watch HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS with your children and take the message to heart.

**Enjoy happy holidays from Living Simply!**

**Wrap up the holidays with Living Simply!** Let us put away your holiday decorations! We will come into your home, carefully sort, wrap and store in labeled containers all of your holiday decorations. No mess, no clean up - no holiday hangover.

**Living Simply Gift Certificates** Give the gift of peace and order this holiday season with a Living Simply Gift Certificate! Call or email today to customize your gift certificate.

Living Simply, LLC [www.livingsimply.net](http://www.livingsimply.net)

**January 1, 2009: Living Simply has a new name! Living Simply is now Simplicity.** Visit our website at [www.simplicity-organizers.com](http://www.simplicity-organizers.com).