



Hello,

Gift Yourself Less Financial Stress

The holidays can be a really fun time*, but it can also be really stressful on our finances. Planning ahead is a great way to reduce some of this stress. Ask yourself, *What can I do today to ensure that my holiday gift giving doesn't lead to extreme financial stress in January?*

Start Saving for the Holidays Now

December is approaching quickly and this year, it seems even harder to set aside extra money. So instead of starting to save for the holidays in November, saving smaller amounts now might work better. There are 11 weeks left to save. So, determine the [amount you want to spend this year](#) and divide by 11 to see how much you need to save each week. If that weekly number is too big, consider reducing your budget or take part in a “No Spend Week”.

No Spend Week

Make a challenge for your family to see if you can go seven days without spending a penny. Brainstorm fun things that you can do without spending money:

- Plan your meals for the week (Don't forget the snacks!)
 - Right before the week starts go to the grocery store with your meal plan and get all you need for the week.
- Make your coffee at home
 - Get a good coffee and creamer/flavor to dress it up a bit
- Borrow movies and books from the library (they often have the latest movies and tv shows)
- Check out free museums

- Go hiking, biking, fishing, or play a board game
- Get gas right before the week starts.
 - Try to make it last all week. Be creative, can you ride bikes to practice?

This process is a lot more fun if you are doing it with other people. Is there another family that would also be interested in doing this challenge together? Can you carpool with them? Host a game night together? Share meals? The possibilities are endless. Set up your wager: If one family spends money in the seven day period, then they have to do a fun punishment, host the next dinner, etc.

Here is a video that explains a [no spend month](#) challenge. This will give you some ideas on planning your week and may inspire you to continue after the week challenge. Another helpful article is [Financial tips to help you be more mindful of your spending](#).

We often feel too overwhelmed to save, but the truth is either way, you will be paying for those gifts in the months before or in the months after. It takes a lot less stress and money to pay for them before. The little bit of extra effort is worth it because you can focus on what really matters!

Remember, you've got this!

** The holidays can also be a time of great sadness, especially if you have experienced a loss. Consider sprinkling in some activities that honor your loved one during that time (if you have children the silly memories are great to recreate). For one of our team members, ice cream plays a big part in one of their fondest memories of their mom who has now passed. She loved ice cream and would secretly let their kids eat it on the couch despite the risk of a giant mess. In memory of her, their family often recreates this on special occasions. For their family, it is amazing how a little silliness can take away some of the sting. We are so sorry for your loss and hope that in the midst of grieving you can find ways to celebrate them.*

If you would like to take advantage of the free coaching session with GreenPath, their number is 877-337-3399. Let them know that you were referred by the Community Impact Fund (CIF).

Over the next few months the Community Impact Fund will be sending you emails to support you in your financial journey. We are here to be a resource for you at any time! For questions or support, email us at loans@communityimpactfund.org



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