

Are you ready for Christmas Community Comment? Mike Goldsby, December 5, 2013

Are you ready for Christmas? I have noticed that the people who ask that often brag that their shopping was done in late August. I like the build-up to Christmas and don't feel complete unless I have a little shopping left to do on Christmas Eve.

Our family tradition is to have crab cioppino on Christmas Eve and I hope the negotiations are done in time for me to make my annual trek to Crab E Tom's in Fortuna. I much prefer to shop local and support local families.

On a Christian website, Power to Change, I found an article titled "Do you have Christmas Spirit?" by Gail Rodgers. She says the true spirit of Christmas is a spirit of giving, evidenced by a generous heart, shining out with stark clarity in the lives of those who possess it.

Rodgers says generosity has nothing to do with your checkbook or even cookies. She suggests giving compassion to someone who is hurting, even though they dug their own hole. Give encouragement to someone who is frustrated. Give forgiveness.

A spirit of giving, evidenced by a generous heart, shining out; That certainly sounds like Betty Chinn. On his Tuesday Community Comment, Tom Cookman did a great job describing the Betty Kwan Chinn center and why it is worthy of our support. Charity is an investment. You get more benefit when you invest early and often.

Charitable giving is integral to the spirit of Christmas. That certainly was the lesson to Ebenezer Scrooge. And just as I prefer to buy local crab, I prefer to support local charities and non-profits. I seldom carry money but I try to have some on hand for the Salvation Army bell ringers.

I don't buy a lot of canned foods but I do like to support the food drives. Food for People is a very worthwhile, well-run organization that gives a helping hand. I admire the work of executive director Ann Holcomb. You can donate to Food for People with confidence.

Hospice of Humboldt provides a very different type of support, so needed by some in the darkness of Winter. Any of us could find ourselves or our family in need of Hospice, regardless of our economic situation. My friend Merilee is the director of Hospice. It is another well-run local non-profit and they are very deserving of donations.

Helping a child or a family at Christmas is very appealing. There are a number of local toy drives. You may also want to consider donating to an organization like Changing Tides Family Services. Yet another efficient local non-profit, my friend Carol Hill is the Executive Director. Changing Tides provides a number of services that help families be successful and healthy. These include child care, information and referral, nutrition assistance, mental health services, parent support and school support services.

I also want to mention local foundations. I was just accepted to be a board member of the Union Labor Health Foundation, a supporting organization of the Humboldt Area Foundation. The Union Labor Health Foundation started in 1997 and has awarded over 3 million dollars since then to funding partnerships, nursing scholarships and assistance to low income children and families.

Chances are someone's generosity has probably improved your life. Christmas is a special time to remember to pass that on.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment.