ADRA’s Really Useful Gift Catalog offers high-impact Christmas gifts
As a Christmas gift this year, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency is suggesting nails, rope or a machete. For those wishing something even more unusual, the agency suggests a cow, goat or bees.

Though they're not gifts typically found wrapped under a tree, Christmas gifts to those less fortunate in developing countries can be life-changing and provide a sustainable source of income to feed a family or send kids to school.

The gifts can be found in this year’s ADRA Really Useful Gift Catalog, available at GiftCatalog.ADRA.org or by calling 1-800-242-2372.

“This year’s catalog is your opportunity to give a gift that’s not just another trinket, but something that will make a huge, dramatic impact on the life of someone in need,” said Chris LeBrun, ADRA’s director of development.

The catalog groups its gift into categories ranging from clean water and medical care to disaster relief and helping orphans.

One possible gift is a cow that can be given to a family with a child who is blind. In countries such as Bangladesh, a blind child can be a financial strain on the family. Teaching the blind family member to care for the cow gives them purpose, and the milk can be sold.

“Animals are always popular,” Karla Cole, ADRA’s associate designer, said of the annual catalog. “One of my favorites is the beehive because I grew up on a farm and I've always wanted to tend bees,” she said referring to gift #12. Ten beehives provide enough sustainable income for a family in a developing nation to put food on the table, send kids to school and pay for adequate medical care.

Another gift—#19 in the catalog—gives tools to child-headed households to build shelter.

Gift #22 helps a child orphaned by HIV/AIDS in countries such as Kenya. Many such orphans face discrimination and don’t get the same opportunities as others their age, making them vulnerable to lives of crime and prostitution. Helping one of these children gives the gift of school and supplies, and tools for a future career.

One category focuses on women and girls. Gift #14 helps fund a safe house program that provides an immediate place of safety for victims of domestic violence in places such as Romania. Another gift helps protect a girl from sexual exploitation in India by keeping her in school. Gift #18 helps save a girl as young as nine from becoming a child bride in Eastern Europe and Africa.

The catalog also includes success stories from past years.

In the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar, a program to help widows participate in food production is providing income for 150 women in one of the least developed regions of the nation.

"We all make the food products at home but invest in the raw materials together," Masanymint, a single mother supporting five children, told local ADRA workers last year. "Now I can afford good food for my children and provide the books, uniforms and school supplies they need."

Throughout the year, ADRA serves nearly 13 million people in more than 100 countries, ADRA President Jonathan Duffy wrote in the in the catalog’s introduction, which thanks donors.
"It’s your support that enables us to bring God’s love and life-sustaining help to people in every corner of the world every day," he said.

When Rosemarie Clardy of the Mt. Pisgah Adventist Church in the U.S. state of North Carolina received the catalog in the mail, she said she felt motivated to do something.

“The children were smiling and they had food in their hands and it just made me cry," Clardy said.

This Saturday, Clardy will set up a display promoting the catalog in the lobby of the Mt. Pisgah Seventh-day Adventist Church. And from the stage during the service she plans to announce to her church family: “At this time of year we like to give gifts to each other, but the best give we can give is when we can help others.”

Adventist president offers condolences at passing of Mandela

Seventh-day Adventist Church President
Ted N. C. Wilson released the following statement regarding the passing of statesman Nelson Mandela:

“The global Seventh-day Adventist Church joins the people of South Africa and the world in mourning the loss of Nelson Mandela. His life of forgiveness and reconciliation served as a light in a world that too often lives in the shadow of reprisal, anger and malice.

"May all reflect on his important efforts to bring people together in peace. What a joy that we can also be part of that process as we are reconciled to God and each other by the grace of Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace. We offer our sympathy and condolences to the Mandela family and the citizens of South Africa."

Ted N. C. Wilson
President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
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