

Making the Most of the Hol-i-daze!

It's already started and we are well into the swing of the holiday season. This is the time of year that everyone may feel additional stress as we weave our way through the "holidaze." You may find that being out of work can add to that stress, however, if you follow these simple guidelines, it may take away some of the anxiety.

- It's the most wonderful time of the year – for networking! This is the time of year that you may be able to connect with people that you don't normally see any other time. Friends and family, people in the community and beyond. Take advantage of every opportunity to attend functions, parties, events and gatherings. The parties pretty much end after New Year's Eve so don't miss the chance to see and be seen.

Make the most of the time with people by mentioning that you are looking for work. There is no need to dwell on the subject but don't let a great opportunity pass you by when you do have a chance to reconnect with others. Remember to be sure to stay upbeat and festive.

- Send holiday greetings to everyone that you know. You may not have seen the people on your list in a long time and it is a great way to remind them that you are still alive and well and thinking of them. It may be just the spark they need to keep you top of mind. Short on cash? These greetings can be as close as your email and much less expensive than cards and postage – and much greener, too.
- Give the gift of kindness and the gift of yourself. Ring a bell, volunteer to help needy children and families, deliver or serve food to the hungry. The need is greater than ever in our community for volunteers and, as you know, you may meet people that you would never have the chance to meet otherwise that could lead you to your next job.
- Be creative in your gift giving and keep your debt to a minimum. You have more time on your hands this year since you are not working so think about making gifts for loved ones or doing something for them instead of buying high priced items that you can't afford. If you already bought the things you can't afford, take them back; it's not too late. Everyone will understand if you forgo the extravagance this season.

Paint or clean out a room for someone, run errands, watch their kids while they take in a movie, make dinner, decorate somebody's home because they don't have the time or ability to do it themselves (or put their decorations away after the holidays), change the oil in their car, bake, sew, cut and stack wood, the list is endless. Give from your heart – the rest is easy and people will love the thought that you have put into their special gift.

Take advantage of all of the wonderful things that the holiday season has to offer. Connect with people – both those that you know and those that you don't know yet. Do something that makes you feel good about yourself and something that will help others and make them happy. It really is the most wonderful time of the year and it's all what you make of it. Happy Holidays!