

## **Get Creative This Christmas: Hand-Crafted Locally-Made Gifts**

### **Eco-Friendly Gifts That Won't Break the Bank**

The silly season is just around the corner. For the festive fanatics, your Christmas tree is already up, and the house is decorated. But for most of us, it's about to begin.

Traditionally a time for family and celebrations, many of you may be stressing about how to make this year special. With the cost-of-living crisis and the need to stretch your household dollars further, have you considered more sustainable, locally-made gifts?

On the Kāpiti Coast, evidenced by our recently successful arts trail, we're home to a thriving artistic community. Whether you love original artwork, hand-crafted jewellery, upcycled clothing, pottery or quirky garden art - you're spoilt for choice.

### **Sustainable Gifts On The Kāpiti Coast**

Many local artisans also embrace sustainability by using recycled materials like old photo frames, timber offcuts, harakeke, beach glass and upcycled jeans. One such creative is Waikanae's Juli Hunter, the Queen of eco-friendly clothing and home wares. Since 2000, when she first launched her label on Auckland's fringe, sustainability has been her inspiration.

*"Creativity has always been an integral part of who I am. I can't remember a moment in my life where I haven't been drawn to create. Whether this is clothing, crafts, or anything else - hunting out overlooked materials and moulding these into something beautiful is at the core of my being,"* says Juli Hunter.

Inside her alterations workshop on the Main Road, you can join her weekly sewing club every Wednesday night for only \$15. Everyone's welcome, and it's a great opportunity to work on your project: think personalised Santa sack, Christmas decorations, or tote bag! If shopping is more your thing, mark Saturday, November 30, on your calendar. That's when her weekly eco-friendly Christmas market kicks off and runs until December 21.

### **Gifts That Do More Good**

If you love supporting local charities, did you know some of them make unique hand-crafted items for sale? It's two thumbs up. You get affordable, locally-made gifts and do good for the community. How good is that?

### **Home4All - Caring For People Living With Dementia**

Jan and Marian Weststrate operate Home4All, a care facility for those living with the early stages of dementia. The community-based service in Raumati is centred around the Green Care farm model used in the Netherlands. It supports visitors by providing a safe, homely, social environment. These daily interactions offer physical exercise and cognitive stimulation, giving them a fun and rewarding day out (and family members some respite).

*“Getting dirty hands and dirty shoes and soaking up the outdoors all contribute to the sense of purpose and well-being that the visitors experience. By including environments and hobbies they enjoy, it increases their quality of life, keeps them mobile and makes them feel valued. It’s the essence of what we do,” says Marian.*

At Home4All, every day is full of activities, whether playing scrabble, gardening, tending to the animals, or crafting outside. This year, they have some great gift ideas for the family, from bright and funky bird feeders to outdoor games and Christmas trees made from recycled pallets. In fact, everything is made from upcycled and donated materials, much like the facility's own home renovation. But that's another story.

### **The Shed Project - Supporting Marginalised & Differently-Abled People**

Since 2014, Denis at The Shed Project in Paraparaumu has been working to improve the lives of disadvantaged and differently-abled people. From his space in Tongariro Street, his team supports them by providing a range of programmes to train and provide employment opportunities.

*“The goal is to remove the stigma and help our people live independently and enjoy healthy, meaningful lives within the community,” says Denis.*

Recently, The Shed Project opened Platform 1, a community-focused art gallery showcasing the creativity nurtured and developed in-house. Here, you will find a beautiful array of artwork priced to sell, including hand-painted earrings, felt work, harakeke weaving, pottery, photographs and paintings. With 70% of the sale price going back to the artist, every purchase—big or small—makes a difference.

So, if you want to do something special this year, before you jump on Temu or go where everyone gets a bargain, perhaps be more creative. Maybe spend your money where it does the most good—for you and your community.

Featured:

Juli Hunter: <https://www.julihunter.com>

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The Shed Project: <https://shedproject.co.nz/>

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