



# TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## GIVE GIFTS OF TIME THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, GROUP URGES

Seattle, WA — With the holiday buying season just getting underway, leaders of the national TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY campaign ([www.timeday.org](http://www.timeday.org)) are encouraging Americans to say no to expensive shopping sprees and give friends and families the gift of time instead.

“Massive spending during the holidays traps millions of Americans in a perpetual ‘buy and work’ cycle,” says Gretchen Burger, national staff person for the Take Back Your Time campaign. “For the past six years, more Americans have declared personal bankruptcy each year than have graduated from college, and this kind of debt leads to longer and longer working hours just to pay it off.”

“The result is a society that is running out of time and working an average of 350 hours more each year per person than western Europeans work,” adds Cecile Andrews of The Simplicity Forum, which initiated TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY. “Overwork is the price of our obsession with stuff, and the price of overwork is poorer health, less time for families, friends, community and civic life, and environmental stewardship. The emphasis on materialism has gotten American life way out of balance, and that’s especially clear during the holidays.”

Time Day’s national coordinator, John de Graaf, co-author of *AFFLUENZA: THE ALL-CONSUMING EPIDEMIC*, warns that “shopping malls and discount stores are hot zones for ‘affluenza’ the disease of over-spending—while credit cards are carriers of the virus. Be careful with your cards and avoid the hot zones. Economists will say such restraint is bad for the economy,” adds de Graaf. “But what’s an economy for anyway? Is it to give us more debt, overwork, stress and unhappiness, or to provide a healthy, balanced and sustainable way of life? That’s the question we should be asking.”

“Instead of showering kids with material gifts, and taking them to the mall, spend real family time with them this holiday season,” advises Dr. William Doherty, professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota and TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY Steering Committee member. “Make gifts with your children, sing together, play games, share meals and talk with each other. Encourage your kids to help the less fortunate. These are the gifts that strengthen families and the ones children will remember in the long run.”

This past October 24<sup>th</sup>, thousands of Americans participated in the first annual TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY, with more than 200 events in the US and Canada, according to Mark Schindele, an intern with the campaign. “Overworked and overscheduled, they understand that it’s time we slowed down a little and started moving toward more balanced lives,” says Schindele. “This holiday season is a good time to start reminding ourselves that the best things in life aren’t things and that there’s no present like the time.”

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*Take Back Your Time Day is a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy at Cornell University, and is the first national initiative of the Simplicity Forum*