

Nurturing Mom

A bouquet of budget-friendly tips for Mother's Day

By Carley Thornell | Sunday, May 3, 2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Hard Times

When the coral bells bloom in her yard every spring, Barbara Seed Siergiewicz is reminded of the Mother's Day perennial that her son, now 25, gave her when he was in grade school. And last year her son and 20-year-old daughter helped plant window boxes - making blossoms and memories for years to come.

"It was a family thing done together, which brings joy to the mother," said Siergiewicz, a parent coach and teacher of child and adolescent psychology at Endicott College. "The flowers continue to grow all season long. It's a memory of that day when they helped me to make my yard look beautiful and started the whole season off."

Rather than buy flowers, helping mom garden is one way to have a memorable Mother's Day, Siergiewicz said. Her point: In these tough economic times, personalization is the key to a good gift.

"A great way to make a homemade card extra special is to include specifics, such as 'I love how you take good care of me/us,' or 'I appreciate all that you do for me (driving me everywhere, making delicious lunches, my favorite foods, your wonderful hugs, the way you tuck me in at night, how you listen to me).' The key is specifics that convey some real thought and attention beyond just 'Happy Mother's Day.'"

Most mothers, she said, would rather their children spend time, not money on them. Ideas include the clever framing of family photos, old or new, or a day trip.

There's plenty to do around Boston outdoors. The annual Duckling Day Parade, based on the children's book "Make Way for Ducklings," is a family event retracing the steps of Mr. and Mrs. Mallard and is led by the Harvard University marching band. A \$25 donation per family includes snacks, entertainment and a toy for each child at the Mother's Day event.

The mother of all free flower shows is at Arnold Arboretum. Lilac Sunday coincides with Mother's Day this year, said event coordinator Leah Kane. In addition to 192 different kinds of the fragrant purple blooms, there will be music, ballet, Mexican dancing and children's activities. Lilac Sunday is the only day of the year picnicking is allowed at the park.

There is also Family Play Day on Saturday at Wharf District Parks on the Greenway. There will be music, jugglers, stilt walkers and crafts, and tours of Rose Kennedy's historic neighborhood.

Franklin Park and Stone zoos are offering moms free admission on Sunday, and Coldstone Creamery is giving mothers free dessert Sunday when they visit any New England location with kids.

Looking for other sweet treats, or some of the adult variety? Try mimosas and chocolate chip cookies at Boutique Fabulous in Inman Square. Owner Mara Kustra is enlisting her husband to make dessert.

"I'm keeping my husband in on Saturday night to bake chocolate chip cookies for everyone," she said. "We thought, 'It's Inman Square, everyone comes in after lunch.' There's a lot of moms coming in and out of my store seven days a week. . . . We just wanted to celebrate them. If you're a mom, come on in!"

The **Newbury Street** Mothers Day Promenade promotion is another draw. Dress and Luna Boston boutiques are offering 15 percent off discounts and gifts with purchase, Fresh is giving deluxe bath product samples, and the Movement Center of Boston is discounting exercise lessons by a third.

But sometimes the best things in life are free, said Siergiewicz, and oftentimes what Mom - or Dad - needs is just some extra sleep.

"Parents don't get enough sleep and that's a problem," said the parent coach. "The No. 1 reason parents have stress is that



Photo by Matthew Healey

they don't take care of themselves."

If you're planning on making that breakfast in bed, hold off for an extra hour or two - and make sure you clean up that mess in the kitchen. "It's the small things that count," said Siergiewicz.

Still clueless? Just ask Mom what she wants. "I love being asked what I would like to do!" said Siergiewicz. "Moms are usually the ones trying to make everyone else happy."

Renee Nadeau and Katy Jordan contributed to this article.

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