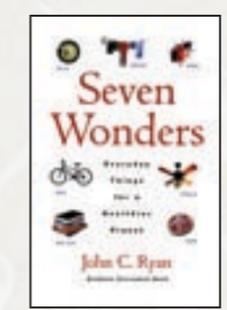


Simple Solutions

for everyday ORGANIC™



In December 1999, a newspaper reporter from Washington called. He was writing a review of the book *Seven Wonders: Everyday Things for a Healthier Planet* by John C. Ryan. Michael Guilfoil of *The Spokesman-Review* newspaper asked me if I had my own “seven wonders.” The story that ensued was headlined “Simple Solutions.” Here, then, is the continuation of that story. Each issue of *MaryJanesFarm* will feature in detail new solutions, and will give you all the information you need to make them your own.

Solutions from previous issues are available in the magazine section of my website: www.maryjanesfarm.org/SimpleSolutions

7 Acts of Kid Kindness
Helping kids become helpers is crucial in developing strong identities of generosity and usefulness. “There is an unexpected magnificence in our children and an underestimated power in their ability to change our world for the better,” writes Mary Gordon, author of *Roots of Empathy*. Let’s begin teaching our kids ways to offer the best of themselves to others in need. Here are seven ways to start ‘em off on the right foot.

1. Start a Stuffed Animal Roundup
Encourage your child to pick a toy or two that she is willing to give kids who have less to cuddle. Branch out by asking friends, neighbors, and schoolmates to contribute to the cause. Toys can then be offered to a local charity or homeless shelter.

seven wonders

5. Share a Story, Sing a Song
Nearly every child is a natural performer. Maybe yours is a storyteller, singer, dancer, artist, or acrobat. Whatever her talent, encourage her to share it with seniors at a nearby nursing home or hospital. The residents will relish the charming entertainment, and your child will love putting her special skills to good use.



6. Collect Pennies for Pet Food
Another way to help out at retirement centers is to offer pet food and supplies. Many seniors own pets but have little or no income, making it difficult to care for their friends. Neighbors, supermarkets, and pet stores may be willing to donate money or products for your child’s cause.

7. Donate Doodle Books
Save your cardboard food boxes and scrap paper. When you have a stack, use scissors to cut the boxes so that they form book covers, then snip scrap paper (blank on one side) to fit. Staple or sew paper into the covers to create “Doodle Books” that you can deliver to waiting rooms at local business and medical offices (add a pencil tied with string). Bored kids (and their parents) will be so grateful!

A Few Tips for a Simple Life

by Michael Guilfoil
The Spokesman-Review

Organic farmer MaryJane Butters long ago embraced Thoreau’s dictum to “simplify, simplify.” As a Forest Service ranger in the 1970s, she spent two summers roaming Utah’s Uinta Mountains with her home on her back. Later, she maintained the most remote wilderness ranger station in the Lower 48. Today, Butters and her family live eight miles outside Moscow, Idaho, on their farm, headquarters of her mail-order dry-foods business. But even e-commerce hasn’t tempered Butters’ enthusiasm for simplicity.



MaryJane’s

2. Create Homemade Happy Meals
Gather up a bunch of craft supplies and get busy creating “healthy meals” for homeless kids. Paper bags can be glitzed up with glitter, stickers, and cheerful messages. Fill bags with healthy “store-packaged” treats like cookies, popcorn, granola bars, crackers, and dried fruit snacks. Your child can add a small toy, game, or book to each bag for an extra dose of delight. Deliver your happy packs to a local shelter for women and children.

3. Pamper Homeless Pets
Animal shelters are always in need of supplies: towels, blankets, newspapers, pet dishes, and more. Organize a neighborhood drive to gather up items for homeless pets in your area. Kids will also love the idea of baking their own treats to take to the animals (find recipes at www.greatpetrecipes.com). Go the “extra mile” and volunteer to walk a dog while visiting your shelter.



4. Spruce Up Your Street
Your child may not get excited about cleaning her own room, but she will likely be tickled to tidy up around town. Grab a couple of garbage bags, gloves, a shovel, and a wheelbarrow (or little red wagon!) for easy transport, then set out to spruce up your yard, street, or even the local park.

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