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## Little gifts help beat chemotherapy blues

By Terry Lee Goodrich  
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**BEDFORD** - After each of her 12 chemotherapy treatments, Janna Adams couldn't wait to get home.

But not simply to rest after the cancer-fighting sessions, which frequently cause nausea and other unpleasant side effects.

Like a child at Christmas, the Keller resident wanted to open the latest gift from her aunt. During six months of exhausting chemotherapy for breast cancer, she unwrapped comic DVDs, relaxation CDs, bath oils -- even grape juice and balloons to celebrate with her family after the final treatment.

"It was something to look forward to when there was something else you *weren't* looking forward to," said Adams, 38, a computer programmer whose breast cancer has been in remission

for more than a year.

Adams' reaction inspired her aunt, Joy Becker of Bedford, to begin making gift baskets and sell them to people who want to comfort loved ones undergoing chemotherapy. Her business, the Chemo Buddy Club, began accepting online orders in mid-September. About 25 orders have been placed, Becker said.

"When Janna was going through this, I didn't want to call or go to her house all the time, because she wasn't feeling good," said Becker, 55, a legal secretary. "But I wanted to provide emotional, spiritual, practical support. Once you do, you don't feel so helpless."

Chemo Buddy Baskets, priced from \$10 to \$100, usually include one to eight gifts. Items are individually wrapped and tucked into the basket, which is wrapped in cellophane. Patients open a gift after each treatment.

Becker's sister, Judi Sparrow, 56, of South Lake Tahoe, Nev., assists with shipping and creates lacy "chemo caps" to keep heads warm and hide hair loss that chemotherapy may cause.

"At first it was, 'Let me do shipping,' " said Sparrow, a breast cancer survivor. "Then it was, 'Let me work on a Web site.' Joy's the creative one, but I have more time."

The sisters say a basket is a way to support patients after the initial flurry of cards and calls tapers off. They have sent baskets to men, women and children, with gifts ranging from journals, puzzles and jewelry to teddy bears, booties and "Jars of Joy" containing inspirational messages.

Former Little League coach Jack Ritenhouse, 69, of Reno, Nev., who recently completed chemotherapy for lung cancer, said he was heartened by a basket from several teacher friends, among them Edie Webber, a creative-writing teacher in Jacks Valley, Nev.

"We thought, 'What can we do?' " Webber said. "This can be very tailored to the person you're sending it to."

Among Ritenhouse's gifts were a sports trivia book and a DVD of *Who's On First?*, Abbott and Costello's classic comedy routine about baseball.

"This is a simple thing," he said. "But it's a wonderful idea."

to contact Chemo Buddy Club, call (817) 354-6343 or (775) 586-1066 or visit [www.chemobuddyclub.com](http://www.chemobuddyclub.com).

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