



## PRACTICAL WAYS TO CREATE MEANING

# Fall RYH Open House Event

*Two RYH trainers in Marshalltown -- Diane Hall, retired Marshall County Naturalist, and Pam Blake, Marshall County Recycling Coordinator -- partnered with their local library and Marshalltown Community College to host a fall RYH event. The event drew 70*

*attendees and 12 volunteers. The team offered a similar event at their local nature center. They encourage other RYH trainers to modify the planning ideas for your own community.*

### Planning Notes/Preparation

**Event Date:** October, 2-6 p.m., Marshalltown Library (timed for after school & work)

Start planning in August for October event (see [RYH Tasks & Timelines](#) Chart in online resources). This event included several stations for varied participant ages.

### Staff/Volunteers needed at these stations for three 1 ½ hour shifts:

**Greeter (1 table plus place for coats):** Encourages people to come into room and respond to questions below and post short answers on public smiley poster or RYH display poster.

“What are your favorite parts of the holiday? What traditions are important? What holiday routine depletes rather than restores?” Might also run [Happiness Video](#) in the lobby (need internet access, laptop, speakers.)

**Halloween Table (3 tables):** Easy costume ideas from books/magazines; simple decorations; [Costume exchange](#) ideas from two Iowa communities; face painting for younger children.

**Thanksgiving Table:** Ideas for natural or recycled decorations (pinecone turkey, pilgrim clothespin, gourds, leaves, nuts, paper weaving placemat, scarecrow candle holder jar, Halloween spatter jar, twig vase).



*Creative Gift Display*

**Places to Shop Table:** Attic/basement, second hand stores, antique or flea market (see list from [Finding Used Gems](#) handout); Use local or RYH display; Show examples of local places/gifts.

**Creative Gift Ideas (2 tables/4 chairs):** Examples of gifts of experience, unique gifts, coupons/gift certificates for local arts/theatre, mix in a jar example, art box, homemade checkers/memory game.

Guests could do a Make a Mix activity to take with them. Make use of [RYH Printable Gift Certificates](#). Use some of these gifts as door prizes during event.

**Creative Wrapping (4 tables/7 chairs):** Display examples of comics, old maps, rubber stamping, & pop-up cards. See RYH [Green Wrapping and Green Gifts](#).

**Hands-on Craft (1 table):** Environmentally friendly craft for age 10-adult.

**Book Display:** In main library, display children's books and books that are appropriate as gifts for children/youth. Librarian attends as resource person. Include [RYH Book/Resource](#) List.

*Guests register for door prizes at this table; write their name and contact information on a slip of paper and put in a box.*

**Food --** Served popcorn using Library's popcorn machine.

### **Publicity**

Installed a **display** promoting the event in the Library's display case. Monthly topic ideas:

1. October – showcase “Gifts of Experience” & Oct Open House event
2. November – RYH “Ideas/to do list” for public
3. December – RYH “last minute” details for public to promote December Cookie Decorating Event at Nature Center.

Wrote news release for local newspaper/radio/TV.

Contacted public access television station to air a short video promoting the event.

Promoted event through library newsletter, nature center newsletter, two radio stations, Chamber of Commerce and other area electronic/digital display marquee, fliers left in various community locations.

Could post [RYH Event Flyer](#) (template set up – just insert your information) on community display boards i.e. coffee shops, library, local eateries.

**Here's what one participant said after the Open House:** “I thought it was so refreshing to be able to use these simple ideas for gifts and natural items for decorating. That way I avoided all the shopping and didn't get worn out. It's much more relaxing than the hectic pace in the stores. Now instead of shopping for my family, I can spend more time with them. In my point of view, that's getting your priorities in order. For people with limited income, RYH ideas are a great way to save money and still have a really good Christmas with your family.”

**Visit our [Facebook page](#) for more ideas and to contribute your own!**

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*Reclaim your Holidays is a project of the University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education. Support for this project is provided by the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) Conservation Education Program and University of Northern Iowa EPSCoR project. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of funders.*

For more information, visit [www.ReclaimYourHolidays.org](http://www.ReclaimYourHolidays.org)

### *Make a Mix Activity Recipes*

Someone may donate quart fruit jars or they can be purchased.

#### **Bean Soup Mix** (<http://www.budget101.com/content.php/323-bean-soup-mix>)

1/4 cup dried garbanzo beans  
1/4 cup dried navy beans or lima beans (measure generously)  
1/4 cup dried red kidney beans/ pinto beans /cranberry beans (choose one)  
1/4 cup dried whole or split peas  
3 Tablespoons minced dried onion  
4 Tablespoons pearl barley (measure generously)  
2 Tablespoons dried celery flakes / dried parsley  
2 tsps. instant vegetable bouillon granules  
1/2 tsp. dried basil, crushed  
1 bay leaf  
Salt

Layer all ingredients in a large cone shaped bag, quart jar, or Vacuum Seal bag; seal & attach a tag with directions.

Attach Tag that gives instructions

#### To Make Bean Soup

Combine contents of package/jar with 7 cups water in a 3-quart saucepan. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 2 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand 1 hour. (Or soak bean mixture in the water overnight in a covered pan.) Do not drain. Bring beans and liquid to boiling, reduce heat. Cover and simmer 1-1/2 to 2 hours or until beans are tender. Remove bay leaf. Season to taste. Makes 6-8 side dish servings.

#### To Make Bean Soup with Meat

Follow basic recipe through the soaking step. Add one 3/4-1 pound smoked pork hock or beef shank crosscuts. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 1 hour for pork hocks or 1-1/2 hours for beef shanks. Remove meat, chop coarsely, and return to soup. Remove bay leaf. Add one 16-oz. can tomatoes, cut up and undrained. Add one medium carrot, chopped. Cover and simmer for 30 more minutes. Season to taste. Makes 4-6 servings.

#### To Make Chili Bean Soup

Follow basic recipe but reduce water to 5-1/2 cups. Remove bay leaf. Brown 1/2-pound ground beef and drain off fat. Add 1 tsp. chili powder and cook 1 minute. Add to bean soup along with one 10-oz. can tomatoes. Heat through, stirring occasionally. Season to taste. Serve in tortilla bowls or with corn chips. Garnish with jalapenos, if desired. Makes 6-8 main-dish servings.

### To Make Bean Cheese Soup

Follow basic recipe through the soaking step, except reduce water to 4 cups. Remove bay leaf. Mash beans slightly. Add 2 cups milk and one 6-oz. link cheese food or smoked cheese food. Cook and stir until beans are soft.

Makes 4-6 main dish servings.

### **Chocolate Chip Cookie Mix**

1/2 cup sugar

1 cup packed brown sugar

1 cup milk chocolate chips

2 1/4 cups flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

1/2 c. walnuts, chopped

Combine all ingredients in jar (in Layers) or in vacuum seal bag.

Attach Tag with instructions:

1 Jar Mix

3/4 cup softened butter

2 eggs

1 tsp. vanilla

Combine all in good size bowl & mix well. Drop by big spoonfuls on greased baking sheets. Bake in 350 F. oven for 12-14 minutes.