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WNC Parent

Top 10 gifts for teens and tweens

by Lockie Hunter, WNC Parent Correspondent
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Buying holiday gifts for teens and tweens can be challenging, as there is often a wide variety of items that are overlooked. The suggestions below range from gadgets to experiences, from books to cell phones. Art, music and theater file alongside the latest video games. These gifts may extend your child's range of skills or broaden your child's horizons.

1. Nintendo's Wii

Pronounced "we," it is a video game system designed to encourage people to sit and play together. Teens, younger siblings and parents may all enjoy playing. Wii can be played across the room or across the continent. Think locally. Game globally. \$249.99 at Circuit City, 107C River Hills Road, Asheville, 299-0150.

2. 'The Daring Book for Girls' and 'The Dangerous Book for Boys'

"Great resources for kids who are passive or spend too much time inside," says Malaprops' Caroline Green. With chapter titles such as "Telling Ghost Stories" or "The Golden Age of Piracy" these books encourage activity. "They tell you all the things that parents knew but seem to have gotten lost in our DVD culture." \$24.95 each. Malaprops Books, 55 Haywood St., Asheville, 254-6734.

3. Cell Phone with Chaperone and VZ Navigator

Add Chaperone and Navigator to the Samsung U410 to create an ideal phone package for your tween. Chaperone allows you to locate your child from a Verizon telephone. Navigator boasts turn-by-turn directions to any address. The U410 comes with functions like Bluetooth wireless technology.

\$79.99 for Samsung U410 phone; Chaperone \$9.99 a month; VZ Navigator \$9.99 a month; at Verizon, 242 Tunnel Road, Asheville, 251-2335.

4. Nike + iPod Sports Kit

Transform your iPod nano into a personal workout coach with the Nike + iPod Sport Kit. One end of the wireless sensor plugs into your iPod and the receiver fits in your shoe. Runner Danielle Deines of Jus Runnin' said, "it's a really fun way to mix up workouts. The voices offer encouraging words from celebrity athletes."

\$29 at Jus' Running, 523 Merrimon Ave., Suite 1, Asheville, 252-7867.

5. Classes at Asheville Arts Center

"The Asheville Arts Center inspires and teaches teens, tweens, children and adults to explore and excel," notes director Chris Lynn. Classes and lessons include acting, Broadway sing & dance, ballet, hip-hop, Irish dance, Rock U- school of rock, tango and more.

Eight-18 week sessions range from \$125-275. Music lessons \$88 per month.

Asheville Arts Center, 308 Merrimon Ave., 253-4000,
www.ashevilleartscenter.com.

6. Glittering earrings and barrettes

Step up to the Street Fair on Battery Park Avenue and prepare to be dazzled. The store boasts an impressive collection of costume jewelry. "Mostly the teenage girls come in and head straight for that wall of earrings," says Street Fair's Daniel McDonough, pointing to a wall overflowing with bling.

Earrings from \$10-\$28. Barrettes from \$5-\$24.

Street Fair, 42 Battery Park, Asheville, 253-0836.

7. RipStick Caster Board



credit: Special to the Citizen-Times
Nintendo's Wii game system is the top gift for tweens and teens.

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Unlike a 4-wheel skateboard, the RipStik is a two-wheel board that can make 360 degree turns in a smooth fashion due to its pivoting deck. Pushing is lessened as the twisting motion of the board propels you forward, even up hills. Totally rad.

\$99. Dick's Sporting Goods, 299 Swannanoa River Road, Asheville, 299-0077.

8. Sumi Art Kit

Give the gift of self-expression. Claire Reader at True Blue Art Supply says this painting kit may give your tween "an appreciation for art and another culture. It also has meditative properties." The kit includes three brushes, ink, stone, brush rest, paper, weight and red paste.

\$16.99. True Blue Art Supply, 30 Haywood St., Asheville, 251-0028

9. iPod Shuffle

The world's smallest digital music player, the 1GB iPod shuffle lets your teen wear up to 240 songs on his sleeve. Measuring only 1.62 inches long and weighing about half an ounce, this gift proves that good things do indeed come in small packages.

\$79.99. Best Buy, 83 S. Tunnel Road, Asheville, 298-2330.

10. Guitar and amplifier pack

This pack provides everything you need "to open your gift on Christmas morning and begin playing," says local musician Shane Roland. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, Musician's Workshop is a one-stop-shop for musical instruments as well as a full-service repair shop. It also offers classes. The pack includes a guitar, amplifier, gig bag, picks, tuner and either an entry level book or CD.

Packs range from \$199-\$299. Musician's Workshop, 319 Merrimon Ave., Asheville, 252-1249.

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