

smart solutions

Big Hug gives special gifts a personal touch

Personalized gift items can go a long way toward showing your appreciation for that special someone or honoring the memory of a loved one who is gone.



**JEANINE
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Katie Kiyo, owner of Bloomfield Hills-based Big Hug, offers an impressive selection of sentimental remembrance gifts, ranging from cozy throws to garden stones that can be customized.

When Kiyo learned the significance of sympathy gifts firsthand, the inspiration for her business was born. “I had a friend who lost her father, and I struggled with what to give her. I gave her personalized wind chimes, and they were well received,” she says. “It meant a lot to her that I made the effort to find something personal. When she hears them ring, she has the gentle reminder of her father.

“Flowers are beautiful but fleeting,” Kiyo says. “I was looking for something meaningful and something that could live

on in perpetuity. The loss of a loved one is not over six months later. It’s a lifelong event to somebody.”

Personalized benches and plaques, wind chimes and sun catchers, angel figurines, one-of-a-kind cherish boxes, sterling silver bell necklaces and handcrafted wood heart-shaped pet urns are some of the items available at her online store. Memorial jewelry contains the ashes of those who have been cremated.

One favorite is a custom leather photo pillow that uses an innovative new patented digital imaging process to permanently infuse images to leather. “This concept comes at a time when we are searching for alternative uses for digital photographs and artistic ways of keeping memories alive,” Kiyo says.

Kiyo also is expanding to include selections that suit other occasions and life transitions, such as the birth of a baby, weddings and anniversaries, promotions, birthdays, retirements and graduations, and “just because” gifts.

Due to recent requests, Big Hug now has gift certificates so recipients can



Big Hug

Some of the sentimental items from Big Hug, such as this Memories StepStone, come with beautiful sayings.

make their own selections. Some of the pieces, such as picture frames, benches and plaques, can be customized and shipped within 48 hours.

Kiyo says she also has been receiving

calls about Mother’s Day remembrance gifts. “It’s nice to honor a mother who is no longer there,” she says.

“We live in a mobile population,” she says. “You might need to send your gift to California, and we can manage the whole process for you.”

Her favorite part of shipping is the stamp she puts on packages that reads: “SOMEONE SENT YOU A BIG HUG.”

Kiyo says Big Hug is a popular catch phrase among many of her friends, mainly for social occasions.

“I feel that it also captures the essence of compassion and caring,” she says. “A big hug brings physical and emotional support in time of need — because to embrace and to touch is to comfort.”

For more information, call (248) 594-1560 or go to www.bighugllc.com.

Jeanine Matlow is a Metro Detroit interior decorator turned freelance writer specializing in stories about interior design. Her work has appeared in a number of regional publications. Have a décor question or a topic you would like her to cover? You can reach her at jeaninematlow@earthlink.net.