

Turn your ticket into holiday magic in Toys for Tickets campaign

Parking tickets are rarely a positive for the recipient, but they can certainly help spread some positivity throughout the community during this holiday season.

The Town of Aurora's Toys for Tickets campaign is now in full swing.

Parking tickets issued within Aurora between November 22 and December 16, with the exception of tickets issued for parking in a fire route, in an accessible parking space, or by obstructing an accessible parking space, can once again be paid for by donating a new toy or gift card to Town Hall.

All proceeds will support local families in need through the Town's partnership with the York Regional Police's Holiday Heroes campaign.

According to Bylaw's Alexander Wray, 2021 was a record year in terms of the number of donations received, a trend that didn't necessarily correspond with the number of tickets issued. Rather, it's a sign of the community's support of the initiative.

“What we've started to notice is people are voluntarily just starting to come in and donate toys because it's for a good cause; people just show up at Town Hall sometimes with toys that they've purchased or they've found on sale and they've dropped them off,” says Wray. “Last year we completely stuffed two of our SUVs with toys. When I started with the Town, the program was a lot smaller in terms of donations. It's something that seems to be growing astronomically on a year over year basis.”

Joining forces with the York Regional Police through its Holiday Heroes program was a “natural partnership” for Aurora's Bylaw department, notes Wray, given their involvement of the community and their knowledge of what's needed in “some of the communities that are under-served or under-privileged.”

“Bylaw services is always looking to enhance our community partners and community image and work with the community that we serve,” says Wray. “I always joke that not everyone wants a bylaw officer at their door, we're not the most exciting or fun people, but finding a way to give back is important to us. We're trying to give to the community because, ultimately, it builds good character but it also helps the officers understand the impact of people in our community who are underprivileged, are having a hard time, or are suffering, especially in an environment right now with high inflation?”. I think it is more important now than ever because people are struggling. People are having a hard time coming out of the pandemic and the YRP is an organization we trust and stand by.”

If you would like to participate in the Toys for Tickets program, whether or not you have a parking infraction to pay off, Wray notes that there's a particular need for gifts for older kids, particularly between the ages of 12 and 18. For this demographic, needs include books, bags, feminine hygiene products, and gift cards, which Wray says “go a long way.”

“It's okay to donate toys if you don't receive a ticket,” Wray stresses. “It's not just for people who receive tickets as much as that is the focus. If you want to bring in a new, unwrapped toy to Town Hall in passing or you have gift cards that are new with receipts still attached to them to prove that they're fully loaded? we'll happily take that and try and make somebody's Christmas season a little brighter.”

For more, visit aurora.ca/parking.

By Brock Weir
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