

Let the Lions help you get your Christmas wrapping done - and help those in need this season



By Brock Weir

Christmas is just over a week away and around this time of year you're probably feeling a little overwhelmed by the amount of gift wrapping you have ahead of you.

Fear not ? the Aurora Lions Club is coming to the rescue. Beginning this Thursday, December 15, and continuing on Saturday afternoon and the following Thursday and Friday, the Lions will be taking over the former medical clinic space in the northwest corner of the Aurora Shopping Centre at Yonge and Murray Drive for their annual Gift Wrapping drive.

For a cash donation, non-perishable food, toy donations, and gifts for teens, the Lions Club will do all your wrapping for you ? and your donations will stay within the Aurora community.

?The Lions have been doing the Christmas drive for over 40 years and we always used to do it on our own, collecting food, gifts, and giving it out to families,? says Jim Bondy, coordinator for the Aurora Lions' Christmas program. ?About three years ago it got to be too much for us and that's why we got involved with the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army collects all the food and gifts and they give it out to people. At the same time that we do that, we give out gift cards that our Aurora Lions pay for. Last year, we did 161 families and the year before that it was 209. I suspect this year it will probably come in at 180.?

Last year, the Aurora Lions spent over \$10,000 on gift cards for families, which were purchased, in part, from the donations they received from you when they held their charity gift wrapping program at the Aurora Shopping Centre last December.

Although last year's initiative brought in over \$700 in donations, they hope this year will be even better.

?We have gone around to all the stores in the plaza, they have put posters up, and the response is extremely enthusiastic,? says Mr. Bondy. ?Last year we had one guy come in with just two gifts to wrap and he gave us \$60!?

To handle the demand, the Lions have assembled a crack team of members and volunteers to keep the paper unrolling and the ribbons curling. They will be assisted this year by teens from the Leos, the youth arm of the Lions, which was reconstituted last year.

Head out to the Aurora Shopping Centre this Thursday and Saturday, as well as next Thursday and Friday to save yourself a bit of holiday stress while making a donation to help other families in Aurora feel a bit less stress as well. You can also meet Santa to boot!

The drive runs December 5 from 6 ? 9 p.m.; December 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; December 22 from 6 ? 9 p.m.; and December 23 from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. (and Santa from 6.30 ? 9 p.m.).