

Lions Club Christmas Campaign gets big boost from Canadian Tire



By Brock Weir

The Christmas Season is here and that means the Aurora Lions Club is hard at work collecting toys, food, and donations to help make the season bright for local families in need.

Partnered once again with the Salvation Army, the Lions' Christmas Program often benefits over 200 families each year, costing the local service club \$10,000 and \$12,000 annually to meet demand.

This year, however, many families will feel the spirit of the season thanks to a generous donation of \$3,100 from the employees at Aurora's Canadian Tire.

Over the last month, employees at the Bayview Avenue store have been working hard to raise funds within the store, whether making donations out of pocket or deducted automatically from their paycheques. The amount raised by employees was subsequently matched by store management.

"This was a big staff thing," says office manager Lynn Parkes. "We worked really hard - we even bought a set of Leafs tickets and raffled them off. I was down here saying, 'Don't forget the Christmas campaign at every morning huddle' and every payday!" "It was a lot of fun. Everyone was encouraged by it and always had a little story to bring every morning, and it really helped people think about [the community's] needs."

The Lions Club have spent the fall doubling down on raising awareness and securing donations and partnerships after deciding to forego their traditional Christmas gift wrapping services this year and directing their energies on the groundwork.

"The Aurora Lions supply grocery gift cards to all the needy in Aurora and we work in conjunction with the Salvation Army where we give away non-perishable food, toys and gifts at the same time," says Lion Jim Bondy, chair of the Christmas Basket program.

"Last year, we helped 161 needy families in Aurora and, last year, it was 220. We're a small club, so we're just hoping it is not going to be 220 this year!"

Throughout the Christmas Basket campaign, Mr. Bondy notes the Lions will accept donations of non-perishable foods and gifts of all kinds. There are ten donation boxes set up throughout the community, including at local fire halls, all of which is collected at the Salvation Army's depot in Aurora for organization and distribution on December 18.

To arrange a donation, contact Jim Bondy at jbondy@rogers.com or call 905-591-1913. For more on this campaign or the Aurora Lions Club, visit www.aurora-lions-club-ontario.com.