

Close out 2020 with virtual New Year's celebrations following fireworks cancellation

In this difficult year, many of us can be forgiven for wanting to shut the door on 2020. But, if you want to end the year with some fun, the Town of Aurora is offering a series of virtual programs to help kick the old year to the curb and get 2021 off on the right foot.

While present health restrictions will not allow the Town's Family First Night, a mainstay on New Year's Eve at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC), to take place in its traditional format this year, ?Celebration Kits? and virtual activities will allow families to enjoy much of the programming they have come to love from the comfort of their own homes.

?Our celebration kits will include a variety of crafts geared towards children four to twelve years of age and we have focused on how different countries celebrate New Year's Eve at various times,? says Ms. Ware. ?There will be a craft at 2 p.m. celebrating a country ringing in the New Year at that time and there will be other generic activities for them to participate at home. All of the supplies are provided in the bag and the bag will be available for curbside pickup on December 29.

?We're also going to have a variety of virtual experiences with New Year's Eve. Most people celebrate with food and we'll have three appetizer cooking videos put up on our website which are geared towards all ages, especially the person in the home who is not necessarily the chef every evening. We have chosen some really simple appetizers that anyone can make and there will be three teaching videos available. Some families can make some delicious appetizers together to enjoy on New Year's Eve while they watch our virtual entertainment: a little over an hour of back-to-back busker performances all online in an easy format.?

Before the Province-wide lockdown starting Boxing Day was announced on Monday, the Town was gearing up to help residents end the year with a bang. Up to 150 lucky families would have been able to take part in a drive-in fireworks experience at the AFLC on New Year's Eve.

This event, however, was cancelled on December 22 in light of new restrictions, but the 200 free Celebration Kits will save the day. They are available to register for on a first come first served basis through the Town's e-Play system at [Aurora.ca](#).

As Ms. Ware looks toward this new spin on traditional New Year's fun, she says there are a few things she'll miss, like the family-favourite reptile and magic shows, science demonstrations and the ?good cheer of people coming together, all with a common goal of ringing in the New Year.? But it is also a time to make new memories as well ? and plan ahead to events in 2021.

?We're going all out with Arctic Adventure,? she teases on the popular Family Day event. ?It is going to be over multiple days and involve multiple adventures. We're going to keep some of the tried and true that worked well previously but spread them out over different times. There will be indoor adventures, virtual adventures and in-person ones. We'll be honing in with many key community groups to deliver as many adventures as possible. We're going to go from a one-day Arctic Adventure to a four-day experience with virtual activities for children that weekend.

?We're going to continue building on the lessons we learned in 2020 with hybrid programming and in-person and virtual, build upon what worked, and continue re-inventing the wheel and continue to try to keep being creative, to ensure that all the events continue to move forward in some format.?

For more on these and other programs, visit [aurora.ca](#).

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