

Kids get a merrier Christmas ? thanks to your infractions



By Brock Weir

A bumper crop of toys were collected in Aurora's 2017 Toys for Tickets program, but whether this indicates a bumper crop of parking tickets issued by the Town or a cornucopia of generosity from residents, however, remains to be seen.

Representatives from Aurora's Bylaw Department began the task of sorting through a mountain of toys on Thursday, the result of the Toys for Tickets program launched November 15.

Open to all tickets issued between the launch of the program and last Monday, December 11, those lucky recipients could, in exchange for paying their ticket, bring in a toy in its original packaging and its original receipt, along with their parking ticket, for a fair exchange.

The value of the toy (or toys), of course, had to be equal or above the amount owing on the fine. Individuals donating with a value below that of the ticket had to pay the balance.

?This year, the program has been more successful because last year we were a little bit more limited with the program we had going on,? said Bylaw Officer Eric Schafranek as he and his colleagues tackled the toys last week. ?This was open to [tickets for] anything and everything except for parking in a fire route, disabled parking and parking within three metres of a fire hydrant. This could have been for parking [on streets] between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m., violations, parking too close to a sign, or parking too close to the intersection.

?The success of this program, as well as in the last few years, is to be able to give back to the community for the children who are less fortunate at Christmas this year. We have teamed up with the Salvation Army and the Lions Club to take on this program and deliver the toys out to the needy children. We appreciate everybody contributing to the program. We think it is a great idea and some of the recipients who have participated in this program thought it was a great idea. Instead of giving their money to the town, their money went to charity.?

Up at Southlake Regional Health Centre, the giving continued as members of York Regional Police descended upon the hospital to help load up the spoils from their Holiday Heroes campaign.

Southlake's newly-minted President and CEO Arden Krystal presented the toys, donated by staff, physicians and volunteers, to the Police, who have, through Holiday Heroes, raised more than \$1 million in monetary donations, new toys, kids clothing and food since 2008.

?I'm proud to be part of an organization made up of caring and compassionate people; I know this is the foundation you've all built your careers on and is what has brought you here today,? said Ms. Krystal. ?Thanks to the Holiday Heroes campaign, all these items will go to families in need, right here in York Region. I would also like to thank our friends at YRP for organizing such an important initiative. It is just one of the many contributions you make to our community.?