

No Tricks, Just Treats this weekend as volunteers come together for accessible Halloween fun



From Aurora's Haunted Forest to a new spin on the perennially-popular Rocky Horror Picture Show, there's plenty of activities going on around Aurora to get you into the Halloween spirit early this weekend ? but a new event is ditching the tricks for a whole lot of treats this Saturday.

On Saturday, October 25, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., No Tricks Just Treats will take place at Town Park, in conjunction with the Aurora Farmers' Market.

Billed as a fully accessible Halloween event, No Tricks Just Treats, a collaboration between Aurora residents Lauren Hanna and Alison Hughes, with the Market, the event will include an accessible trick-or-treat and costume parade, time on Town Park's inclusive playground, and an opportunity to learn more about how to make Halloween inclusive.

It will also be a chance for residents to pick up signs to indicate their home is a barrier-free place for trick-or-treaters to have some fun on Halloween night, which is part of the Treat Accessibly initiative, a grassroots movement the Town of Aurora has supported over the last several years.

?As a child, I loved trick-or-treating [but] it was often an inaccessible, slow and laborious adventure for my parents. Kudos to my dad for doing most of the doorbell ringing, bumping me up and down steps, getting my treats on my behalf,? said Hughes, a long-time champion for accessibility in the community, a member of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee, and a driving force behind the development of Town Park's playground.

?While we continue to push for more accessible trick-or-treating in all neighbourhoods, some families might not make it out on Halloween.?

The idea for No Tricks Just Treats, she explained, came about after she met Hanna at the Town's Community Recognition Awards ceremony this past spring where Hanna was honoured with Aurora's 2025 Community Leadership Award. Among the achievements for which she was recognized was the popular annual Easter Egg hunt she brought to Cousins Drive.

Hughes says when she approached her with a Halloween event, she was immediately on board.

"We landed on creating an inclusive and intentional trick-or-treat experience at the Market," she continued. "We're excited to bring more families from Aurora and surrounding areas to our incredible, accessible playground and have a fun Halloween experience."

Added Hanna: "When Allison reached out, I was honoured and touched because, as soon as you meet her, you know she's a very smart cookie. There was no saying 'no' to her. This is really exciting because it's free, it's accessible, and it's designed to be inclusive for all kids. It will be the first of its kind in Aurora and one of the very few events like this in York Region."

Communities like Aurora, Hanna said, need more inclusive events and that is at the heart of Saturday's celebration.

"We simply want to make sure that kids with disabilities are included, full stop. Events like this are too far and too few. When you hear Allison share her story, it really makes you think about the fact that inclusion matters and that every child deserves to experience the joy of community celebration," said Hanna.

"For some families, many local and seasonal events can be difficult, as we can all imagine, difficult to access, or simply overwhelming if they make it. When we can create spaces that are welcoming and adaptable, we send a powerful message that everyone belongs. These events strengthen our entire community by helping us to connect, understand, and celebrate together. As someone who is passionate about community connection and making sure no one feels left out, we wanted to help create an event that every family could enjoy without barriers."

After Hughes and Hanna made their pitch to Council last week, local lawmakers shared their enthusiasm as well.

"I really don't have words to say how much, or how many thanks I have to give you on behalf of so many people," said Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner. "What an exciting way to celebrate Halloween for those who find, as Alison did, it can be very tricky, and especially in the darkness or even if the weather is bad."

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas: "We are truly blessed in the Town of Aurora to have an abundance of volunteers, and it's volunteers [like Hanna and Hughes] that are able to bring forward ideas like this and get them done in the community. I want to thank you two for doing this, and we're looking forward to many years of this successful event."

By Brock Weir
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