

Santa's making his list, checking it twice before big night in Aurora



The countdown is on for Aurora's annual Santa Under the Stars Parade.

The perennial family favourite is set to make its way down Yonge Street from Orchard Heights to Murray Drive next Saturday, November 22, from 6 ? 8 p.m.

This night-time parade promises beautifully-decorated floats, marching bands, and much more ? including a visit from the Jolly Man in Red himself.

As he prepares for his trek to Aurora, Santa Claus took some time out of his busy Christmas preparations to share his excitement at coming back.

The Auroran: What are you doing up at the North Pole to get ready for the big day?

Santa Claus: You know, it's always the most magical time of year, as well as my favourite time of year, and I always look forward to coming to the Santa Under the Stars Parade. In preparation for our magical night on November 22, the elves have been working overtime, the reindeer are stretching their legs, and I'm polishing my boots for a night of twinkling lights and holiday joy!

TA: What's Aurora doing to get ready? What are you hearing?

SC: I've been checking my list and I must say Aurora's children have been extra nice this year, which is why the elves have been working even more overtime to accommodate my list, which is definitely growing! The true magic of this season is seeing neighbours come together, sharing laughter, cocoa, and kindness. This is what makes the parade so special for me, and so I've been promised that my sweet ride that night is all getting polished, all getting cleaned up from last year, so I'm excited because I'm familiar with my chair, and it's the same parade route, so again I'm excited because I've mastered that down. However, I want to preface that this parade isn't just about me; it's about bringing families together under the stars to celebrate the spirit of giving, joy, and community. I might be giving of my time that night, however, I'm the one benefiting because I actually get to see all the children with their eyes open, because as you can imagine, I only see them sleeping!

TA: What will be some of the parade highlights getting the kids' eyes all aglow?

SC: It's not going to be a quiet parade! There's going to be so many dazzling floats to merry music, with every moment being designed to light up the community, to light up those watching the parade. It's going to be an absolute sleigh-ful of wonder, and of course I just love hearing the marching bands. As well, they will have some pretty innovative buskers this year and quite a nice

balance between community groups, sports organizations, marching bands, and performers. So, really, they're warming up the roads for me, because I'm actually the very, very tail end of the parade. I only get to see it in the staging area, and trust me, I do not want to give up my ride, but it would be neat to watch a couple of these floats go by me, such as the Optimist Club of Aurora. They always do an outstanding job with their float. Then there's also the dance groups, they don't all have floats, but they are coordinated to the exact beat of their music, which is wild to see. I enjoy seeing how they pull it together, their rhythm, it really, really makes for a smashing success. I'm very looking forward to seeing the Dynamic Dance Company perform, as well as Spectrum North Baton. Then of course, there's really unique floats, such as the New Roots Garden Centers float ? theirs is always a strong one, and as well as Green Infrastructure Partners is a strong one. Then again, there's also the sports organizations, and they bring with their cheer, such as the Aurora Tigers. There's local martial arts groups involved. It really is a nice balance of sports, including Central York Girls Hockey Association. It truly is representative of how special the Aurora community is.

TA: What should families lining the street bring to the table?

SC: I'll definitely dress in layers because the weather can always be unpredictable. However, I am secretly kind of hoping for a few fun flakes to be floating down just to add to the magic of the night. So definitely dress warmly. I cannot, cannot stress this enough ? although they closed the road just for me and for all the floats, we really have to keep every single family member, child, parent off the actual road. I really want to see everybody's smiles from the sidewalk curb. Because we are closing down the road for a significant period of time, we need to ensure that emergency medical services are able to access any route they need. So please, please have encouraged families and whomever you bring along with you to watch the parade from the sidewalk curbside. I definitely always tip my hat and make sure I give an extra big wave to the accessible viewing area, so for anyone that requires to be in this section, reach out to Aurora's Events Team now and I'm sure they will hop right to it and secure you a spot in a special accessible viewing location.

For more on this year's Santa Under the Stars Parade, visit aurora.ca/santaparade.

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