

Student Athlete Tyler Pridham leads Christmas Toy Drive for kids residing at Blue Door Shelter



Aurora resident Tyler Pridham understands the vital importance of community service.

The 18-year-old aspiring US College baseball player volunteers at soup kitchens weekly and dedicates two days a week helping youngsters at the Blue Door Shelter in Newmarket.

When Pridham was advised that donations to the shelter's annual toy drive had stalled and the kids facing homelessness and housing challenges were not going to receive presents on Christmas morning, he was motivated to remedy this situation.

?The social workers at Blue Door told me how bad it is this year for kids and that toy donations were almost non-existent. There are kids in the community who are suffering. I feel like I should be doing this. I want to be able to give back and help out in the community. I have to do this to help these kids that are in these tough situations.?

Pridham's sense of resolve is certainly inspirational as are his goals for this year's Toy Drive.

?The goal is to raise awareness. Kids deserve to wake up Christmas morning with toys under the tree. The children living in the shelter?they're going through a tough time, including refugees just trying to get their bearings in Canada.?

The Aurora High School graduate is spending a gap year with the Titans Baseball Club in preparation for US College Baseball. When he takes his break from offseason training, Pridham interacts twice a week with the children at Blue Door to feed them healthy snacks.

?The kids are so well-behaved. Many of them are at the shelter in need of short-term relief. Blue Door's mission is to end homelessness. It's an invaluable organization that does important things to help members of our community that are suffering from housing crises.?

When asked how people can donate to his Toy Drive, he delineated a few strategies to help him provide toys for the children living at the Blue Door Shelter this Christmas: ?We'd be very grateful if people could drop off new, unwrapped toys at the True North Fieldhouse at 220 Pony Drive, Unit 3 in Newmarket. As well, on-line donations can be made directly to bluedoor.ca which is Blue Door Shelter's official website. People can also contact me by email at tylernormanpridham@gmail.com to arrange drop-offs or pick-ups of toys.?

Blue Door Shelter, whose slogan is "Giving Hope a Home," is located at 835 Gorham Street, Newmarket. Donors can also contact Blue Door at 905-898-1015 to arrange drop-off of toys. As noted on the shelter's website, "Blue Door increases housing access and retention, by creating and retaining new and existing affordable, transitional, and emergency housing."

Specifically, Blue Door provides 102 emergency housing beds, many of which are used to assist families with children.

Most immediately, Blue Door is in need of toys for the children residing at the shelter.

By Jim Stewart