

## Toys for Tickets is back for Holiday Season ? and in the home stretch



Aurora's annual Toys for Tickets program is back for another holiday season.

On now, through December 13, you can pay your parking ticket by donating a toy or non-perishable food.

In partnership with the York Regional Police, Aurora's Bylaw Department has already accepted a bevy of gifts that will warm many hearts this Christmas season, but they are looking to do a lot more before next Friday's deadline.

Through the program, parking tickets issued from Tuesday, November 12 to Friday, December 13 can be paid for by donating a new, unwrapped toy or non-perishable food donation at Town Hall.

Donations will not be accepted after this date.

Toys for Tickets is now in its fourth year and, according to Alexander Wray, Manager of Bylaw & Animal Services for the Town, was first seen as a way to give back to the community.

“We get that people make a mistake, they park on the street, and instead of the Town collecting the revenue from it, we should be giving back to those in the community who are in need,” says Wray. “We know there are concerns with poverty and homelessness arising in the community and it is a very simple gesture to support the kids over Christmas and just simply give back. This is something positive that can come out of something negative and that is genuinely the approach.”

The program collected more than \$5,000 in donations last year, exceeding their \$4,000 goal, and this year the Bylaw department is looking to raise the bar even higher.

To participate, all you need to do is bring in your ticket with toys and food in their original packaging, the original receipts for your donations (no photocopies or emails will be accepted), and the value of the toy or non-perishable food donations must be equal to or exceed the amount owing on the ticket.

Donations that total the early infraction payment will be accepted only within the early payment period.

Donations of more than one toy will be accepted as long as the total cost is equal to or greater than the parking fine amount. Cash will not be accepted.

Parking ticket recipients that donate a toy with a value less than the amount owing, are required to pay the remaining balance.

All toys and non-perishable food items will be donated to local toy drives and the local food pantry.

As the deadline approaches, Wray states that in addition to toys for the younger kids, donations for older kids and teens, particularly gift cards to stores like Best Buy and EB Games, are encouraged.

He further encourages those looking to pay off their fines think "outside the box a little bit."

"I know that might be a bit of an ask, but things like bicycles, electronics, these are things that kids like and it is often hard for them to obtain, especially in these types of situations," he says. "We will always take the donation in terms of the minimum value of the ticket, but if the ticket is \$40 and you want to donate \$100 worth of toys just because it is going to charity, by all means. You can over-donate. We'll happily take it and the police would be happy to work with us on it."

For more information about this program, please call Bylaw Services at 905-727-3123 ext. 4245 or visit [aurora.ca/toysfortickets](http://aurora.ca/toysfortickets).

**By Brock Weir**