

Auxiliary cops kick off toy drive

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Almost 2,000 children living in shelters and low-income families in the Scarborough area will have a toy for under the Christmas tree by Dec. 13.

Santa's early arrival again is thanks to a group of Toronto Auxiliary Police officers from the east-end 41, 42 and 43 divisions.

"The joy of giving" has moved these volunteers for the last 15 years to collect, sort and deliver thousands of toys to shelters and community centres in the neighbourhood.

"It is hard work, but our reward is the smile of all these children in need," said toy drive chairman Auxiliary Insp. Margaret Miklas.

She's been in charge of the initiative for the past five Christmases.

"Thanks to many sponsors and volunteers we can make sure all these kids will enjoy the spirit of Christmas, even if some of them are not able to spend this time of the year with their families."

Christmas 1993, auxiliary officer Carrie Malin knew about a couple who had lost their jobs and were living in a motel room with their three kids.

"I couldn't sleep for nights just thinking of families like them, but in just two weeks our group was able to donate 750 toys to families in distress," Malin said.

Councillor Paul Ainslie, who attended the kickoff for the toy drive at 43 Division yesterday, said "this area is now particularly in need of this support due the large amount of single parents living in shelters."

In the next six weeks, new and unused unwrapped toys can be dropped off at 41 Division (2222 Eglinton Ave. E.); 42 Division (242 Milner Ave.); 43 Division (4331 Lawrence Ave. E.); and the Scarborough Town Centre police office.