

Shelburne Fire Department's 15th Toy and Food Drive underway

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The Shelburne & District Firefighters Association is lending a helping hand to local families this holiday season as they hold their 15th annual Toy and Food Drive.

Firefighters from the local department will be collecting toys and food items from community members throughout December, including at two events held on Dec. 14 at No Frills and Dec. 21 at Foodland from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"The purpose of the Toy and Food Drive is to give back to our community and give to those in need. We didn't realize it was going to be an annual event when we started it 15 years ago. Our hope was to try and give back to the community we serve, plain and simple, and it's just gone from there," said Capt. Mike Morrell, coordinator for the annual event. "It shows the need for food and toys has continued to grow year after year."

Started in 2010 by Morrell and fellow Shelburne firefighters, the annual Toy and Food Drive looks to collect new, unwrapped toys to give to Dufferin Children & Family Services (DCAFS) and non-perishable food donations for the Shelburne Food Bank, Shepherd's Cupboard. All donations made stay within the community.

Last year, the local fire department was able to help donate toys to a total of 400 families at DCAFS.

"Anything we get to help these families and children with toys and gift cards is great," said Morrell.

When it comes to donations through the toy drive, the Shelburne & District Firefighters Association typically sees a majority of donations for younger age groups as well as newborns.

"The teenagers really seem to be the ones that lack [donations]," said Morrell.

For anyone interested in making a donation to the Toy Drive, but is unsure on what to get; Morrell recommends picking an age group and gender, then shopping based on those criteria.

"Think of what you would have liked to have received at that age," said Morrell.

So far, the Shelburne & District Firefighters Association has hosted two collection events, held on Nov. 23 and Nov. 30. Morrell told the Free Press that the toy and food collection has been "very slow," but added that they're hopeful it will pick up.

"We don't set a goal, we just try to do the best we can and collect as much as we can for as many people," said Morrell. "It's not easy for anybody to give. It's become tougher, as we see the need for the food banks and people reaching out for the extra help increase over time."

For those who are not able to make the two remaining collection events, the Shelburne and District Fire Department also accepts donated items at the fire station, located at 114 O'Flynn Street. Donations can be dropped off on Thursday and Friday between 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays from 12 p.m. (noon) to 4 p.m.