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Dufferin OPP launch ?positive ticketing? initiative

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While a ticket from the police can be quite upsetting for adults, youth throughout Dufferin County can look forward to getting written up over the spring and summer season.

Dufferin OPP are rewarding youth for good behaviour with ?positive tickets?, under the community-based crime prevention program, ?Operation Freeze?.

The program kicked off recently and is in partnership with Circle K convenience stores, where the positive tickets can be redeemed for a frosty beverage.

?Officers will be handing out coupons or as we like to call them, ?positive tickets', when they see you demonstrating acts of kindness or exhibiting positive behaviour,? said Const. Terri-Ann Pencarinha of the Dufferin OPP.

The tickets can be distributed in recognition of good deeds, participating in community activities or demonstrating community pride by doing things like picking up trash.

The tickets can also be given to youth for practicing personal safety, such as wearing a bicycle helmet, or the tickets are simply used as an icebreaker, so police can build positive relationships with kids in the community.

One of the main benefits of the positive tickets is they allow officers to interact with youth in a less authoritative manner.

?It's just a great icebreaker for officers to establish that rapport with kids while they're out in their patrol areas,? noted Const. Pencarinha.

?It's bridging the gap between officers and youth. Positive tickets are a tool that officers are able to initiate conversations and ultimately cultivate relationships with the youth in their community.?

While the 28-day province-wide stay-at-home order may have an impact on how often youth are outside, Dufferin OPP will still be on the lookout to see if kids are wearing their helmets on bicycles or doing good deeds.

Const. Pencarinha said on the weekend of April 3 and 4 a member of Dufferin OPP issued 27 positive tickets and officers look forward to handing out more.

She added that it's important to note, officers are always in personal protective equipment (PPE) and socially distance while on patrol.

The Orangeville Police Service use to run a program similar to Operation Freeze where they'd give out coupons for Dairy Queen Blizzards as a reward for good behaviour, before disbanding Oct. 1, 2020.

Because the Dufferin OPP are new to Orangeville, this is the first year Operation Freeze has run locally, however the program was offered in other communities policed by the OPP since 2010.

In the winter months, Operation Freeze turns into Operation Heat, where youth can earn positive tickets that are redeemable for hot chocolate.