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Local fire department holding 12th annual Toy and Food Drive]

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Shelburne & District Fire Department has kicked off its 12th annual Toy and Food Drive fundraiser.

The local fire department began collecting donations of non-perishable foods and toys for the drive on Nov. 17 and will be collecting items until Dec. 17.

?What we do on a daily basis as firefighters is help the community and people in emergencies, and what we're doing with this food and toy drive is helping the community that needs the extra help,? said Cpt. Mike Morrell, coordinator for the annual event. ?It feels good to help, but the need has become even more so it's more pressing to try and help.?

Each year, the Shelburne Fire Department's Toy and Food Drive fundraiser collects food donations for the local food bank, Shepherd's Cupboard, and toys for Dufferin Children & Family Services (DCAFS).

Cpt. Morrell said they were able to help over 400 families with toys last year through the holiday fundraising event.

Helping as many families as they do each year, Morrell noted that they are expecting the number of those in need of aid for the holiday season to increase.

?With the cost of everything going through the roof, we know the numbers are going to be even more. The ones that could give, can't do anything because they're now in the other bracket,? said Morrell.

Some of the specific food items the food bank is looking for this year include peanut butter, mayo, cooking oil, canned fruit, cereal, cookies, hot chocolate, coffee, and canned salmon.

When it comes to gifting toys, Morrell shared one tip.

?Think of an age group and think of a gift that you would like to get as a child in that age group.?

Monetary donations will also be accepted and turned into gift cards.

Donations can be dropped off at the Shelburne Fire Hall, on Thursdays and Fridays between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m., and Saturdays from noon until 4 p.m. The local fire department will also be hosting collection events in the community including on Nov. 26 at Giant Tiger, Dec. 10 at No Frills and Dec. 17 at Foodland.

The Shelburne & District Fire Department also has community partners including Streams Community Hub, Starbucks and TD Bank with drop boxes for donations.

Community members that are unable to attend the drop-off dates or access any of the locations can contact the Shelburne Fire Hall, and leave a message for Cpt. Mike Morrell asking for an item pick up.

?We are trying to help those in need and anyone in the community that can give or would like to, please do because the people you're helping could be your neighbour. The thing is, is that not everybody knows everybody that need help,? said Morrell.