

Parking Violators Pay Fines With Toys for Charity Drive - Prospecting - The Chronicle of Philanthropy

By Raymund Flandez

Pay a parking ticket or give a toy?

This week, the city of [Boston](#) is excusing parking violators from cash fines if they donate a toy of equal or greater value to the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program.

As it has done for 18 holiday seasons, drivers who get a parking ticket can show up at Boston's City Hall with a "new, nonviolent, unwrapped toy," along with the toy's receipt, according to a leaflet that the city's parking officers are leaving on the windshields of parking offenders.

Last year, City Hall received about \$3,400 worth of toys, and violators have contributed \$36,000 worth of toys since the effort started in 1993.

The exchange program was started in Boston but has spread to [Barre, Vt.](#), [Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio](#); [New Haven, Conn.](#), and [Texas Tech University](#), in Lubbock.

"During these difficult economic times, families are struggling every day just to make ends meet," said Thomas Menino, Boston's mayor, at the kick-off event of the Toys for Tots program last month. "Parents and guardians don't have an opportunity to buy toys," he said. "I ask those who have the ability to donate to give."



Mark Stuart, of Medford, Mass., used a VTech Pull 'n Learn Car Carrier to cover a \$25 parking ticket last year. Photograph courtesy of Boston.com.