

## Remembering those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in-person as community



Each year, Canadians gather on the eleventh day of the eleventh month to remember the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for King & Country.

Over the past three years, however, this communal act of Remembrance has, of course, been limited due to public health restrictions.

With the lifting of these limits, Remembrance Day observances this year will have a familiar air and the local poppy campaign is in full swing.

On Friday, members of the Aurora Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion gathered at Town Hall with MP Leah Taylor Roy, MPP Michael Parsa, Mayor Tom Mrakas, and Councillor-elect Ron Weese to raise a special flag to herald the start of the poppy campaign.

The campaign, with the sale of poppies at its heart, is a poignant and very visible way to pay tribute to the fallen and raise awareness of the issues facing veterans young and old.

Proceeds go to a number of programs to aid these men and women in civilian life, whether it is to help make ends meet, fund service dogs, and tackle mental health issues like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder through a number of therapy programs. Just one example is Heroes Mending on the Fly, which provides therapy through fly fishing.

?'It's the first time in a couple of years we've been able to have full-blown services and activities,?' says Bonnie Robertson, Poppy Chair for the Aurora Legion. ?What started off as doing poppy boxes blew up into planning our Remembrance Dinner, parade, and another small service on Remembrance Day.?

The Legion's traditional Remembrance Day Dinner, the first since the start of the global pandemic, will take place in the Legion Hall (105 Industrial Parkway North) on Saturday, November 5, with cocktails at 6.30 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.

The dinner is a prelude for the Legion's annual Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service the following morning, which will see the parade commence at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School on Dunning Avenue around 10.30 a.m., proceeding on foot down Yonge Street for the Cenotaph service, which will begin around 10.45 a.m.

The Sunday Service will be followed by light refreshments back at the Legion.

On Remembrance Day itself on November 11, the service at the Cenotaph is expected to get underway at 10.45, again followed by light refreshments at the Legion.

On now through November 11, poppy boxes will be available throughout the community for purchase by donation.

?The Remembrance period runs from Friday, October 28, to Friday, November 11,? says Robertson. ?This year, we're able to reach more locations than we have in the past with stores being open more and stores are more receptive to receiving the poppy boxes. We hope the campaign helps reach more people to let them know what's going on.

?The big thing right now [with the poppy campaign proceeds] are the service dogs, particularly the training of the service dogs, and events like fly fishing for Heroes Mending on the Fly. Also this year, because of the lifting of COVID restrictions, we were able to visit veterans down at Sunnybrook and this year we'll be doing our stocking campaign for all those veterans at Sunnybrook. We fill them with things that are purchased and donated and deliver it so they have something at Christmas.?

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