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Neighbouring legions ensure funds are still raisedfor local Veterans during Shelburne Legion?s closure

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Despite the temporary closure of the Shelburne Legion Branch 220 ahead of Remembrance Day, local Veterans will continue to receive financial support as two neighbouring legions are helping with fundraising efforts for the 2024 Poppy Fund Campaign.

The Dundalk Legion Branch 285 and Orangeville Legion Branch 233 have received special permission to provide poppy donation boxes and assist in collecting donated money for the Poppy Fund, during the Shelburne Legion's temporary closure. The Poppy Fund provides financial assistance to Veterans and their families.

?The thought of Shelburne not having poppies, and knowing that they have a significant amount of Veterans in comparison to us just didn't sit well with me,? said Shannon Larsen, a Dundalk Legion member assisting in the Shelburne Poppy Fund campaign. ?I've seen the first-hand effects of what [war] can psychologically do to a person and how people can sometimes be too proud to ask for help. But, when it comes time and they find the strength and the ability to ask for help, if it's not for the Poppy Fund, the help is not there.?

The Shelburne Legion was forced to temporarily close its doors as of Oct. 23 following the resignation of the legion's president at their monthly general meeting on Oct. 22. Based on the bylaws and regulations of the Royal Canadian Legion, a branch cannot open its doors without a president to oversee the caretaking of the building and finances.

As a result of the temporary closure, all bank accounts for the Shelburne Legion have been frozen and its volunteers are unable to collect for the Poppy Fund as they ?can't represent themselves as the Shelburne Legion while it's closed,? said Chuck Arrand, Zone Commander for E-3 of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Each year in the lead-up to Remembrance Day, members of the legion with the assistance of volunteers and local cadets hand out poppies to community members, who in turn give donations to support the Poppy Fund.

The Poppy Fund assists veterans and their families in various ways, including purchasing construction materials or providing maintenance for housing and care facilities for elderly and disabled persons, bursaries, and getting service dogs for veterans.

Through the Dundalk Legion alone, the Town of Shelburne has received 36 Poppy Fund donation boxes and roughly 8,000 poppies to give to residents. The Dundalk Legion has additionally provided donations of Canadian flags, flag poles, wreaths, and wreath cards for the Town of Shelburne's Remembrance Day Ceremony.

?It makes me very happy knowing that they're working together to cover off the area for the time that the [Shelburne Legion] is closed and that the veterans of Shelburne in the long run, will be looked after,? said Arrand.

The money raised through the poppy boxes, which are set up throughout Shelburne, will be donated back to the Shelburne Legion following their reopening at the end of the month.