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Aurora Lions to leave legacy with 100 trees for 100 years



By Brock Weir

After 100 years it is hard to miss a Lion.

If you haven't had an sight or hearing cheque from them, picked up a stack of pancakes or three at Sheppard's Bush, or let them wrap your Christmas gifts in exchange for a nominal fee, the yellow vests Lions Club members wear when they do their rounds can be a dead giveaway.

Their hard work in each of these areas ? and then some! ? continues but as Lions Clubs International marks its first century of service in 2017, the local Lions den is looking to leave a lasting legacy this month.

Next Saturday, May 27, the Aurora Lions will be fanning out through the Aurora Community Arboretum to plant 100 Trees for 100 Years. Picking up the gauntlet thrown down by Lions International to mark the Centenary by carrying out Centennial Community Legacy Projects to ?give clubs an opportunity to connect with their communities?by giving a lasting gift to the community,? they hit upon planting trees as a project which will endure for generations to come.

?We have been planting trees for years, but we thought on this anniversary, planting 100 trees for each year would be something different,? says Don Lewis, Past President of the Aurora Lions.

?It is something different for the community,? adds long time Lion Cliff Davies. ?We need trees. We need oxygen to live and the more trees we plant the better off we are.?

The Lions have also maintained that the more members they have the better off the community will be as well. Over the past decade or so, the venerable service club ? which is nearing its own 75th anniversary here in Aurora ? had seen membership wane. But through concerted outreach and undertaking activities to increase their visibility, they have seen their numbers steadily rise over the years.

?We have done a lot for the community over time,? says Lion Kathi Lewis. ?A lot of people still do recognize us and we are trying to get our name back out into the community so we are able to help more individuals in Aurora, with the help of the Town. That is why we think it is important to do something like this for the Town so they can continue to recognize us and help us help more people in the Town.

?The Lions are very involved in education and youth. We have a program called Lions Quest where we go into the schools and there is a training program for teachers to help at-risk youth. It is one of only two Lions Foundations in Canada. The other is our Dog Guide Foundation. We're very involved in sight, as we have always been, and we do vision screening and now we do hearing screening at all senior kindergarten levels.

?You will hear when you walk around town, ?Oh, you helped me at some point and I will help you,' or, ?You told me I had bad eyes as a child and, as a result, I got glasses.' If you're in a family who can't afford glasses, Lions will help pay for them as well.?

If you would like to help the Lions Club pay it forward next Saturday, May 27, by planting the Lions Grove they are always looking for more volunteers. The planting will begin at the Aurora Community Arboretum, located at Optimist Park (Berkshire Drive and Skipton Drive) from 9.30 a.m. to 3 p.m., rain or shine. Everyone is welcome and high school students can collect community service hours in the process.