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Legions' accomplishments celebrated during special week

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Correspondent

Sunday, Sept. 21 marks the beginning of Royal Canadian Legion Week across the country.

With more than 400,000 members and 1,600 branches nationally, the non-profit, fraternal organization, which is supported by membership fees, plays an active and vital role in many aspects of community life.

Since its formation in 1925, the Legion has worked tirelessly to ensure adequate pensions and benefits for veterans and their dependents. Through the observance of Remembrance Day and related activities, it continues to ensure that the sacrifices made by those who served in two world wars is not forgotten by succeeding generations.

At the same time, the Legion is an organization which tackles the issues of today, supporting a variety of services such as programs for seniors, housing projects and medical training plans for

doctors, nurses and therapists. The Legion's Youth Program provides scholarships, bursaries and sports programs and offers assistance to groups such as cadets, Scouts and Guides.

In the past six months, Branch 459 in Stouffville has donated more than \$10,000 to community charities and causes, among them the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank, Markham Stouffville Hospital and local sports groups.

A memorial garden dedicated to Princess Diana, who died Aug. 31 following a tragic car crash, is the local Legion's special project for 1997. Although no public appeal for donations was made, residents have already contributed money towards materials and construction, said spokesperson George Lovett, adding that their generosity is very much appreciated by the Legion.

The garden, located at the northeast end of the property on Ninth Line, will incorporate a new flagpole and a Canadian stone with a commemorative plaque, which will be surrounded by

white lilies. Other features include a crushed white stone walkway, red impatiens and the white tulips which are named after the princess.

In his message acknowledging Legion Week, Premier Mike Harris noted, "Ontario's strength comes from the beliefs, values and actions of organizations such as The Royal Canadian Legion. Your

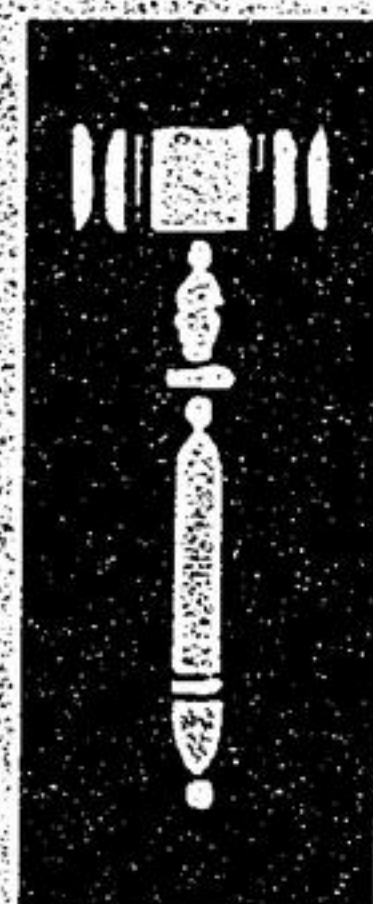
members promote the interests of the brave men and women who served our country during wartime, as well as generously volunteering their time and energy to numerous community projects. "The hard work and commitment of Legion members have earned them the respect and admiration of people across Ontario."

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