

Local Lions Clubs’ contributions noticeable in King

By Angela Rose

The Township of King is fortunate to have not one, not two, but three active Lions Clubs serving their communities – King City, Nobleton and Schomberg.

The Mayor and King Councillors honoured and acknowledged their significant contributions to the Township over many years by raising the Lions Clubs International’s 100th Anniversary flag June 10 for all three towns.

It was a touching and meaningful, albeit quiet and intimate, ceremony on as the mayor said a few words of acknowledgement and appreciation for the work of the three Lions Clubs in the Township of King over the past seven decades. He actually credited us for being a powerful force for community spirit and community building, suggesting it’s this group that is the foundation of King. So generous.

“It was our honour to recognize the incredible work all the lions in King have done to make this a spectacular place to live,” said Mayor Pellegrini.

Ever wonder who Lions are, what they do and why?

Lions Clubs began 100 years ago by Melvin Jones, a Chicago business leader who felt that his local business club should reach beyond business issues and address the betterment of their communities and the world. The idea of a secular, non-political service organization caught on – so much so that, today, Lions International is the largest charitable organization in the world with 1.4 million members in 46,000 clubs in over 200 countries. Like the Clubs in King Township, each club has always kept to its roots with the simple idea: let’s improve our communities, as well as support global causes.

King City Lions Club was founded in 1952; the Nobleton Lions Club was chartered in 1962, and the Schomberg Lions Club recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. King Township has enjoyed the results of the efforts of members who are committed to giving back to their communities. Is there ever an event in King that is not attended or supported by members of Lions Clubs?

The Nobleton Lions Club has raised in excess of a million dollars, which has been put back into the local community. The Nobleton Golf Tournament is

an annual must-go staple in the events calendar for many King residents. Another welcome annual event is the Seniors’ Christmas Dinner for upwards of 160 attendees. Nobleton Lions have raised funds for the Nobleton Arena, the Nobleton Arena elevator, the laundry room at the Senior’s Centre, lights at the Nobleton tennis court and the Nobleton baseball diamonds. Each November they collect used clothing and other small articles which are donated to the Salvation Army.

The King City Lions Club took the lead in fund raising for the building of the first Community Centre in King City and subsequently contributed \$100,000 towards its renovation and expansion. They also helped fund the building of the seniors centre, the baseball diamonds, lights for the tennis courts, and playground equipment.

In the early years, it was Lions members who coached youth sports teams, provided and drove the buses to get the kids to swimming, hockey and baseball events. Support for youth activities and organizations continue to be important, including support for local hockey, baseball, figure skating, and soccer teams, as well as funding annual bursaries that encourage volunteerism for high school students.

The Schomberg Lions Club created the Kitchen-Breedon Manor for seniors 25 years ago and members still sit on the board of directors. They also provided funding for Osin Lions Park and contributed to the building of the Trisan Center. They are most renowned for their peameal bacon on a bun at Schomberg’s “A Main Street Christmas,” their Pancake Breakfast at the Schomberg Agricultural Fair and the annual Fish and Chips dinner. Clearly, they take the Lions motto, “We Serve” literally.

Because members pay for the administration of their clubs, all monies raised from public events go right back to community and various local and global charitable organizations.

Many people associate Lions Clubs International with its support of organizations that address issues related to sight. This came about after Helen Keller addressed the Lions Clubs International Convention in 1925 where she challenged the Lions to become “knights of the blind in the crusade



Mayor Steve Pellegrini, Schomberg Lion Angela Rose, Councillor Cleve Mortelliti, Councillor Debbie Schaefer, King City Lions Club President Peter Tetley, Councillor Linda Pabst, Schomberg Lions Club President Gord Dobson, Councillor Avia Eek, Nobleton Lions Club President Jerry MacBain join to raise a flag and celebrate 100 years of Lionism.

against darkness.”

Since then, the Lions have committed to aid the blind and visually impaired. The King chapters have provided financial support to the Dog Guides training facility in Oakville, to local dog guide foster parents, have collected glasses to be shared with needy countries around the world, and have organized and participated in the annual Dog Guides Walkathon.

Today, Lions Clubs also address issues related to pediatric cancer and the environment, including disaster relief.

A little closer to home, the local Lions Clubs have provided support for a wide variety of organizations including Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Hill House Hospice, Hospice King Aurora, King Township Food Bank, the Bob Rumball Foundation, Canadian Diabetes Association, Ontario March of Dimes, Lions Camp Dorset for dialysis patients and their families, Camp Kirk for children with learning disabilities, Lions Homes for Deaf People, and the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre. Lions of King also contribute funds to the York

Region Hospitals, including Southlake and Mackenzie Health.

You might be surprised to learn that Lions have not only provided disaster relief to foreign lands, but communities in Ontario have been helped by Lions International – Goderich after the F3 tornado in 2011 is a case in point.

While they have some serious business, it is mixed with Lions fellowship where friendships and social activities form outside regular meetings. Members of Lions all share one common purpose and that is to give back to their communities, to be involved, to get to know their neighbours, to make new friends both near and far, and to make our world better through service.

In the words of a long-time Nobleton Lion, “the work is voluntary and if you don’t feel comfortable doing one task then don’t do it, as there are many other tasks that you will be good at, and each member adds his own skills.”

If you would like to become a member, reach out to your local chapter – details can be found at www.lionsclubs.org

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