



Supplied photo

Sheilah Lee Restall (centre) with Coun. Devi Sharma (far right), Coun. Sherri Rollins, Teacher Barbara Warbanski, and students Princess Angeles, Chelsea Manago, and Jamaica Larez.

A powerful project

**Devi Sharma**

**OLD KILDONAN CITY
COUNCILLOR
WARD REPORT**

In John McCrae's famous poem *In Flanders Fields*, he writes, "To you from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high."

Over time, "passing the torch" has become a term used to designate continuity from one generation to the next. Thus, it's so meaningful to see youth involved in remembrance. So many students have been active in the recently completed poppy blanket, which started here in Old Kildonan.

The Poppy Blanket Project is a display of crocheted and knitted poppies created in collective remembrance of Canada's fallen soldiers and veterans. It's over 85 feet long and includes over 8,000 poppies and 2,000 ribbons dedicated to fallen soldiers and veterans.

When Garden City resident Sheilah Lee Restall approached me with the idea of the poppy blanket over a year ago, I was honoured to champion this tangible act of remembrance. It was a pleasure to connect this project with many communities and volunteers of all ages and backgrounds across Manitoba.

I was happy to see the involvement of students from Seven Oaks School Division. When I reached out to superintendent Brian O'Leary, he eagerly agreed to promote the poppy blanket project by sharing information with schools, and we saw such mean-

ingful participation from them. Garden City Collegiate's textiles class with teacher Barbara Warbanski contributed to the poppy blanket. West Kildonan Collegiate teacher Goldelyn Shapiro and students from the school's "Nellie's Knitting Nook" knitted 500 poppies. Their contributions were outstanding.

"It is wonderful to see the care and attention the volunteers have put into this work and it really does feel like the torch of remembrance being carried in our community," said Armand Lavallee, chairperson of the Joint Veterans Association of Manitoba. I couldn't agree with him more. It's so rewarding to see the far reach and impact of this project. It's truly fitting that work on the poppy blanket was conducted year-round, because remembrance is also year-round.

The finished poppy blanket was unveiled at City Hall on Nov. 7, shared at the Winnipeg Jets hockey game on Nov. 10, at the Joint Veterans Association of Manitoba Remembrance Day Service on Nov. 11, and at the Manitoba Legislative Building from Nov. 12 to 17. To learn more, visit www.PoppyBlanket.ca

I can be reached by email at devi@winnipeg.ca, by phone at 204-986-5264, or feel free to stop by my community office at 646 Leila Ave. to discuss matters that are important to you.