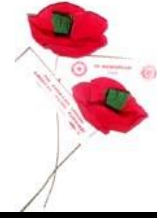


Poppy Day – May 24th



During the week of May 20th, American Legion Post 318 in cooperation with the FHSD will be sharing the history of Memorial Day with your children. During the lunch hour, May 24th, Anderson Post 318 will be in the Forest Hills Elementary Schools, to distribute the “2018 Memorial Poppy” to each student and would appreciate a modest contribution. Participation is strictly voluntary.

The Story Behind the “Poppy”

Each year around Memorial Day, volunteers representing the American Legion Auxiliary distribute millions of bright red poppies in exchange for contributions to assist veterans and their families. The program provides multiple benefits to the veterans and to the community. The hospitalized veterans who make the flowers are able to earn a small wage, which helps to supplement their incomes and makes them feel more self-sufficient. The physical and mental activity provides many therapeutic benefits as well. Donations are used exclusively to assist and support veterans and their families. The poppy also reminds the community of the past sacrifices and continuing needs of our veterans. The poppy has become a nationally known and recognized symbol of sacrifice and is worn to honor the men and women who served and died for their country in all wars.

A brief history of the artificial poppy:

On the World War I battlefields of Belgium, poppies grew wild amid the ravaged landscape. How could such a pretty little flower grow wild while surrounded by death and destruction? The overturned soils of battle enabled the poppy seeds to be covered, thus allowing them to grow and to forever serve as a reminder of the bloodshed during that and future wars.

The poppy movement was inspired by the poem *"In Flanders Fields"* written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae of the Canadian forces in 1915 before the United States entered World War I. Selling replicas of the original Flanders' poppy originated in some of the allied countries immediately after the Armistice.

No definite organized sale of poppies on a nationwide scale was conducted in America until 1921, when the Franco-American Children's League sold poppies ostensibly for the benefit of children in the devastated areas of France and Belgium.

Madam Guerin, who was recognized as "the poppy lady from France", sought and received the cooperation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. early in 1922, after the Franco-American Children's League was dissolved. The VFW conducted a poppy sale prior to Memorial Day, 1922, using only poppies that were made in France. In the 1923 poppy sale, due to the difficulty and delay in getting poppies from France, the VFW made use of a surplus of French poppies that were on hand and the balance was provided by a firm in New York City manufacturing artificial flowers.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was the first veteran organization to promote a nationally organized campaign for the annual distribution of poppies assembled by American disabled and needy veterans. In 1924, the VFW patented the name "Buddy Poppy" for their version of the artificial flower. Buddy Poppy proceeds represents no profit to any VFW unit. All the money contributed by the public for Buddy Poppies is used in the cause of veteran's welfare, or for the well being of their needy dependents and the orphans of veterans.

Following the 1924 sale, the VFW believed it would stimulate local sales if the poppies they used were assembled by disabled veterans in hospitals within their own jurisdiction. The 1924 encampment of the VFW at Atlantic City granted this privilege, under the provision that all poppies would be produced according to specifications set forth by the National Buddy Poppy Committee, and that all poppies would be assembled by disabled veterans in government hospitals and by needy veterans in workshops supervised by the VFW.

Around the same year, the American Legion Auxiliary adopted the poppy as the organization's memorial flower and pledged its use to benefit our servicemen and their families. Today, the poppy continues to provide a financial and therapeutic benefit to those hospitalized and disabled veterans who construct them, as well as benefiting thousands of other veterans and their families.

Each nine-piece poppy is made by veterans for veterans in Auxiliary sponsored Poppy Shops that supplement physical and psychological therapy needed by hospitalized and disabled veterans. The Auxiliary provides the materials and the volunteers. The veteran makes the poppy and is paid a small amount for each painstakingly made flower. For some it is their only income.

No matter what the cost of maintaining and supplying the Poppy Shops, the memorial poppy is never sold, but given in exchange for a contribution.

In Flanders Fields

By Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.