



## CONTENTS

Board of Directors  
Human resources  
Fund Development  
Events 2024  
International Events  
National Coordinator's Report  
NSLA Impact story  
Social Media  
Donor Profile  
Contributor Profile  
Community Profile  
In Memoriam  
Letter of Reflection

### Cover Photos

*Top: Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands is one of several European locations where NSLA volunteers will hold commemorations this spring.*

*Center: Maureen places a poppy at the base of our Vimy Oak in Beechmount Cemetery in Edmonton, in honour of Vimy Ridge Day, April 9.*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Q3 | Apr 2024



A warm springtime hello to all and thank you for taking the time to read about the updates for No Stone Left Alone.

I can honestly say that I have never been so proud that we have now reached our 14th year of this great program.

To our donors I say: Thank you for your contributions and for your ongoing trust in us to deliver an exceptional education program to which over 76,103 students have participated since 2011. Your generosity facilitates

the simple yet powerful impact of one student, one poppy, one headstone – repeated now 585,000 times over 13 years. We do not take it for granted.

I do want to share my concerns with our NSLA supporters. NSLA is a nonprofit and as you know every donation supports our mission of giving students this important program at no cost to them. When you think about how many have participated you can easily see the urgent need we have to sustain our catastrophic growth. To be able to host our signature events, to fund operations and to develop and increase programming, so that we can hire more professional staff to assist with the workload. I also understand how all nonprofits are down in funding, as we all know many Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. I am just asking you to consider us when your heart feels the need to give. I promise you; your donations are educating so many students, who tell us that this is the only program teaching them about remembrance and the tie to our Canadian history, working together in their communities. Visit our website and see the Ways to Give and I thank you on behalf of the team at NSLA.

Since the early days of NSLA, we have always taken decisive and coordinated action to ensure we are delivering a simple but truly impactful program for our participants and our volunteers. Our program has developed into a solid and rewarding event for all who

*continued...*

have participated, attended, or supported us to help us reach them all. We will continue to make education our focus. The need for understanding conflict and history has never been so important as it is now. Our students deserve the best we can do to show them that we care and that we want them to understand more of why we remember and why more importantly we should never forget.

As I mentioned to you in my last message, going back to the beginnings, I want you all to know I am committed to all sites, to know where they stand, what do they need, what do they want to share. Weekly, I have been reviewing each one individually with our National Coordinator to ensure that we retain the ones we have, recognize those who have been with us for years, and see how we can get those who have stepped back for all kinds of reasons back on for 2024. No one understands the specific need in their communities better than the people who live there.

In addition to this, we are in the process of hiring an Alberta Program and Community Development coordinator to help with this process.

In closing, let me say this: Difficult times bring out the best in people. Everywhere we look we see good people doing the right thing. There are countless examples. Let's all continue to do the right thing, by honouring and recognizing our veterans, past and present with strong and committed Canadians who are exceptional in their volunteerism and support for this mission.

I will conclude these remarks by expressing my deep gratitude for our Canadian Armed Forces, all of whom deserve our profound thanks and appreciation.

And of course, I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their continued support and counsel.

In the coming days, the challenges to continue will test our unity, our endurance and resourcefulness. It is a challenge we must rise to and I am confident that we will.



Maureen Bianchini Purvis, AOE, MSM  
Founder & President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board members met and completed their individual member interviews for 2024. I am happy to say all have consented to serve again for 2024.

An exciting addition is BGen (Ret'd) Stephen Lacroix, CD, who has sat on our Advisory Board, will now move onto the Board of Directors. Steve is currently Managing Director/Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of Alberta Emergency Management Agency, and we are thrilled that he brings this perspective as well as a wealth of other experience in both government and military service to help foster the program in new ways.

We are also in the process of recruiting another new member. Stay tuned. The board will stay focused on assisting in fund development, networking, and strategic approvals. They are committed.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

We hired SKR Consultants to assist with a review of our HR practices and to help implement strategies so that all employees, volunteers, and contract workers feel respected, valued, and included. We all filled out individual surveys, telephone interviews and will now finalize the process with a half day retreat to compile all information and share it with plans in place for the future.

NSLA has always valued our employees, since we are a small operation, we treated them all as family and we were extremely flexible to their needs. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on who you ask, we will now have to change, be more rigid in our practices and SKR consulting is doing a great job ensuring we will be.

## FUND DEVELOPMENT

Greetings NSLA family! My name is Stephanie Perilli, and I am honoured to have joined the small but mighty team here at NSLA as the Director of Fund Development. Coming from a family with a strong military background, including a cousin lost in the Afghan war, this cause is deeply personal to me. I am excited to help move the mission and vision of NSLA forward.



Our team has been hard at work this year preparing for this year's Remembrance activities and

supporting the many ceremonies already taking place across the country. At the same time, we are also working hard to ensure that we have enough funding in place to support our growing program participation.

As a charitable foundation, we are primarily funded through financial donations from caring individuals like you. Your generous gifts allow us to provide our educational programs and services at no cost to participants, and helps to cover the cost of ceremony supplies, program coordination, educational resources, equipment rentals, administration of ceremonies, and transportation, inspiring generations to remember and honour our military service.

Whether it's a transformative annual gift of \$1,000, a monthly donation of \$20 per month, or a meaningful annual gift of \$150, every contribution makes a difference.

To support our mission and help ignite the spirit of remembrance in the hearts and minds of young Canadians, please consider making a financial gift today: [www.nostoneleftalone.ca/donate](http://www.nostoneleftalone.ca/donate)

Thank you for being the heart of our mission! Should you any questions about the impact of your gifts and/or other ways to give, please feel free to contact me at: [sperilli@nostoneleftalone.ca](mailto:sperilli@nostoneleftalone.ca)

## EVENTS 2024

### Fundraising Luncheon, Edmonton

May 30, 2024 marks the inaugural "Voices of Remembrance" fundraising luncheon on, at the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald in Edmonton. This event introduces our inspiring work engaging youth in remembrance to a new audience.

Your support as a valued member of our NSLA family is crucial. I'd be honoured to host you and a guest, who is new to our mission, at my table. While attendance and the complimentary three-course luncheon are free, we hope all attendees will consider making a financial contribution to support our ongoing efforts. If you are interested, RSVP to me at [mpurvis@nostoneleftalone.ca](mailto:mpurvis@nostoneleftalone.ca). We eagerly await your presence and support.

We are also seeking event sponsors (\$1,500 - \$5,000). Contact me or Stephanie at [sperilli@nostoneleftalone.ca](mailto:sperilli@nostoneleftalone.ca) to explore sponsorship opportunities. Your support will greatly impact our success.

## Beechmount Live Stream 2024

The team has met, and we are now beginning the planning stages for this important signature event. What I love most about this team is they are so committed and professional and the great ideas they put forward show that. I am always so pleased to see each one of them, year after year, giving of their time to put together a meaningful, emotional program for all viewers. This year the focus will be on the RCAF Centennial. We are in the early planning stages so any ideas you may have to enhance this event, please let me know. Would love to hear from you.

## Dance to Remember

Stay tuned for more information about this event!

## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

No Stone Left Alone is excited to announce significant international involvement once again in 2024, in particular surrounding the 80th Anniversary of D-Day this upcoming June. No Stone Left Alone is incredibly honoured to be taking part in the Great Vigil Event at Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery, in partnership with Commonwealth War Graves, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Juno



*Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery in Reviers, France.*

Beach Centre, along with many other incredible groups and individuals. This event will be one of a series across cemeteries in Normandy on June 5th, the night before the D-Day anniversary, in which students and youth will carry lights to the cemetery at dusk, perform a ceremony, and 'light up the cemetery' in honour of those who served so honourably. A second ceremony at Beny-sur-Mer, to be carried out by a school group from Whitecourt, Alberta, will take place on June 7th as a more intimate and traditional No Stone Left Alone ceremony.

Numerous other No Stone Left Alone ceremonies will also be taking place across Europe thanks to

our incredible network of volunteers. Ceremonies in France (Dieppe and Vimy Ridge), the Netherlands (Groesbeek), and Germany (Rheinberg) have already been confirmed. With a multitude of others in development stages, we expect to be able to share many more confirmed ceremonies with you in the near future!

## NATIONAL COORDINATOR'S REPORT

### Michelle Koch

Our ceremonies team is gearing up for the official 2024 registration launch on May 13. We have already received over 50 pre-registrations from individuals and communities demonstrating their intention to participate, and we anticipate another year of growth in number of sites and participants.

Our regional coordinators will be meeting in early May to prepare, and we have some exciting new initiatives to discuss – which we will share more widely as they are finalized.

We look forward to welcoming back our returning organizers and volunteers for another year of commemorations, and to making connections with new individuals, organizations and communities who will join us for the first time in 2024.

## NSLA IMPACT STORY

Kim McKenzie in Reston, MB shares this about how she was inspired to make remembrance a year round practice for the students at her school.

*“Remembrance Day has always been so important to me but nothing like it is now. We need to remember these sacrifices not only in November but throughout the year and every single Canadian should visit Vimy Ridge. I think it should be on the itinerary of every high school trip.*

*I have been involved with our school Remembrance Day services for over 30 years. It used to be something we tried to fit in between Halloween and November 11. However many years ago I realized as librarian I was in a unique position to start the ‘remembering’ long before November and so for the most part we start early in the year reading about and talking about Remembrance Day, it’s importance, and learning about the sacrifices made.*

*The students are like sponges and they can’t get enough of the stories. If you make it interesting and show your passion they soak it all up and just want more.*

*We included Grade 6 this year as partners with Grade 12 for NSLA and they did their own research on local veterans. I know by taking the NSLA idea just that one step farther has sown the seed of remembrance in many of our students.”*

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Sara Weisgerber

In 2024 our efforts on social media are reaching more people than ever. We are proud to share that we have already reached over 3 million people on Facebook, and our Instagram followers gained have increased by 250%. Additionally, our LinkedIn and X performance has surpassed our expectations.

We are excited to continue showcasing the vital work of the No Stone Left Alone team and our donors. Stay tuned to our social platforms as we bring you more inspiring stories and updates from NSLA, highlighting the profound impact of our mission and the community’s support.

## DONOR PROFILE

Jackie, a recent addition to our family of monthly donors, generously shared her heartfelt reason for giving:

*“My father served in WWII, and my sister served in the RCAF. Both have since passed away. Additionally, I dedicated over two decades of my life as a civilian employee at the Department of National Defense. Tragically, my beloved husband lost his life while serving with the 408 Squadron in 1984.*

*Now, in a position to give back to the community, I carefully researched where to invest my charitable dollars. Your cause stood out to me as deeply meaningful and important.*

*Thank you, No Stone Left Alone, for your tireless dedication to honouring the memory of my loved ones and all who have served our country. Your work ensures that their service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. It means the world to me.”*

### Connect with Us!

Website: [nostoneleftalone.ca](https://nostoneleftalone.ca)

Facebook: [@NoStoneLeftAlone](https://www.facebook.com/NoStoneLeftAlone)

Instagram: [@NoStoneLeftAlone](https://www.instagram.com/NoStoneLeftAlone)

X: [@NoStoneAlone](https://twitter.com/NoStoneAlone)

TikTok: [@NoStoneLeftAlone](https://www.tiktok.com/@NoStoneLeftAlone)

## CONTRIBUTOR PROFILE

In this issue we extend our gratitude to Captain Kevin King for his invaluable contributions to No Stone Left Alone.

Captain King's support of our cause spans many years and multiple roles. From his early involvement as a guard member when the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) first partnered with NSLA, to serving as the main point of contact for coordinating regimental participation, Captain King has been a valuable part of our success. In his role as Regimental Ops Warrant Officer and later as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the LdSH(RC), he took part in varied aspects of our commemorations – always with a spirit of collaboration and reverence for the mission. In his current role as our 3rd Canadian Division point of contact, he serves as liaison with the Division, facilitating their support of and participation in NSLA events throughout Western Canada, including our live streamed national ceremony from Beechmount Cemetery.

We are immensely grateful for his continued support. Thank you, Captain King, for all that you do!



*Captain King leads students in some light calisthenics to keep warm during a visit to Beechmount Cemetery in Edmonton.*

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Cold Lake, AB

We were delighted this year to welcome the students of Assumption Jr/Sr High School in Cold Lake, Alberta to the No Stone Left Alone family. This is the first year that educators and students in the city of Cold Lake have participated in NSLA, and we are so proud and grateful to support their efforts to commemorate the veterans in their city - which has such a strong connection to the Canadian Armed Forces being home to CFB Cold Lake.

Students from the school, led by educators Jason Bayer and Angela Sequin, visited Our Lady of Assumption RC Cemetery, Grand Center Memorial

Cemetery, St. John Evangelist Cemetery, Lakeview (Cold Lake North) Cemetery and St. Dominic's Cemetery on November 3, honouring more than 60 veterans. Thank you to all who worked to make this commemoration happen!

## IN MEMORIAM



### Vickie Torrie

We are saddened to share that Vickie Torrie passed away in March.

Vickie was tremendous supporter of NSLA, and a true force of nature working hard to ensure that organizations like ours keep going. She was also a driving force in fundraising for Kingsway

Legion Branch 175, where she and her husband Mac Torrie have been very active members for many years. Mac has not only served as an NSLA advisor, but has led the Legion Colour Party at Beechmount since our first event.

Vickie will be missed by all of us who knew her, and our hearts are with our wonderful friend Mac as he adjusts to life without his wife of 54 years.

### Roy Bossert

Our NSLA family lost another member in late 2023, with the passing of Roy Bossert on November 11.

Roy, along with his wife Sheila and other members of the South East Edmonton Seniors Association (SEESA), was involved in many efforts to support NSLA through the years. He was always cheerful and a consistent supporter of our mission.

One of the SEESA group's greatest contributions to NSLA was that they originally counted, labelled and bagged poppies for all sites in the Edmonton area.

*An inspiring part of Roy's legacy is the beautiful hand-carved wood poppies that he crafted and shared with us (seen in photo, right).*



## LETTER OF REFLECTION

The act of sharing their thoughts and feelings brings young participants' NSLA experience full circle. It is the culmination of the entire program, and allows students to reflect on the personal connections they may have experienced from being involved.

These heartfelt expressions are the essence of why we do what we do, and are a critical measure of our success. They grant us insight into how our young participants' understanding of and connection to remembrance are changed by the experience, and they further strengthen our resolve to give all Canadian youth this opportunity.

### Letter of Reflection Lettre de Réflexion

First Name/ Prénom: Leon  
School/École: St. Mary's Elementary School Vancouver  
Grade/Classe: 6L



Experiencing and being a part of the service was educational. It felt good to honour those who died for our country and for us. Especially because I had the honour of bringing up a wreath with my school's name on it. The event had a kind of sad atmosphere because of the location and pouring rain. I talked to many soldiers who are serving on the ground, the air force and navy. They explained what their line of work includes, what kind of impact they make and cool things they get to do. I also socialized with students from other schools. I laid my rock on Patrick Sheridan's headstone. He died at the age of 33 and lived from 1889-1922. I am really grateful for being able to attend this ceremony and I hope that those who sacrificed their lives for us may rest in peace.

Thank you for taking the time to read my President's Message updates.

If you'd like to send feedback to me or if you just want to ask a question about the contents you have just read, please email me at [mpurvis@nostoneleftalone.ca](mailto:mpurvis@nostoneleftalone.ca) with the subject line "President's Message feedback".