

Former Homeless Youth Pushing For Change

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Joe Roberts to push his shopping cart into Orillia New Year's Day.

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(Orillia) -

Orillia is going to get a visit from the country's well-known shopping cart to begin the new year.

Joe Roberts will be bringing his Push for Change to end youth homelessness campaign to the Orillia Opera House on January 1st, 2017.



Roberts lived in Midland and Barrie, but he struggled with addiction and left home at age 15, dropped out of high school, then moved to Vancouver at age 19, where he eventually was able to lift himself off the streets and out of poverty, and became a successful businessman.

Kevin Gangloff -- Director of Youth Opportunities at the Orillia Youth Centre -- says with the New Year's Levee at the Opera House, it created a bit of a conundrum.

But he says has been working things out with the City of Orillia and believes the levee would be a wonderful way to welcome Roberts to the Sunshine City.

Gangloff says there will be several events being held leading up to the New Year's Day appearance.

He says there will be hockey games, community dinners, and other events to bring the Push for Change campaign out in the forefront.

Gangloff describes a recent survey of youth homelessness in Orillia staggering.

He says the number of youth who say they are homeless isn't high but when you put it in perspective it does seem real.

Roberts will be bringing his shopping cart to Coldwater the next day on January 2nd.

There will be a number of events planned that day including an open skate with half of the money raised going to the Push for Change campaign and the other half to stay in the community.

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