

# Push for Change trekker passes through Garden City

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After making a brief stop at the St. Catharines Cenotaph in Memorial Park on St. Paul Street West Tuesday, Joe Roberts is joined by members of the community for a short walk through downtown. Roberts is walking 9,000 kilometres across Canada to raise funds and awareness of youth homelessness. (Bob Tymczyszyn/St. Catharines Standard/Postmedia Network)

Sporting his tenth pair of running shoes since he started his cross-Canada trek, Joe Roberts was a few minutes late to the St. Catharines Cenotaph on St. Paul Street West, joking that he would have been there earlier, but the Burgoyne Bridge was out.

Supporters greeted the 59-year-old who has now walked 3,500 km while pushing a shopping cart that symbolizes chronic homelessness in Canada.

He hopes to complete his The Push for Change trek in Vancouver, B.C. on Sept. 30, 2017, and having logged 9,000 km.

In 1989 Roberts found himself on the streets of Vancouver when he got a second chance thanks to front-line service providers, the people who were there to care for him when he didn't have the ability to take care of himself.

“Thanks to my mom and an OPP officer I got a second chance,” said Roberts.

“My entrance into street involvement was addiction, but that’s not always the case.

“I had a lot of challenges at home, it led to the streets of Vancouver.”

Roberts told a crowd that in less than 12 years he found himself a celebrated entrepreneur, but he wasn’t any more fulfilled and wanted to do something to pay it forward.

“What do Canadians do to raise money and awareness?” asked Roberts. “They have a history of troddling across the country. It’s kind of our thing.

“We’re the second widest country in the world, but we have one highway that goes across and engages 85 per cent of the population,” said Roberts.

“Canadians have a way of rising up, you don’t have to convince people to do good, you just need to give them a vehicle.

“Until our outreach is better than the drug dealers and the predators we will continue to lose our children.

“The steps that you’re taking today will be part of this national walk, I have another 11 months to go, but we’re all taking these together to raise awareness on what we need to do better protect our youth.”

More information, including how to donate, can be found at [www.thepushforchange.com](http://www.thepushforchange.com) or locally [www.theraft.ca](http://www.theraft.ca).