

## News

- Pinetree secondary students join The Push for Change

By Diane Strandberg - The Tri-City News

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From left, Jeannie Wong, Grace Chiang, Joe Roberts, Elaina Liang, Angela Cheng of Pinetree secondary's Odyssey Angels check out the ergonomic shopping cart they designed and had built for Roberts' walk across Canada called Push for Change.

DIANE STRANDBERG/THE TRI-CITY NEWS

Brain power is joining forces with foot power to make change for homeless youth.

A group of Pinetree secondary students who are members of the creative problem-solving group Odyssey Angels have designed a light-weight, ergonomic shopping cart that will be a symbol of hope for thousands of at risk-youth across Canada.

They collaborated with Joe Roberts, a trainer and [motivational speaker](#), who will push the shopping cart across Canada next year to raise funds for educational programs and agencies supporting at-risk youth.

The [Push for Change](#) ([www.thepushforchange.com](http://www.thepushforchange.com)) cart is a smart-looking upgrade of the average shopping cart that has become synonymous with homelessness. The students say they were excited to work on the project with Roberts, a Coquitlam businessman who was homeless as a youth, because they want to help other young people who are struggling with issues that could lead to homelessness.

"This is such a wonderful opportunity," said Elaina Liang, a Grade 10 student on the Odyssey Angels team. "We're helping youth like ourselves who are maybe not as fortunate."

It was a challenging project, the students admit, and took a lot of brainstorming and multiple sketches. The end result was a prototype that was built with the know-how and support of local businesses.

"It has been a great collaboration," agrees Roberts, who will do a training run from Calgary to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside this summer in the lead-up to a cross-country odyssey beginning next May in Newfoundland.

He said the students were given a problem to solve and they came through by designing an attractive yet functional shopping cart that even a 45-year-old, father of two with an average fitness level could push across thousands of miles of Canadian countryside.

"I'm not your Red Bull poster boy," Roberts joked in an interview, although he had planned to walk in the BMO Vancouver Marathon this past weekend as part of his training.

The Odyssey Angels project was chosen from amongst hundreds of submissions world wide and the students will be heading to [Odyssey of the Mind 2012 World Finals](#) at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa from May 23-27 to present it and receive an award.

Grace Chiang agreed the project was challenging but said the effort was worth it if more people come to understand homelessness and how to stop it. "We weren't engineers. We didn't got to school and we didn't know how to make it work." But she said the group persevered for weeks.

In the end, the students produced the design by Roberts' deadline. Then the cart was assembled by mounting an aluminum box made and donated by A & A Steel Fabricators in Port Moody on top of a frame from a high-end Chariot baby stroller donated by the Calgary company. Signage promoting The Push for Change was by Fastsigns in Coquitlam.

Roberts said he was impressed at the work the students put in to the project and said it shows what young people can do if they believe in themselves. He hopes other young people will get involved in The Push for Change as that's one of the main goals of the campaign.

"It's not just going to be another walk across Canada," he promised. "We want to empower young people to do things and we want to create an educational legacy. If we can get that, we're there."

More information is available at [www.thepushforchange.com](http://www.thepushforchange.com)

To help fundraise for the Odyssey Angels group to enable them to get to the [World Finals](#), email [odysseybc@gmail.com](mailto:odysseybc@gmail.com).

Odyssey Angels is made up of the following students:

Grace Chiang

Elaina Liang

Angela Cheng

Jeannie Wong

Jim Chiang

Sheila Wang

Rachel Au

Michelle Sung

Chris Lee

Maria Kim

Josh Kim