


OPP Push for Change Hockey Challenge

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Ontario communities lace-up to help end youth homelessness

ORILLIA, ON, Jan. 26, 2017 /CNW/ - The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is organizing over 30 Hockey Challenge events across the province in partnership with local communities to raise awareness about youth homelessness.

Hockey Challenge events began in December, 2016, and will run through March. Sportsnet will produce a feature that will air on Feb. 18, Hockey Day in Canada that highlights the Hockey Challenge and the OPP's involvement with The Push for Change.

As part of its community safety partnership with The Push for Change, the OPP is mobilizing and engaging with youth and various stakeholders in more than 170 community-based events such as hockey games, as well as SleepOut Challenges and community meals. These events raise awareness about the risk factors and vulnerabilities affecting homeless youth, while fostering positive connections between the OPP, youth, families, stakeholders and communities.

The Push for Change is a national awareness and youth empowerment campaign focused on ending youth homelessness. From May 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017, Joe Roberts – a former street youth turned successful entrepreneur – is pushing a shopping cart 9,000 km across Canada to raise awareness of and end youth homelessness.

The OPP Push for Change Hockey Challenge helps create positive momentum and multiplies efforts to educate people about, and eliminate youth homelessness, one community at a time. Check out the listing of upcoming events for a Hockey Challenge in your community in the attached schedule.

Further information about The Push for Change campaign is available at www.thepushforchange.com. Further information about the OPP Push for Change community safety partnership may be found at <http://www.opp.ca>.

Quotes:

"The Push for Change is a perfect opportunity to engage with community stakeholders and partners to spread awareness about homeless youth and help mitigate the underlying risk factors that lead to the vulnerability of homelessness."

– J.V.N. (Vince) HAWKES, OPP Commissioner

"Having the OPP as a community safety partner helps both our organizations engage Ontario communities with a shared message on what we need to do to prevent, reduce and end youth homelessness."

– Joe ROBERTS, The Push for Change

"Each year Scotiabank Hockey Day in Canada features positive initiatives across the country where hockey can help make a difference and The Push for Change is a great example of how the OPP and Joe Roberts are making an impact."

– Joel Darling, Executive Producer, NHL Special Events - Rogers Sportsnet Hockey

Push for Change Hockey Challenge Event Schedule

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is organizing Hockey Challenge events across the province in partnership with

local communities to raise awareness about youth homelessness. Check out a Hockey Challenge in your community:

- **Jan.29 – Lambton**
Progressive Auto Sales Arena, 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Law Enforcement vs. Lambton College Students
- **Feb. 2 – Kenora**
Kenora Recreational Centre, 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Emergency Service Players vs. local high school boys and girls
- **Feb.3 – Kenora**
Location and time to be announced
Lake of the Woods Minor Hockey tournaments
- **Feb.7 and 8 – North Caribou Lake**
North Caribou Lake Arena, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Youth hockey tournament
- **Feb.12 – Kirkland Lake**
Joe Mavrinac Arena, time to be announced
OPP vs. Kirkland Lake Goldminers, Salvation Army and Canadian Mental Health Association
- **Feb.10 – Wilberforce**
Wilberforce Arena, 1:40 p.m.
OPP Officers, local schools, Fire Department and community youth groups
- **Feb.14 – Collingwood**
Central Park Arena, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Public family skating hosted by Collingwood OPP Detachment, Rotary Club, Kids Helpline 211, Mental Health Services, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Collingwood Library and Home Horizons Youth Shelter
- **Feb.15 – Wawa**
Wawa Community Centre Arena, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Joe Roberts will speak at a game between Soo Thunderbirds and a local emergency services team where Algoma Public Health, Wawa Family Services and local schools will raise donations for the Wawa Food Bank
- **Feb.15 to 18 – Longlac/Greenstone**
Longlac Sportsplex, time to be announced
OPP vs. students from three local high schools
- **Feb.16 – Meaford**
St. Vincent Community Centre, 1 p.m.
- **Feb.18 – Strathroy Caradoc**
Gemini Arena, Strathroy, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Stanley Cup winner Andy MacDonald of the Anaheim Ducks will play on the Alumni team, ex-NHL referee and former OPP Constable Don Van MassenHoven will referee, with Strathroy Rockets Jr. B team members on hand to sign autographs

- **Feb.18 – Brampton**
PowerAde Centre, 5:45 p.m.
OPP vs. ETR members and 407ETR Members
- **Feb.18 – Kincardine/South Bruce**
Davidson Centre Arena, Kincardine, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Round-robin hockey tournament between OPP, Kincardine Fire and Kincardine Secondary School teachers and students with Stanley Cup winners Greg Devries and Boyd Devereaux, along with World Junior Bronze medalist Mark Bell
- **Feb.18 – St. Mary's/ Perth County**
Canadian Centre in St. Mary's
12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Educational Awareness SleepOut Challenge
2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Family Skate
3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Perth County OPP vs. St. Mary's Fire Department
- **Feb.18 – Dryden**
Dryden OPP Detachment, 8:30 a.m.
Pancake Breakfast and boot hockey game between Dryden Eagles Girl's Hockey team, OPP and Dryden Police Service
- **Feb.18 – Terrace Bay/Nipigon**
Terrace Bay Hockey Arena, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Hosted by OPP and Harvest Cupboard
- **Feb.18 – Ennismore/Peterborough**
Ennismore Community Centre, time to be announced
"Guns 'N Hoses" OPP vs. firefighters hockey game
- **Feb.24 – Thunder Bay**
Macgregor Recreation Centre, Shuniah, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Outdoor hockey tournament between OPP members and their families
- **Feb.25 – Sioux Lookout**
Sioux Lookout Arena, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Hockey game between OPP, Lac Seul Police Services, Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service and firefighters
- **March 1 – Minden**
Minden Arena, 2 p.m.
Game between OPP officers, local schools, fire department and community youth groups
- **March 3 – Haliburton**
Haliburton Arena, 1 p.m.
Game between OPP officers, local schools, fire department and community youth groups
- **March 9 – Haliburton**
Haliburton Arena, 1 p.m.
Game between OPP officers, local schools, fire department and community youth groups

These events help create positive momentum and multiply efforts to educate people about, and eliminate youth homelessness, one community at a time.

BACKGROUNDER

OPP Partnership with The Push for Change

- The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is in a community safety partnership with The Push for Change, a national awareness and youth empowerment campaign, focusing on youth homelessness and related issues.
- From May 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017, Joe Roberts - a former addict and street youth turned successful entrepreneur - is pushing a shopping cart 9,000 km across Canada, stopping at schools and communities along the way as part of The Push for Change.
- Joe became a celebrated Canadian entrepreneur before he was 35 years old. Today, he is the Executive Director of The Push for Change. But more than 25 years ago, he was pushing a shopping cart to collect cans and bottles for change around Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.
- While still on the streets in Vancouver, Joe sold his boots for \$10 to buy drugs. Shoeless and penniless, Joe did two things: he called his Mom back in Ontario and he resolved to pay it forward. Back home, Joe tried to get clean, but it was too difficult. One dark night, Joe had a firearm and was threatening suicide. His Mom called the OPP.
- OPP Constable (Retired) Scott MacLeod responded to this call. Scott recognized the difference between a threat and a crisis. This was a turning point for Joe. Ultimately, Joe received help, graduated college on the Dean's list, became a successful CEO and started paying it forward.
- Joe's story and his pivotal encounter with an OPP officer underlines the tremendous impact one call for service can have.
- The OPP is involved in more than 170 Push for Change events throughout 2016 and 2017.
- These events will raise awareness about risk factors and vulnerabilities affecting homeless youth while fostering positive connections between the OPP, youth, families, stakeholders and communities.
- Through its partnership with The Push for Change, the OPP will maximize efforts to mobilize and engage for community safety and well-being throughout Ontario.
- As part of its commitment to Ontario's Mobilization and Engagement Model for Community Policing, the OPP partners with many organizations and people, including Joe and The Push for Change.
- The shopping cart can be seen as a powerful symbol of homelessness. No one has pushed one across Canada before. While the custom built cart Joe is pushing on this trek is physically empty, Joe says it is really filled with hope for change and hope that youth homelessness can be eliminated.
- The OPP will use The Push for Change as a springboard, creating positive momentum and multiplying everyone's efforts to make positive change for youth in our communities.
- The Push for Change encourages everyone to work together, one community at a time, to make sustainable change for Canadian youth. The goal is to broaden everyone's focus to include early intervention and prevention efforts as well as response.

SOURCE Ontario Provincial Police

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