



Joe Roberts began The Push for Change to fight youth homelessness in Canada in Newfoundland. (Postmedia Network File Photo)

ENNISMORE - The Peterborough County Ontario OPP will face off against local firefighters for a Guns 'N Hoses charity hockey game as part of The Push for Change initiative on Feb. 18 at the Ennismore Community Centre.

The Push for Change is a national awareness and youth empowerment campaign, focusing on youth homelessness and related issues with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention efforts.

In a community safety partnership with The Push for Change, the OPP is organizing over 30 Hockey Challenge events in communities across the province to raise awareness about youth homelessness. These events are designed to educate communities 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 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," stated OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes.

As part of The Push for Change campaign, former addict and street youth turned successful entrepreneur Joe Roberts is pushing a shopping cart 9,000 kilometres across Canada.

Beginning his journey in May 2016, Roberts is stopping at schools and communities along his route to share his story, the shopping cart representing a powerful symbol of homelessness. He expects to complete the route in September.

"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," Roberts said. Throughout its partnership with The Push for Change, the OPP will mobilize and engage with youth and various stakeholders in more than 170 community-based events.

In addition to the Hockey Challenges, the OPP and The Push for Change will also host community meals and SleepOut Challenges in efforts to create positive momentum and multiply efforts to educate communities and eliminate youth homelessness.

**NOTE:** For more information, visit [www.thepushforchange.com](http://www.thepushforchange.com) and [www.opp.ca](http://www.opp.ca).