

Pushing for Change in Kapuskasing

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Thirty-four students from Écho du Nord braved the cold on Feb.15 as participants in The Push for Change campaign intended to end youth homelessness. During the event the students built temporary shelters in Riverside Park.

Students from Écho du Nord and members of the Kapuskasing Ontario Provincial Police faced frosty winds and a frigid chill in the Riverside Park on Feb.15 as part of the Push for Change campaign.

The 34 students volunteered to set up temporary shelters made of cardboard and face the winter conditions for a few hours beginning at 11 am and ending a bit earlier at 1 pm, while the OPP collected donations for the Food Bank and Connexion Centre.

“Everything went really well,” said event organizer Constable Stéphanie Bélec. “I’m very happy with the turnout that we’ve had, and I’m proud to say we’ve had nice results in terms of participation as well.”

For the students the activity provided a learning experience to the hardships faced by others.

“It showed really how people on the street live,” said student Ryley Casonato. “I didn’t think it was going to be like

this, it was really interesting. We've been here since 10:30 and it was really cold.”

Constable Bélec said that despite finishing early, the weather helped shape the event.

“I think the cold is a part of the experience to see really what it is like to be homeless and without shelter,” she said. “I think it was a good learning experience for our youth participants.”

Over the span of a few hours, two cruisers were filled with donated items.

“We have one cruiser full of clothing, and another full of non-perishable foods,” Constable Bélec said. “We also received some cash donations.”

Push for Change is a national awareness campaign that is focused on ending youth homelessness that began last year when former street youth and heroin addict. Joe Roberts. decided to push a shopping cart across Canada.

“So he started on May 1, 2016 in the eastern provinces and now he's making his way through Ontario to raise awareness for that, a push for change.”

For more information on The Push for Change campaign visit www.thepushforchange.com.