

# OPP, local schools combine to Push for Change

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Rivalries were put aside as Beaver Brae and St. Thomas Aquinas girls hockey team members joined forces with the Ontario Provincial Police for a charity game benefitting Push for Change at the Kenora Rec Centre yesterday.

The Ontario Provincial Police and local high school girls hockey teams hit the ice for a good cause yesterday.

Two teams comprised of a mix of OPP members, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry firefighters, and Beaver Brae and St. Thomas Aquinas girls hockey teams played a charity game for the Push for Change campaign.

John Frankcom, a member of the Forensic Identification Unit, discussed playing in front of the jam-packed arena.

"It was awesome to see the kids out there cheering and stuff. Hopefully a lot of the images can be shared for Push for Change, it's a great cause," Frankcom said. "I had the opportunity to meet Joe [Roberts] last year and we got dialed in on the program. The OPP were happy to show support and I know since he's been in Ontario it's been a great go and we look forward to having him come through Kenora."

Push for Change is a national awareness and youth empowerment campaign, focusing on youth homelessness and surrounding issues.

Joe Roberts, a former street youth turned successful entrepreneur, is pushing a shopping cart 9,000 kilometres across Canada. Roberts is stopping at schools and communities along the way as part of the Push for Change. He started in May 2016 and is scheduled to finish his trek later this year on Sept. 30. He's expected to be in Kenora on Apr. 7.

All the money raised from the charity game is going towards Push for Change and Kenora's emergency shelter.

Not only was the game for a good cause, it brought together teams accustomed to being adversaries.

"It was a super fun experience. We got to get both the girls teams together and that doesn't happen often, so we got

to work together for once instead of having our rivalry,” said Katie Mahon of Beaver Brae. “It was for a really good cause and we had a lot of fun doing it.”

Annika Pedersen from St. Thomas Aquinas echoed that sentiment.

“It was really nice to come out and have a lot of fun to play with girls we don’t usually get to play with, and seeing the OPP have a lot of fun,” Pedersen said. “Hopefully we get to do it again and raise more money for Push for Change.”

The bleachers were full for the contest, as both post-secondary and elementary school students were allowed out for the afternoon to take in the game.