

# One Man's Push For Change

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Roberts is at the half way mark of his 9,000 km voyage across Canada

A former homeless youth who is now a successful entrepreneur brought his story to Sault Ste. Marie Wednesday and was greeted with a warm reception on a cold February day.



A turnout to welcome Joe Roberts to the Sault

When Joe Roberts was 22 he found himself living on the streets in Vancouver. He was homeless. In 1989 you could find Roberts pushing a shopping cart “it was tough , it was lonely, we can talk about being hungry and wet and cold and all those things but it was the feeling of watching the city around me and knowing I wasn’t a part of it” Roberts said the root problem of youth homelessness is fairly common. He ended up being homeless because of family conflict and drug addiction and mental health issues. “Once I got the support I



The Machine Shop *the new home of* **BON SOO** FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3 thru SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12 83 HURON STREET



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Roberts said his life was a vicious circle of addiction and feeling bad about himself that led to more drugs and more emotional unrest. The help of an addiction centre helped him get out of that cycle.

Pushing the shopping cart is symbolic for the 28 year old who is trekking across Canada pushing one to bring awareness of the youth homelessness problem and to get the different levels of government to make a stand against the problem. “young people need the protection and to prevent them from showing up at the door of Pauline’s Place in the first place”

Roberts was welcomed by more than two dozen community sponsors, Pauline’s Place being one of them who shared in 50% of the funds raised Wednesday during the three hour event featuring “Cart Wars challenge” where Competing teams sponsored a shopping cart for \$200 and had to race the cart through an obstacle course on Gore Street. The other 50% of the funds raised went to The Upstream Project, Push for Change’s school-based youth homeless prevention model.



Several members of council including the Mayor were in attendance



“We are into the hardest part of the campaign, from a terrain perspective we’re heading into some hills as we head towards Wawa, but also the weather” Roberts said. “What is encouraging when we come into a community like the Sault and see how well they have mobilized, this isn’t the push for change campaign, this is the City of Sault Ste. Marie’s campaign today and how everyone has come together to support this every very important issue” 100% of donated items such as personal hygiene, socks, hats and mitts also benefitted Pauline’s Place.

For more information on Push for Change go to [www.thepushforchange.com](http://www.thepushforchange.com)



Roberts is on his way north to Wawa.