

Man pushing shopping cart across Canada to raise awareness of homelessness

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Joe Roberts stops at the Saamis Tepee - Photo by Charles Lefebvre

MEDICINE HAT, AB — A Vancouver man who at one point was living on the streets is travelling across the country in an effort to change how communities tackle homelessness.

Joe Roberts arrived in Medicine Hat Wednesday morning on the Push for Change Tour. Roberts is pushing a shopping cart across Canada to raise awareness of chronic homelessness.

Roberts began his journey in Newfoundland last year, and ends in Vancouver in September.

Back in 1989, Roberts was homeless on the streets of Vancouver and addicted to drugs, but credits his family and social support programs for lifting him out of poverty.

“In less than 12 years, I went from a guy who was pushing a shopping cart around the streets of Vancouver to being on the cover of Canadian Business (magazine) as a celebrated entrepreneur,” he said.

Throughout his journey, Roberts has been speaking with community leaders and city officials, adding that investing in housing first and other social programs is the only way to address homelessness effectively.

“I’m an example of a community investment gone correct,” he said. “When we properly invest in infrastructure and people, we’re investing in transformation. That’s really the only way to look at seeing the sun set on the issue of homelessness.”

Roberts has praise for Medicine Hat’s efforts to reduce and end homelessness in the city, praising their support of a housing-first initiative.

Roberts will be in Medicine Hat until Friday, where he is the keynote speaker at the Community housing Society’s annual progress report luncheon on ending homelessness. The luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Esplanade.

More information about his journey can be found [here](#).

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