

Push for Change aims to raise money across Canada in fight against youth homelessness

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By Mo Cranker on June 17, 2017.

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At first, any sort of fundraiser that required him to run across the country seemed like a joke to Joe Roberts.

After toying around with the idea, Roberts decided to take the plunge last May and instead of jogging across the country, he decided he would push a shopping cart more than 9,000 kilometres to raise funds and awareness for youth homelessness, thus starting his campaign the Push for Change.

“Back in 1989 I was living on the streets in Vancouver pushing a buggy to collect bottles and cans to fuel a drug dependency,” Roberts said Friday after finishing a presentation at the Redcliff Youth Centre. “Thanks to people and systems I broke free and became successful in the business world — I want to help create sustainable solutions.”

Roberts’ walk began in St. John’s, Nfld. at the beginning of last May. Since then he and his team have travelled more than 7,500 kilometres, and will conclude in British Columbia on Sept. 29. He says connecting with the country’s youth is one of the most important parts of this journey

“Any time we get an opportunity to connect with schools and youth centres is important,” he said. “We really want to engage young people. If it’s just Joe walking down the highway with a shopping cart, who cares? It’s when we come into a community and share that message and inspire young people — that’s where you begin to see change.”

Roberts says stopping in Medicine Hat was interesting for him because of the steps the city has taken to attack homelessness. He says he thinks great steps have been made in the Hat.

“When we look at Medicine Hat, they have done a great job at investing in housing first,” he said. “The only way to end homelessness is by investing in prevention.”

Next stop for the Push for Change team will be Brooks. Roberts says he could not be happier with the last 13 months.

“Walking over many months and one Canadian winter across Canada might not have been the smartest choice I’ve ever made,” he said. “We’ve done more in the last 13 months than we could have ever imagined.”

For more information on Roberts and his journey go to, <http://www.thepushforchange.com>

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