

North Grenville Youth Up hits the pavement to spread the word about Oct. 2

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Members of the North Grenville Youth Up join with members of North Grenville Council to promote The Push for Change coming to the community on Oct. 2. From left, Craig McCormick, Deputy Mayor Barb Tobin, Councillor Frank Onasanya, Councillor Donovan Arnaud, Melanie Spiteri, Mayor David Gordon, Councillor Jim Bertram, Sandy Archibald, Brad Latta and Mary Cook. - Jennifer Westendorp

North Grenville Youth Up will spend the next month promoting The Push for Change event on Oct. 2.

"We believe that youth homelessness is an issue in every municipality," said Craig McCormick, member of NGYU, during a presentation to council on Aug. 22. "Each and every one of us can raise awareness."

He provided a few statistics on youth homelessness; each year, 35,000 youth in Canada do not have a place to call home (as many as 7,000 each night), 50 per cent of homeless youth come from middle and upper-income families and 66 per cent of homeless youth fail to complete high school.

“Why are we here tonight? North Grenville Youth Up supports the Joe Roberts campaign called The Push for Change,” explained McCormick. “Who is Joe Roberts? Joe is a former homeless youth who ended up living on the streets of East Vancouver in the late 80s and early 90s. He made himself a promise that if he ever escaped his fate, he would do something to pay it forward for the rest of his life. One cold morning, while under a bridge, Joe decided he needed to change his life. He reached out to the local services for help. Today, over 20 years later, Joe is the CEO of his own company and a well-known public speaker.”

On May 1 of this year, Joe began pushing a shopping cart across Canada. He just entered Quebec and has completed 2,280 kilometers of his 9,000-kilometer trek from St. John’s, Newfoundland to Vancouver, British Columbia. Along the way, Roberts will be stopping off in hundreds of community – including North Grenville – to spread awareness. His journey will end on Sept. 30, 2017.

“As you’ve probably already heard, we have convinced Joe Roberts, and his team, to come to North Grenville on Oct. 2 at 2 p.m.,” said McCormick. “Day 155 of his trek across Canada has been named North Grenville day.”

The event will feature a three-kilometer walk with Roberts, a charity barbecue and Robert’s life presentation.

“How can the community help? We need to spread the word,” said McCormick.

“I want to thank you for the work you’re doing – it’s very important,” said Councillor Jim Bertram. He asked about the logos displayed on the North Grenville version of Robert’s shopping cart, known as Wile E. Wheels (in honour of Wile E. Coyote and his partner in crime The Road Runner). McCormick explained for a sponsorship of \$100, businesses and organizations could have their logos displayed prominently on the cart, which will be journeying far and wide for the next few weeks to promote the event.

“Thank you for your presentation and to all of your colleagues, congratulations for what you’re doing here,” said Councillor Donovan Arnaud. “Outstanding. I’ll be there on Oct. 2.”

The NGYU is also running a challenge similar to The Ice Bucket Challenge in support of ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) called BOOTSOFF. People can text BOOTSOFF to 41010 and donate \$10 and then challenge their friends and family to go one hour without shoes to see what it might be like to be homeless. All funds raised through the BOOTSOFF challenge stay local.

50 per cent of funds raised by NGYU will go to the Kemptville Youth Centre and the other half will go to The Upstream Project, which supports community school-based strategies in order to reduce the number of young people who become homeless.

To donate to the cause, visit chimp.net/groups/north-grenville-youth-up. To date, \$2,700 of the \$10,000 goal has been raised. To get involved in NGYU, or to help with the event, contact McCormick by emailing t2tgolf@gmail.com.

For more information about the campaign, visit www.thepushforchange.com.



by [Jennifer Westendorp](#)

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