

Peel Youth Village welcomes Joe Roberts on his Push for Change

The Peel Youth Village recently welcomed Joe Roberts, former homeless youth, who is pushing a shopping cart across Canada to raise awareness and dollars to prevent and support the end of youth homelessness.

Roberts' national trek began May 1 in St. John's, Newfoundland, and is expected to end Sept. 30, 2017 in Vancouver, B.C.

Roberts shared his inspirational story with more than 60 students from St. Pio of Pietrelcina Elementary School after he walked through Mississauga during his 9,000-kilometre journey that's expected to last 17 months.

So why youth homelessness, other than the personal connection for Roberts?

"Because we now know what needs to happen if we ever want to end youth homelessness," he said. "The key is in prevention combined with emergency services and sustainable housing."

"Often the issue of prevention is one that is overlooked, but it's the one that offers the best hope for helping young people transition safely into adulthood," he added. "It is also the most cost effective and pragmatic approach to investing in a problem that looks like it has no end. If we keep doing what we have always done, we will keep getting what we have always gotten."

"Joe's story is inspirational. From living on the streets to leading an organization as a CEO he is a perfect example of the potential that's out there when people receive a hand up," said United Way of Peel Region President and CEO Shelley White. "United Way was proud to invest \$1.9 million in our homelessness reduction and prevention strategy last year and will continue working with our government partners to end homelessness."

The event was organized by Supportive Housing In Peel, the Region of Peel, Peel Regional Police and United Way of Peel Region.