

# Ottawans brave cold to end homelessness

BY KELLY ROCHE ,OTTAWA SUN

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Hot chocolate and hugs will fuel Eric Saumure as he spends Monday night outside City Hall in frigid temperatures for the Sleep Out for Ottawa Youth fundraiser.

Leading a nine-person team from KPMG, they've raised almost \$800 to fight youth homelessness in the city.

Saumure has a personal connection to the cause.

"My grandfather was an alcoholic several years ago, and he lived on the streets for several years in Ottawa," he said.

Roughly 1,000 young people in the nation's capital are homeless.

Mayor Jim Watson will be joined by more than 100 others taking part in two-hour shifts, including paramedic chief Anthony Di Monte, fire chief John de Hooge, police chief Charles Bordeleau, and medical officer of health Dr. Isra Levy.

"To just see everybody get involved, it's just really an enormous feeling," Saumure said.

The inaugural event has raised at least \$30,000 and was organized by the Youth Services Bureau, John Howard Society, Operation Come Home and Ottawa

Salus.

"We know that the sooner we can get youth off the street, the better outcome they'll have," said YSB volunteer Linda Cruz.

YSB helps about 1,500 street-involved youth each year, providing housing, emergency shelter, meals, counselling and health care.

Monday night will feel like -23C with the wind chill, Environment Canada predicts.

The mission wraps up with breakfast at City Hall from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., launching Toque Tuesday, where volunteers will be selling hats for a \$10

donation.

For each toque sold, 80% of the net proceeds will support the work of YSB, while 20% goes to Raising the Roof's national projects aimed at long-term solutions to homelessness.

In Canada, an estimated 65,000 youth are homeless.

Toques can be purchased online at raisingtheroof.org until Feb. 28.


For details, check out ysb.ca or contact ysbfoundation@ysb.on.ca

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