

Tyler determined to help 12-year-old works to ease plight of street people

by Tony Lofaro, Ottawa Citizen



Tyler Thompson saw firsthand the misery of Ottawa's homeless, and decided to do something about it.

The 12-year-old Barrhaven youngster visited the Ottawa Mission where he saw dozens of street people lining up for daily meals. And at an old-timers lacrosse pickup game he went to watch, Thompson saw the misfortune of an older man who lacked the equipment to play that day.

Tyler lent the man his gloves so that he could play the game and also made sure he got a ride back home. The man had hitchhiked to the Manotick Arena from Cornwall where he lives. "I felt bad for the man, and it got me thinking that I should help," said Tyler, a Grade 7 student at Mother Teresa High School in Barrhaven. Afterwards, Thompson mentioned to his mother, Tanya, that he wanted to start a fundraising campaign for the street people at the Ottawa Mission. She agreed it was a good idea and the campaign began several weeks ago.

He has received pledges on the Ottawa Mission website as well as donations and cans of food from family and friends, including teammates on his lacrosse, hockey and football teams. As of Dec. 8, he had raised about \$1,500.

Tyler said the Ottawa Mission informed him that it takes about \$600 to feed the homeless at breakfast, between \$600 to \$700 for lunch and another \$1,200 for dinner, for a total food bill of about \$2,400 per day.

His goal is to reach \$2,400 by this Christmas.

"I'm really hoping I can make the goal because I have a lot of nice people helping me," said Tyler. "It makes me feel good that I'm doing this and I understand now what homeless people go through."

Tanya Thompson is understandably proud of her young son.

"It's amazing for a young boy to want to make a difference because he's not exposed to that sort of thing normally," said Thompson. "It's nice for him to see that and appreciate what he has."

Thompson said the visit to the Ottawa Mission was an eye-opening experience for her son.

"His eyes were wide open and scared a little bit like a deer, because we walked past police cruisers on the street corner. After the tour of the Mission he understood how much more there is than just feeding the homeless."

Tyler is a competitive player with the Nepean Minor Lacrosse Association. Spokesman Matt Firth applauds the efforts of the young player and said some members of the association have made a donation to Tyler's campaign.

"Tyler is an intelligent, sensitive kid and it's nice to see him connect the dots and think that he can do something about homelessness and reach out to the Mission," said Firth.

You can visit Tyler's pledge page on the tribute donation page on The Ottawa Mission website, www.ottawamission.com.

TYLER UPDATE!

Tyler Thompson did indeed reach his fundraising goal of \$2,400 for The Ottawa Mission! Not only did he reach his goal, but his efforts inspired an anonymous donor, who matched Tyler's donation of \$2,400 and the company he worked for also matched it, raising a total of \$7,200 to help those in need at The Mission.

On Friday, January 14th, 2011 Tyler brought 3 of his friends – Graham, Chad and Adam –down to the Ottawa Mission kitchen to see firsthand how each dollar raised is making a difference in the lives of those in need.

At only twelve years old, these boys are some of the youngest people to volunteer in the Mission kitchen. The grade 7 students didn't appear to be intimidated. In fact their enthusiasm was infectious.

The boys witnessed many genuine thankful responses from the men and women receiving meals and it was an eye-opening experience for all of them.

Tyler's fundraising efforts covered the cost of food for about 800 meals at The Ottawa Mission that day.

