

Local scout doubles goal for sleeping bag campaign



Photo Courtesy of Sharon Ribero

Scout Riley of the 7th Kanata Scout Group launched a 'Sleep Like a Scout' campaign on Feb. 14 in hopes of collecting 25 sleeping bags for the Salvation Army's Ottawa Booth Centre in downtown Ottawa. He doubled his goal by collecting 55 sleeping bags.

BY ANIL JHALLI

When Scout Riley of the 7th Kanata Scout group went on an outdoor camping trip with his peers in the frigid winter conditions earlier this year, he wondered what it would be like for those individuals who didn't have the necessary shelter to help shield them from the cold winter months.

After he returned from his camping excursion, Riley decided he wanted to help those in need. He launched the 'Sleep Like a Scout' campaign with a goal of collecting 25 sleeping bags for homeless people by April 7.

After *Your Community Voice* published a story at the beginning of Riley's journey, he said the word started to spread and the campaign took off.

"I was really surprised to see how much we were

able to get," said Riley after the end of his campaign. "It was great to see how many people came through and the way the community helped out."

Riley and his mom, Sharon, were busy spreading the word, passing out flyers to their neighbours and community, making posts on social media and contacting the local library branches who agreed to set up a bins where residents could drop off sleeping bags and other winter clothing for Riley's initiative.

Riley exceeded his goal, more than doubling it, and collected 55 sleeping bags, over 20 adult coats and jackets; an assortment of bedding and blankets; 16 pairs of warm socks, quite a few hats, mitts and scarves.

All the donations are now at the Salvation Army's Ottawa Booth Centre in

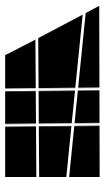
downtown Ottawa, and the staff is in the process of cleaning and distributing the donated items to individuals in need.

"It was a really great experience for him," said Riley's mom, Sharon. "I remember him climbing snow banks when he was delivering flyers and just getting the word out. And to see how many people responded, it was great."

Riley said the scout movement really taught him to help others, and he wanted to make a difference in people's lives who may not have the luxury of shelter and warmth, especially during Canada's cold winter months.

"I am really lucky that I have a place to sleep and keeps me warm," said Riley. "There are people out there that don't have that and they aren't as lucky as the rest of us."

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Submitted photo

Kanata South. Coun. Allan Hubley and Kanata Carleton MPP Merrilee Fullerton caught up with Ontario Finance Minister Vic Fedeli as he met with business leaders in the west end on Wednesday, April 24.