



Record time, record money

by Jennifer McKenzie

For the fourteenth year in a row, Women in Transition House Inc. (WITH) received a whopping cheque from an all male residence at UNB. This year, Neville House - who have run BedPush solo until this year - worked with Jones House to raise the astonishing \$25,500.

WITH is a safe and confidential shelter for abused women and children. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is staffed by women who are trained to be supportive and respond to the needs of abused women in crisis.

Women may stay at WITH for 30 days. This gives them time to think and make plans. WITH provides the women staying there with food and other essentials at no cost. It also offers them emotional support and peer counseling.

As Craig Estabrooks, this year's BedPush Coordinator explained, "both houses together still had less students the Neville alone did last year... so we decided to set our goal a little bit lower this year, at \$17,000." They managed to surpass that goal, and surpass last years fundraising total by \$3,500.

With even fewer residents between the two houses than Neville has had solo in the past, Neville-Jones managed to work together and bypass those solo efforts.

Estabrooks added, "90 to 95 percent of the fundraising was from door-to-door solicitation. The guys worked really hard."

The normally 12-hour journey from Saint John to Fredericton was even made in record time, in just over 8 hours, despite heavy, heavy rain for the first leg of the journey. In fact, after just a few minutes of running, the lightning reached overhead and the bus needed to stop.

Chad Robertson, a proctor at Neville/Jones, won the Top Fundraiser prize, bringing in over \$1800, the highest individual fundraising effort both this year, and in BedPush history.

The President of the Women in Transition House Board, Tracy Frasier, accepted the

cheque on behalf of the organization, and thanked Neville/Jones for their enormous contribution.

Frasier also commented on the example the house is setting for the community: "I brought my son with me for the past couple years, so hopefully he'll look up to what you guys do every year."

WITH presented both Neville and Jones houses with plaques in appreciation of their effort and Frasier added "Hopefully Jones will want to continue supporting us in the future." Former Jones resident, and now Neville/Jones resident, Justin DeMerchant accepted Jones' first plaque of appreciation from WITH.

Including this year's feat, Neville house has raised over \$160,000 for Transition House. Only good things are expected for the future.

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For us to come out with \$25,500, which is \$3,500 more than we raised last year is just phenomenal... We pushed in record time. We finished an hour early, and began an hour late. How do you explain that? I don't know. It's Neville/Jones. It's magic.

Nick Ouellette, Neville/Jones Assistant Don

It's just absolutely awesome... the guys told me I'd be surprised when I saw how much they'd raised. I was more then surprised. It brought tears to my eyes. It's so wonderful that young men will go out and do all of this work for women and children who are leaving abusive situations. It's heart warming

Tammy Kitchen, Executive Director, WITH

It's more than just a few hours on a bus

by Josh O'Kane

You'd think that having someone tell you how much fun they had pushing a bed nearly 100 kilometers in the middle of the night would make you skeptical of them. But having done just that, I can assure that it's no small thing to do.

Having a chance to be a part of the Neville-Jones Bed Push this year was no less than inspirational. It's one thing to hear about a bunch of guys from an all male house push a bed from Saint John to Fredericton, but it's a whole other experience to be there and do it.

Things didn't start out looking good - we were scheduled to leave at 9 p.m. from Fredericton, but once everyone was loaded on the first bus, it couldn't start. So, an hour and some later, a new bus came, and we were finally on our way to Saint John.

And then the thunder and lightning came.

The one thing that they would stop the

pushing the bed for was lightning. You don't want someone pushing a bed for charity to be struck by lightning on the way. Luckily, by the time the bus hit Lancaster Mall in Saint John, it was over.

However, at this point, the rain was torrential. It came down so fast that no matter where you were standing, you were in a puddle. This didn't stop the bed from getting pushed, though.

Led by a police escort and a van blasting pump-up music, and armed with rain suits and garbage bags, the first four boys began pushing the bed at 11:45 p.m. Friday night.

Within 15 minutes, we had to stop for lightning that was directly overhead. But after a call to Environment Canada, we were assured it had moved ahead and we carried on.

I was up soon. The part that worried me the most about the whole thing as I watched from near the front was how I was going to get off of the moving bus. The bus moved as fast as the boys pushing the bed, which meant I had to run as fast as they were as I was getting off.

The first time I jumped off, I didn't know that I had to run, and landed on both feet. This sent me flying on my hands and knees. This didn't stop the bed though, which meant I had to give'r hard to catch up. I made it, and pushed the bed for the first time.

In the end, the most intense part was getting on and off the bus. If I didn't put my right foot down ready to run, I'd land flat on my face. If I missed the handle getting on the bus, I could fly out again and hit my head off the door on my way down to the ground. That alone gave me the adrenaline rush I needed for every time I went out to push that bed.

The bed rested on an impressive tricycle system complete with shocks and steering capability. There were three pushing handles and one steering handle that guided the front wheel. It's not that hard to push the bed since there are three other guys there helping you do it, but it still takes a team effort to make sure you're staying at a good pace.

Pushing the bed was a thrill on its own. You ran, you tapped someone out, and you started pushing. And if you were with the right guys, you pushed hard. Some people tapped out there and then - and there's

nothing wrong with that - and some guys kept pushing. Other guys pumped us up by yelling from the van in front of us with the music blasting, and we chased them the whole way.

At the start of the night I managed to push for five or so minutes at once, through three-inch-deep puddles on the shoulder of the road. This quickly changed later to 30 seconds or a minute at a time. After all, it was the middle of the night and I was pushing a bed 100 km - my body would crash if I pushed too hard all at once. My feet stayed soaked all night, but thanks to everyone pushing everyone on, I stayed motivated all night.

Once you get back on the bus you understand what it is when people talk about how great the Bed Push can be.

Neville-Jones Proctor Chad Robertson once told me "you're gonna get goose bumps every time you think of it."

He was right.

There were points when I wanted to crawl in a corner and sleep, there were points where I couldn't run for a half hour because I hit my shin off of the bus door jumping back in, and there were points where I didn't know if I wanted to stay on both bus trips. But I stayed for the whole night, until 8:15 the next morning, for the thrill of just pushing the bed.

The night was divided into two shifts with two busses, and Chief Coordinator Craig Estabrooks happily signed me up for both of them. Though I had my doubts about staying on both, the adrenaline rush each time I got out to push the bed kept me going. Once I refilled on muffins and Doritos at the start of the second shift, at 3:30 a.m., I was ready to go.

Once people got the feeling for pushing the bed, everything went smoothly. People learned how to steer the bed without jacking it into the middle of the road, how to get out of the moving bus without faceplanting, and how to keep their energy going for the rest of the night.

All it took was a 30-second shift whenever you could, and you kept your energy to do it again. Neville President Sean Perry kept reinforcing this, making sure the pushers didn't drain their energy by running too long, which would slow the bed.

"The last thing we need are heroes," Perry kept repeating. "We can't afford to slow this bed down!"

It was true - with a late start and pouring rain for the first third of the bed push, the bed needed to be pushed even faster, through everyone working together.

That happened, too - with record timing.

Though the Bed Push got off to a late start, it was over by 8:15 a.m. the next morning. The last group of pushers got ready at the top of Regent and took the bed down to Montgomery St., where the whole Neville-Jones crew got off the bus and ran with the bed down the hill.

I'm not even from Neville-Jones, but all that mattered at this point was that everyone there pushed that bed together. Nothing will make you prouder than saying you just pushed a bed from Saint John to Fredericton in the middle of the night.

Now picture 100 men running from the Wu Center down through the UNB campus with that bed at 8:15 in the morning.

It didn't matter when each guy slept last, because the adrenaline was pumping through all of their hearts right there and then. Everyone from that second bus ran down together for one last stretch. The music was still blaring from the van, which honked its way all down the hill to Neville-Jones.

The thrill of making it back home to campus was met again later on at the Farmer's Market, when the cheque for the Women in Transition House was unveiled. It was the victory run, and the boys all ran it together, down through Fredericton to the Market, together, one more time. When the cloak was removed from that gigantic novelty cheque, everyone's heart stopped.

We had raised \$25,500.

This much had never been raised before, not in the whole 14 years of the Bed Push. The run had been more than worth it. A record broken for time and a record broken for money raised for a great cause. I may not be a resident of Neville-Jones, but to be a part of something like this was incredible. If there were any dissonance left between the Neville boys and Jones boys before then, this brought them closer together than anything else could have.

Think about it - what else can bring people together more than pushing for a goal like this? How often are you ever able to go up to someone and say, "hey, remember that time we pushed that bed from Saint John to Fredericton?"

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