



WE MATTER

IMPACT REPORT 2017



Hall of Fame
HOME OF THE
HUSKIES
Home of the Huskies

POOD
WOOD

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I Matter. You Matter. We Matter.

Hope. Culture. Strength.

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

2017 was a foundational year for We Matter.

We took the time to listen, learn and pilot the first iterations of our key initiatives: first, and the heart of We Matter, the We Matter Campaign, soon followed by community-based workshops, the #HopePact campaign, a PSA project, and the #HopeForum. We have also had the opportunity to build a number of partnerships and collaborations that have, and continue to be integral to our work going forward.

We were encouraged by the media coverage we have received; we hope it has contributed to more Canadians beginning to learn about the stories, experiences and resilience of Indigenous youth.

Most importantly, we reached and engaged with thousands of Indigenous youth in diverse ways - online and in-person - sharing our messages of hope, culture and strength.

This document aims to offer a glimpse into the impact that We Matter has had over this seminal year. The stories and data here reflect the need for We Matter to continue this essential work of building and instilling empowerment, hope and life promotion within Indigenous youth across Canada.

We thank everyone who was part of this seminal year of We Matter -- your time, interest, contribution, willingness to engage - in whatever form it was -- is truly appreciated. To the youth who have been part of our journey: you are the reason we started We Matter. We hope that you truly believe your worth and know the love and support that surrounds you.

There is so much power in hope and connection. Through it all, this is something that continues to be affirmed over and over again through our work at We Matter. But there is still so much more to do. We hope you will stay engaged with We Matter in whatever way possible and relevant to you so that we can continue this journey together.

Marsi cho / Thank you,



Tunchai Redvers

Co-Founder & National
Programs Director



Kelvin Redvers

Co-Founder & National Media/
Partnerships Director



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to communicate to Indigenous youth that they matter, and provide resources to encourage and support those going through a hard time while fostering unity and resiliency.

We Matter provides a forum for people across the country to share messages of hope and positivity. By sharing stories, words of encouragement, and authentic messages of hope and resilience, we help to make a community and nation stronger.

We remind youth that I Matter. You Matter. We Matter.

We prove that we are all #StrongerTogether.





ABOUT US

We Matter launched on October 18, 2016. We are an Indigenous youth-led and nationally registered non-profit organization that is committed to Indigenous youth empowerment, hope and life promotion. Our work is centred around the We Matter Campaign – a national multi-media campaign in which Indigenous role models and allies from across Canada submit short video, written and artistic messages sharing their own experiences of overcoming hardships, and communicating with Indigenous youth that no matter how hopeless life can feel, there is always a way forward.

We are committed to:

- Connecting Indigenous youth with positive messages of hope, culture, wellness, healing, mental health and life promotion
- Gathering and amplifying Indigenous and Indigenous youth voices
- Creating space and opportunity for Canadians to celebrate and honour the voices and experiences of Indigenous youth
- Creating and distributing materials and resources designed to empower Indigenous youth
- Building Indigenous youth capacity in schools and communities by implementing Indigenous youth-led projects and enabling peer-to-peer support

Our Core Messages for Indigenous Youth:

- You aren't alone
- You carry your own strengths
- You have the capacity to make change
- There are coping skills you can use during difficult times
- Being Indigenous is awesome and something to be proud of
- Taking action can improve your communities and selves
- You have skills and knowledge that can help others

OUR REACH

At a Glance



1,800

Youth reached directly



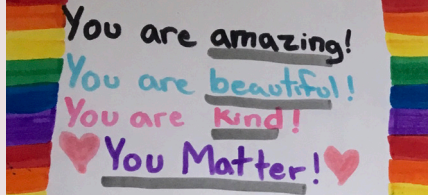
Shared our Outreach Materials* in **40** communities over **9** provinces and territories

*Toolkits, Lesson Plans, Handouts



Delivered **400 USB Sticks**

containing all We Matter messages of hope, culture and strength to Indigenous youth and communities across the country



9,436,642

Total Facebook Reach



462,008

Total Twitter Impressions

1,500

New Twitter Followers

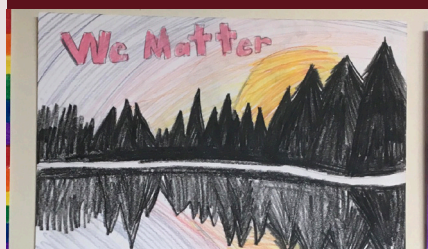


46,459

Total Instagram Reach

1,000

New Instagram Followers



41,359

YouTube Views

17,039

Website Users



1,000

People signed the #Hope Pact in 2017

1,000

#HopePact Bracelets mailed out

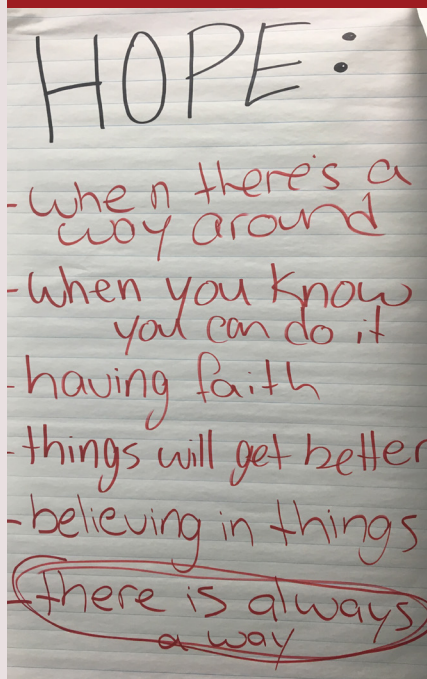


600+

Newsletter Subscribers

15

Partnerships



WE MATTER CAMPAIGN

The We Matter Campaign is the heart of We Matter.

We had a vision of creating an online space where Indigenous youth could hear and see personal and relevant messages of love, hope and healing from their peers, from Indigenous leaders and public figures, and from allies, all in one place. Through these videos, as well as, artwork and stories, we are creating important points of connection for youth, spreading the simple but often underestimated message that no youth is alone in their struggles, and that hope and positive change is possible.

“Someone will find you with a lit candle. And they’ll light yours up. And that will be your lightness....there’s gonna be another person who will always stand by your side. Who knows, they’re already standing next to you, you just don’t know it. Just know: you’re beautiful, you’re unique. Even to me and I don’t know you, but I love you.”

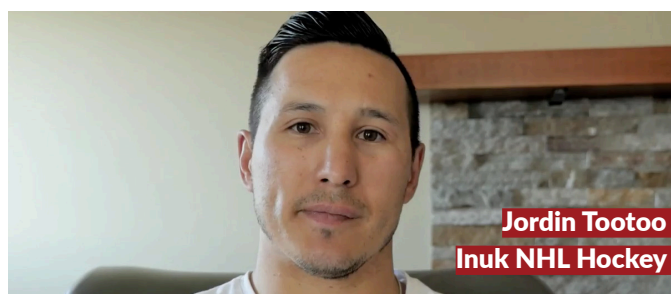
- CHASTITY FIDDLER, SANDY LAKE FIRST NATION YOUTH

To watch We Matter video messages, please visit wemattercampaign.org/videos

The We Matter video library is searchable by topic, location, challenge and name. By the end of 2017, we had a total of **143 We Matter videos** with thousands of views.

Top 5 We Matter Videos

By Views per Page



MY MESSAGE TO YOU if you're
having a hard time:

Look to the trees, as it shows you to
stand tall and proud.

Look to the rock, as it shows you the
strength you need.

Look to the river, as it shows you
to keep moving forward in life as it
flows and to never give up.

To the flowers, as it shows you the
love you need. The colors.

The grass as it teaches you forgiveness,
as it always grows and grows no matter
if you keep stepping on it. It's there to
show you to forgive.

We matter.

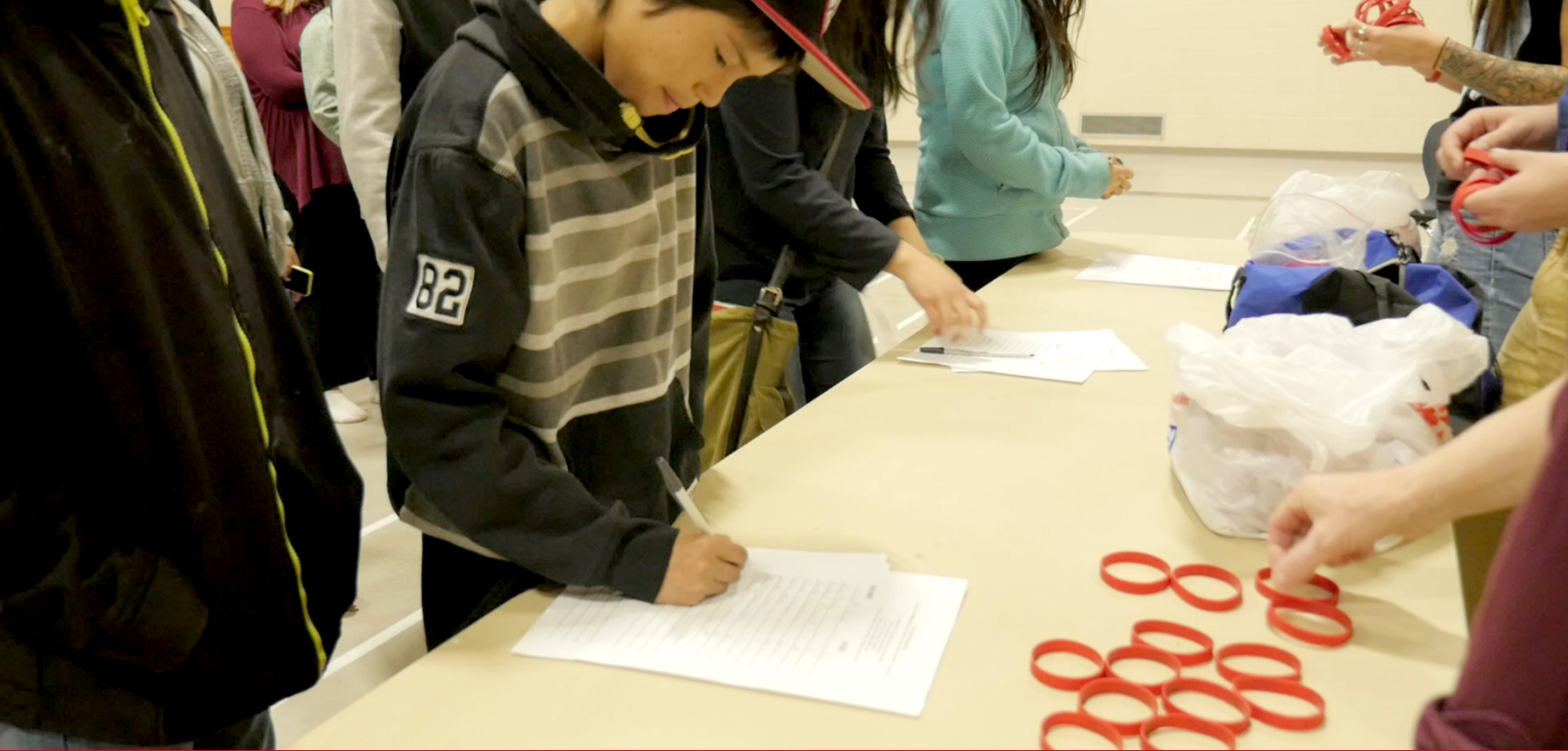
Every little thing matters: the trees,
the rocks, the flowers.

You matter.

Stay strong.

— SHARED BY JACK LINKLATER JR.
ATTAWAPISKAT FIRST NATION YOUTH





THE #HOPEPACT

If youth are dropping out of school, turning to drugs and alcohol, or deciding to take their lives together, what if we had even more people, thousands across the country, deciding to have hope together?

By uniting as Indigenous youth in the name of hope, we become so much #StrongerTogether

In June 2017, We Matter launched the #HopePact campaign, encouraging Indigenous youth across the country to pledge to the following four conditions:

- 1. Believe that no matter how hard life gets, there is always a way forward***
- 2. Ask for help when I need it***
- 3. Honour the strength within me***
- 4. Show support and kindness to those around me***

The idea for the #HopePact grew from the awareness of a common issue in many Indigenous communities, of young people taking suicide pacts together. The #HopePact is an alternate option for youth - it's another way for us to reinforce our messaging that they are never alone and that they have the strength to overcome struggles and challenges in their lives. Further, it is a way for Indigenous youth to actively participate in something bigger than themselves - by taking the pledge, they are making a shared promise with other Indigenous youth signatories, connecting them to hundreds of others who can relate to, stand with, and believe in each other. Youth either take the pledge online or in person by requesting materials.. #HopePact signatories receive a red bracelet with #HopePact imprinted on them as a reminder that they are never alone.

**By the end of the 2017,
we had 1000 #HopePact
pledges.**

Our Reach

We shared messages of hope, culture and strength with 1,500 Indigenous youth through our community and school workshops and various youth gatherings.

- YOUTH GATHERINGS AND CONFERENCES
- VIRTUAL GATHERING ATTENDANCE
- SCHOOL/COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS



ACTIVITIES

In 2017, We Matter began facilitating Indigenous youth workshops in communities across Canada. These workshops were developed to introduce We Matter directly to youth; facilitate discussions around mental health, youth challenges, hope, and Indigenous strength; foster positive identity and identify positive coping strategies; and engage youth in peer-to-peer messaging and support.

“Thank you so very much for the wonderful support and tools.

I will be working even harder to empower our kids and to gently remind our adults that our kids need us to come from a place of compassion and kindness.

Thank you from my heart to yours for creating a space for our youth to have a voice.”

— WE MATTER COMMUNITY MEMBER





USB Stick Pilot Project

In Fall 2016, there was a suicide crisis in First Nations communities La Ronge and Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan. We Matter wanted to support. In partnership with Health Canada and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, we were able to bring our messages of hope to these communities in March 2017.

We spent 4 days running youth workshops at Senator Myles Venne School in La Ronge and Rhoda Hardlotte Memorial Keethanow School in Stanley Mission. Due to a lack of strong internet connection in Stanley Mission, following the 4 days of workshops, We Matter held a ceremony with local traditional drummers and gifted 250 students with USB Sticks containing all the We Matter videos.

To avoid parachuting into and out of the community, we also developed a set of 12 Lesson Plans - Indigenous Curriculum on Hope & Strength - to leave behind with teachers so that they could continue creating space for important discussions on positive mental health, wellbeing and identity in the classroom. The lessons plans continue to be available for schools and teachers.

By the end of 2017, we delivered 400 USB Sticks to youth in various communities, all loaded with We Matter video messages of hope and encouragement.



What We Learned

In order to ensure that We Matter is continually learning and evolving and most importantly, meeting the needs of the youth we engage, we asked participants to share their feedback with us after our workshops and gathering.

WHAT IS WORKING:

- The most effective way to engage youth is through peer-to-peer support
- Indigenous youth want to connect and communicate with other Indigenous youth
- Youth need and want role models they can personally relate to
- Youth carry the wisdom and knowledge to support each other
- Positive affirmation and validation goes a long way
- Youth need more opportunities to express their voices, struggles and successes
- Youth appreciate incorporating culture and Indigenous perspectives into programming
- Operating from a strengths-based model enables youth to feel good about themselves

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Creating more opportunities for youth to engage through our online and social media platforms
- Increasing our outreach and engagement to Inuit regions and Inuit youth
- Effectively communicating that anyone can create and submit their own We Matter video
- Effectively communicating that We Matter is a tool for community members, teachers, social and youth workers to use to engage youth in important dialogue
- Continuing to find ways of getting We Matter messaging into communities lacking strong internet connection / mobilizing USB Stick distribution to remote areas
- Expanding our social media engagement outside of Facebook

#StrongerTogether PSA Facebook Partnership

In August 2017, We Matter was approached with an opportunity, in partnership with Facebook, to create PSA (public service announcement) videos to be featured across Facebook. We Matter created two PSA videos which promoted various self-care and coping strategies from Indigenous youth as well as Facebook's Suicide Reporting Tool - which allows users to anonymously flag posts that indicate suicide and self-harm - and the First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness helpline. These videos featured 20 Indigenous youth ages 13-18 from Vancouver, BC, in attempt to promote strengths-based and Indigenous youth-specific mental health messaging.



We Matter Mini-Toolkit and Resources

Due to high We Matter workshop demands from communities and organizations within the first six months of operations, we needed to find a way for We Matter to support as many communities as possible within the organization's capacity. This led to the creation of the We Matter Mini-Toolkit, a simple step-by-step guide so that anyone (teachers, facilitators, community members, youth, etc.) can introduce We Matter and begin discussions on hardship, hope and healing with youth in their own communities, schools and workshops. This Toolkit was finished by the end of 2017, ready for launch in early 2018.

We Matter's Lesson Plans, developed in Spring 2017, are a set of 12 custom lesson plans on hope and strength designed for classroom instruction. The lesson plans utilize the We Matter videos as starting points for discussions, lessons and activities - all in the effort of empowering educators to bring Indigenous and youth support content into classes, grades 7 to 12. With lesson plans, We Matter felt better leaving community and school workshops knowing that important conversations could continue.

In addition to PDF and print materials, We Matter attempted to streamline access to crisis and help line services nationally for those seeking help, by creating an interactive map on the website, where youth can search numbers by their province or territory.



#HOPEFORUM

January 21st & 22nd, 2018

On January 21st and 22nd, 2018, 70 First Nation, Metis and Inuit youth between the ages of 13-26 from every province and territory across the country gathered in Ottawa, Ontario for the #HopeForum: A National Gathering of Indigenous Youth Leaders on Healing & Life Promotion.

The #HopeForum was hosted by We Matter and Facebook, and was the first ever national event for Indigenous youth focused on mental health, suicide and wellness. The gathering was made up of two parts: two days of workshops and relationship-building for youth participants, and a National Indigenous Youth Roundtable event where we welcomed the general public, media, and dignitaries to engage with the youth in a livestreamed discussion. Leaders in attendance of this youth-led roundtable included Hon. Jane Philpott, then Minister of Health, and Assembly of First Nation's (AFN) National Chief, Perry Bellegarde.

The workshops provided the space for youth to explore their own needs as advocates and leaders of change, as well as identify specific ways to support their own wellbeing alongside the wellbeing of fellow youth. Young leaders also lead the discussion surrounding healing on their own terms.

FIVE KEY OUTCOMES OF THE GATHERING:

1. Youth shared that they felt safe enough to express their thoughts, experiences and stories, and by doing so, didn't feel alone in their experiences.
2. Youth learned techniques and tools such as learning how to respond to a suicidal person (safeTALK training). They were able to take these learnings back to their communities to use and share.
3. The #HopeForum received significant media coverage and the National Roundtable event was also live streamed for public viewing. As Indigenous youth voices are rarely heard or amplified in the mainstream public forum, this was significant.
4. Youth participants identified a set of Calls to Action – 11 actionable solutions and recommendations for change at the community and national level.
5. Since the #HopeForum, We Matter has convened a Hope Council as a result of participant interest from youth at the #HopeForum. This group of diverse Indigenous youth from various regions will continue to provide We Matter with direction, guidance and support moving forward.

TO LEARN MORE about the #HopeForum and our Calls to Action, please visit wemattercampaign.org/hope-forum

FACEBOOK

A Tool for Organizing and Space for Connection

As We Matter began as an online media campaign, social media has been integral to our growth and impact. Facebook especially, is a space for Indigenous youth and communities to connect and communicate with each other, bridging geographical and other barriers that prevent youth from connecting with each other more in person. In addition to being an online space from which to share our We Matter videos, we have also used Facebook as a tool in other ways.

FOR EXAMPLE:

We were able to successfully launch and circulate two Indigenous-youth specific PSA videos, centering mental health and suicide prevention.

We were able to live stream the National Indigenous Youth Roundtable event via Facebook which was important to including those who weren't able to join us in person, and as a harvesting tool for We Matter and others to be able to view the discussion post event.

After the #HopeForum, a Facebook group was created by youth participants who wanted to continue to offer peer support to each other, share opportunities and network with each other. Through the Facebook group, youth expressed the need for a follow up opportunity

to process challenging and lingering feelings from the #HopeForum. We Matter supported by facilitating a Google Hangout for youth to have an informal debrief session, and creating a national youth council.

Our 2017 Facebook Stats:



9,436,642

Total Facebook Reach



411,711

Total Facebook Engagement
Clicks, likes, etc.



2,747,106

Total Facebook Reach by Youth



22,671

Facebook Followers



37,355

Total Facebook Youth Engagement
Clicks, likes, etc.



MEDIA FEATURES AND COVERAGE

The voices and perspectives of Indigenous youth are often missing from mainstream media and public discourse.

We Matter has begun to shift this as we share our own narrative about Indigenous youth resilience and positive messaging in the media. In 2017, We Matter was featured in a number of media and news outlets over the year, from local outlets to national news, to radio, print and podcasts. Select quotes from these pieces are featured here:

“The ask is simple: Listen. Listen to what these young people are saying about how they've gotten through the darkness. Hear and understand their tremendous strength and capacity for resilience. They are the heroes of their own stories; they always will be. It's time the rest of us paid attention.”

- Kelvin Redvers and Tunchai Redvers
Globe and Mail Op-Ed, September 10, 2017
Indigenous youth are their own heroes – it's time we listened

“We felt like this video would be a good way to put ourselves out there and show that we support this campaign as indigenous youth ourselves... [said Celeste Sylliboy, 14]”

- Harry Sullivan, The Guardian, February 21, 2017
Millbrook youths reach out through 'We Matter' video

“There has been issues of suicide pacts across the country where young people decide together to take their own lives,” said Kelvin Redvers, one of the founders of the national movement.

“So what if instead we had even more people deciding to have hope together?”

- CBC News, Jun 25, 2017
Take the Hope Pact, N.W.T. man tells struggling Indigenous youth

...Their partnership with Facebook has produced the video #StrongerTogether, which was launched Friday and created from more than 20 interviews. A public service announcement created with funding support from Health Canada, the video features Indigenous youth speaking openly and honestly about how they found their own strength and how they can help each other.”

- Darren Bernhardt, CBC News, Sept 10, 2017
We Matter campaign partners with Facebook to bring hope to Indigenous youth

“Closest to the crisis, youths can offers insight into the issues facing a generation of people who feel they have no way out. But Redvers says this proximity also means that young people are the most impassioned to see real change, to take constructive steps — something the public and politicians can learn from.”

- CBC Radio, The Current, January 25, 2017
'We Matter': Indigenous youth raise their voices in the fight against suicide



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Who We Are

We Matter was started by Dene/Metis brother and sister, Kelvin and Tunchai Redvers, who grew up in the Northwest Territories and were disappointed with the lack of Indigenous youth-specific mental health and life promotion supports and resources at all levels. They ran We Matter operations until September 2017, at which point they brought on another team member to meet capacity demands.

We Matter would not exist without the encouragement, support and generosity of a number of sponsors and partners who made our incorporation and first year possible.

Partnerships

Facebook Canada
RBC
Government of Canada
NAN
Inuvialuit Corporation
Government of the NWT
Telus
It Gets Better
Assembly of First Nations
Youth Council
Right To Play Canada
Kids Help Phone
Msit No'Kmaq: All My Relations
(3 Things Consulting)
Northern Youth Abroad
Girls At Bat – Jays Care Foundation
Connected North
Classic Roots & Turning Tables
Shawnee
We the Inspired

Special thanks to our extended family and partners:

BDO Accounting
OKT Law
Hot Soup Group

Marsi Cho/Thank you to everyone across the country who contributed their time, voice, stories, videos, love, strength, and support in 2017.

And thank you for believing in a world where Indigenous youth have the opportunity to live, heal and thrive.



WE MATTER

To learn more visit www.wemattercampaign.org
Or email info@wemattercampaign.org

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