



WE MATTER

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

April 2020 to May 2021

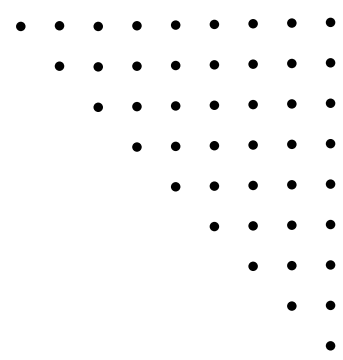
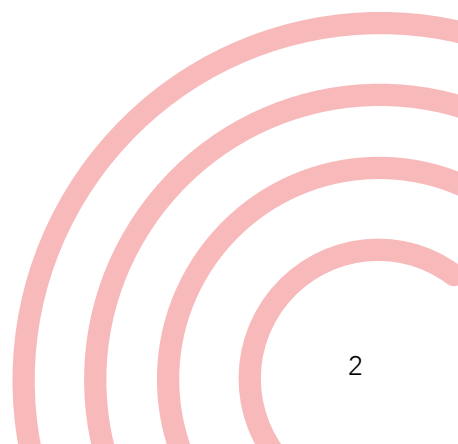


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A Letter from our Co-Directors

2020/21 was an interesting year for We Matter, where, like most, we navigated our operations and programming amidst a global pandemic, requiring creativity and shifts so that we could continue to meet our mission and to serve Indigenous young people.

The previous year showed us an incredibly successful launch of the National Ambassadors of Hope Program. We were able to engage and mentor a select number of Indigenous youth changemakers over a longer period of time, creating ripple effects in communities across the country. Moving into this year we created a strategic plan to ensure that all of our program areas uplifted one another to strengthen the success of each program and the organization, showing Indigenous youth that there is always a path forward. In addition to our toolkits and resources, We Matter Campaign, and National Ambassadors of Hope program, we introduced the #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund based on learnings from the previous regional Ontario Support Network.

The Support Fund provides Indigenous youth the opportunity to take supporting their community into their own hands, while assisting them in establishing their own personal development as leaders in their community. Indigenous youth want change, and with support they can make it happen. The Support Fund was successful in its first year and as we slowly transition out of pandemic isolation, adjustments will be made to open it as the initially envisioned Mini Grant program.

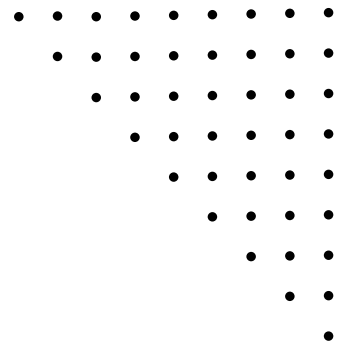
This past year has given us incredible learnings and insights into how to be adaptable so that we can do this critical decolonizing work in a good way. Our dedicated team has undergone many shifts in this past year, providing an opportunity to come together, learn and grow. We continue to find accessible and innovative ways to put power into the hands of Indigenous youth and remind them over and over and over again, how much they really do matter.

Through partnerships, community support, and the amazing extended family of Indigenous youth leaders, we are continually reminded of the importance of this work. Step by step, we truly believe we can help shape a future where Indigenous youth have opportunities, platforms, representation, networks of support, access to culture and the hope to live another day.

We thank everyone who has continued to support the work of We Matter, and who believes in a world where Indigenous youth know their power. We ask that you take the time to reflect, celebrate, and learn from this past year alongside us. The journey of breaking cycles of hardship is difficult, but not impossible. We hope that you continue to stand with us, as we are all stronger together.

With love and excitement,

Chelsea Mulvale - Director, Programs & Youth Engagement
Danika Vessel - Director, Partnerships & Outreach



Our Mission

At We Matter, we create resources to facilitate important conversations on Indigenous mental health, while also generating opportunities for Indigenous youth to step into their power, and see themselves represented positively.

Our mission is to communicate to Indigenous youth that they matter, and support those going through a hard time. We strive to foster unity and resilience in all communities we work with.

We Matter provides a forum for people across the country to share messages of hope and positivity. By amplifying 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.*

We continue to:

- Connect Indigenous youth with positive messages of hope, culture, wellness, healing, mental health and life promotion;
- Gather and amplify Indigenous youth voices;
- Create space and opportunity for Canadians to celebrate and honour the voices and experiences of Indigenous youth;
- Create and distribute materials and resources designed to empower Indigenous youth; and
- Build Indigenous youth capacity in schools and communities by implementing Indigenous youth-led projects and enabling peer-to-peer support.



About Us

We Matter launched on October 18, 2016. We are a national Indigenous youth-led organization with charitable status that is dedicated to Indigenous youth support, hope and life promotion. Our founding project is 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.

OUR CORE MESSAGES FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH:



Our Reach

YEAR AT A GLANCE

Between April 2020 and May 2021...

WE DISTRIBUTED

3,019

Toolkits nationally to every single province & territory*

WE MAILED

100+

#HopePact bracelets to groups across the country**

WE MATTER ENGAGED OVER

2,000

Indigenous youth

The We Matter Team facilitated workshops and presentations in over

7

 events & communities***

623 and 625

people in support worker roles

people in teaching roles reached out to us for support and resources

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA GAINED



2,165

NEW FOLLOWERS

OUR WEBSITE RECEIVED



42,057

NEW VISITS

36,269

YOUTUBE CHANNEL VIEWS

Acquired

72

NEW DONORS

RECEIVED

\$10,203

in donations to go to youth and communities from 106 donors -

THANK YOU!

* this only includes Toolkits mailed, electronic requests and website PDF downloads and does not include materials circulated at workshops, events, gatherings, and through the Ambassadors program

**this only includes #HopePact bracelets mailed and does not include materials circulated at workshops, events, gatherings

***this does not include Ambassador of Hope engagements

Campaigns

WE MATTER CAMPAIGN

Our We Matter Campaign is an ongoing multi-media campaign which predominantly lives on social media. Through filmed and submitted video messages, art and stories, photo series, callouts, articles, and custom content, we share positivity, love, hope, and support with Indigenous youth nationally.

Due to some internal team shifts and a larger focus on building out programs, we were not able to spend as much time dedicated to our campaign outreach which reflects in some lower engagement numbers. That being said, the We Matter Campaign continues to be the glue and platform for all of the work we do, and this past year saw some amazing submissions and content we feel very proud of. We're always accepting message submissions, and this means you can submit your own message, or encourage others to submit a message to Indigenous youth too!

How many new videos filmed & submitted? 15

TOP 5 WATCHED WM VIDEOS

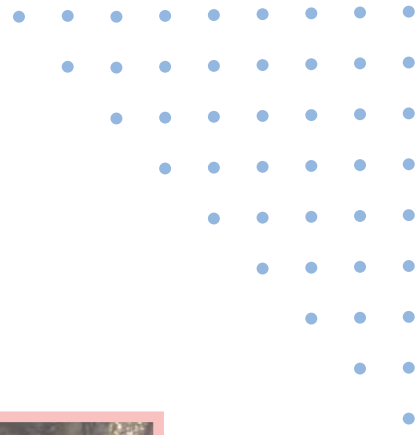
YouTube:

1. AOH Callout - 2020
2. Kelly Fraser - WMC
3. Ashley Callingbull - WMC
4. Don Burnstick - WMC
5. What is WM 3.0

Facebook:

1. COVID Support Fund is Back
2. You Are Not Alone
3. Applications for year 2 of the AOH program
4. #IndigenousYouthRise COVID Support Fund
5. Marshall & Gabrielle's Invitation to join AOH





Highlight Reel!

ORANGE SHIRT DAY



AMBASSADORS OF HOPE CALLOUT VIDEO



We Matter in the Media



“The Indigenous150+ Youth Ambassador program brought together 21 young adults from across the country, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to learn how to moderate cross cultural conversations and basic podcasting skills.

Through the training programme they learned protocols for working with Indigenous communities, how to recognize and address harmful stereotypes, all the while mastering audio recording, editing and storytelling skills.

Together they have created over 40 episodes, hosting conversations with knowledge keepers, community leaders, artists and influencers who share their stories.”

- Indigenous150+ Podcast

We are so grateful to be able to have been featured on their podcast!

<https://goodinfluencefilms.com/podcasts#div12A>



Episodes:

[Roha Hena - Chelsea Mulvale](#)

[Creators Profile Roha and Nicole](#)

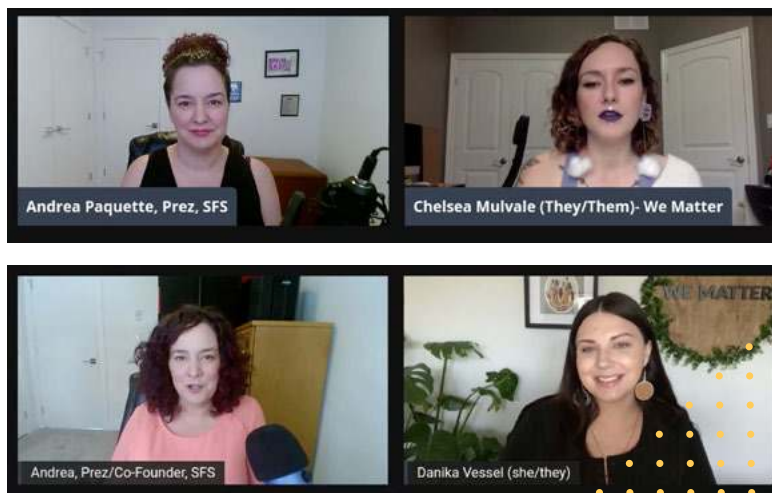
[Creators Profile Roha](#)

[Tornquist Redvers](#)

Stigma Free Society is one of our amazing partners who supports us and lifts up the amazing work we do. We are so grateful that we were able to interview with them on their Facebook Interview series!

<https://www.facebook.com/168880573172522/videos/671823317028360>

<https://www.facebook.com/168880573172522/videos/1417617725289104>



We Matter Founders awarded the Governor Generals' Medal

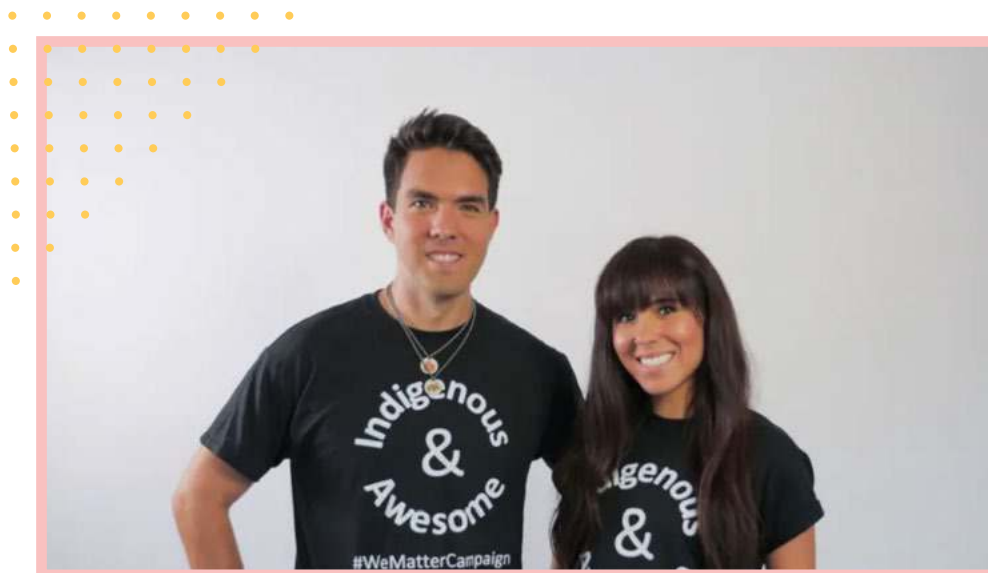
[We Matter founders awarded Governor General's medal](#)



<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/we-matter-founders-awarded-governor-general-s-meritorious-service-medal-1.5939855>

A one pager feature from Kids Help Phone announcing the creation of a formal partnership

[Kids Help Phone & We Matter address Indigenous youth crisis](#)



<https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/news/kids-help-phone-we-matter-address-indigenous-youth-crisis/>



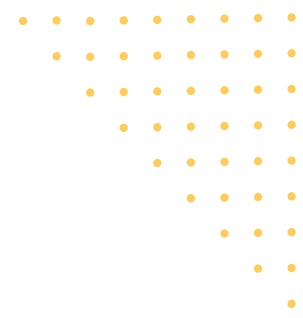
Two-Spirit Dictionary

In January 2020 We Matter entered into an exciting partnership with Facebook Canada and TAXI ad agency to implement an online ad campaign engaging with the Two-Spirit community to educate and raise awareness of Two-Spirit identity and to empower Two-Spirit peoples.

The 2SLGBTQ+ population faces the highest rate of those who die by suicide, so it is very important to We Matter that Two-Spirit people see themselves as important and valued in the world, and that others see that too! The Two-Spirit dictionary collected definitions from individuals sharing what being Two-Spirit means to them. Definitions were submitted in many forms, from poems to photos to stories to fashion. We are currently in the process of compiling all of the definitions into a hardcopy dictionary that will be distributed to communities across Canada.

You can see the definitions on the We Matter website at <https://wemattercampaign.org/two-spirit-dictionary>.





Activities

TOOLKITS

In 2018, we developed and launched a set of Toolkits for Support Workers, Educators, and Indigenous youth in order to better support important conversations on hardship, hope and healing within communities.

The Toolkits use over 200 We Matter Campaign videos as a foundation and knowledge bank to facilitate conversations on challenges Indigenous youth face, intergenerational trauma, self-care, coping, identity, hope and so much more. As our outreach and connections deepened across various regions and due to our new website launch that gives people the ability to download PDF copies directly from the site, 2020 saw an immense uptake in toolkit distribution. Due to COVID-19 our attendance and distribution at in-person events did decrease, but the numbers remained high overall. We also were able to introduce a NEW Mini Kids Toolkit in order to reach younger youth who can benefit from conversations of life promotions. We look forward to solidifying our outreach efforts in 2021-22.

We Matter receives tons of requests from folks working with Indigenous youth and rather than pushing our resources onto communities, we promote our materials and engage with support people or communities when we are invited to do so.

Between April 2020 and May 2021, We Matter was able to distribute:

- 1,117 Indigenous Youth Toolkits*
- 663 Teacher Toolkits*
- 660 Support Worker Toolkits*
- 415 NEW Mini Kids Toolkit*

WORKSHOPS & PRESENTATIONS

Although we have shifted from doing workshops to supporting Ambassadors of Hope to facilitate workshops themselves, we still aim to support communities in times of need, and organizations who are looking to implement We Matter toolkits in their work. Due to COVID-19 we also saw a shift from our usual in-person community workshops to online workshops primarily focusing on Toolkit training and education.





NATIONAL AMBASSADORS OF HOPE

The National Ambassadors of Hope program was created in response to the high and increasing demand and need for We Matter's Indigenous youth-specific mental health and life promotion workshops, presentations and resources. As a small team, We Matter did not have the capacity to be continuously travelling across the country to deliver in-person sessions while simultaneously maintaining our day-to-day operations and general outreach. We also saw an opportunity to train, support and amplify the incredible young Indigenous changemakers across the country to be the ones sharing messages of hope, culture and strength with their own peers and communities. This led to the development of a mentorship program, completely focused on strengths-based Indigenous youth-to-Indigenous youth support.

National Ambassadors of Hope are First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth ages 16-26 who share messages of hope, culture and strength within their own community and surrounding region. Using We Matter Toolkits, and with support from the We Matter team, they deliver presentations on hardship, hope, and healing across schools and communities. They live by example in order to inspire and connect with other Indigenous youth, break mental health and suicide stigma, and promote healthy communities.

National Ambassadors of Hope

- Attend a week-long National #HopeForum Training in order to equip them with the skills, knowledge, confidence and support needed to become We Matter Ambassadors;
- Deliver presentations and sharing sessions in communities, schools, centres, and gatherings within their region;
- Encourage others in becoming comfortable to use We Matter Toolkits to start discussions on hardship, hope and healing;
- Are equipped with the materials, resources, swag, and support from We Matter needed for sharing messages of hope, culture and strength;
- Participate in regular check-ins, training and Monthly Meetups throughout the year;
- Connect, share, and build relationships with each other;
- Are active and visible helpers, leaders, and changemakers; and
- Are mentored throughout the year, staying in touch regularly with the We Matter team and fellow youth Ambassadors





Here is an example of one of the events Ambassador of Hope, Jukipa Kotierk presented at!

2020/2021 was an exciting year that required flexibility and learning as we experienced the growing pains of exploring virtual workshops and navigating the unknown future that came with COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the usual #HopeForum training was cancelled, and training took place virtually throughout the year. However, this didn't stop the Ambassadors! The National Ambassadors of Hope were still able to pull off virtual presentations, and lead projects (incl. Workshops, Beading Events, and providing Self Care Packages for their communities).

Impact

40 presentations and workshops delivered by National Ambassadors of Hope

Over 2,000 youth reached nationally through Ambassador engagements

8 community projects reaching approximately 500 youth across Canada

533 toolkits sent to Ambassadors for their community projects and support

We also were able to see TWO former Ambassadors of Hope evolve into new roles as they took on employment with the We Matter staff team!

Here's a message from John, former Ambassador of Hope, now the Ambassador of Hope Coordinator: "As a former Ambassador of Hope, my experience was very fulfilling, being connected to the organization and the training and opportunities We Matter made accessible motivated me and helped me gain confidence. Now, as a Team Member, I am excited to help other Ambassadors experience what I was able to."



Ambassador Messages

"It's amazing to be connected to a network of other indigenous youth doing similar work, it's like having access to a network of resources and talent."

"Throughout my experience, I have gained skills and confidence."

"Helped me connect with youth cause they can see themselves in my story."

"We Matter has helped me a lot with my self-identity, and feeling to something I really belong too."

"A We Matter workshop I did in Onigaming First Nation, getting to share my story with youth, they trusted me and opened up, they felt motivated."

"I am feeling really motivated now, the program has helped me put those tools in my belt."

"Being an ambassador, I have experienced personal hope and healing."



Indigenous youth connecting with Indigenous youth!

To learn more about the National Ambassadors of Hope visit <https://wemattercampaign.org/activities/ambassadors-of-hope>.

#IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund

Over the course of 2019-2020 We Matter was hard at work with the planning of a Mini Grant program intended to be launched in the Spring of 2020! Due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting protocols for gathering across the country, we decided to alter the program to respond not only to these changes in protocols, but also the increased need for mental health programming due to the impact of COVID-19.

The #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund granted up to \$500 in the first 2 rounds and up to \$1000 in the third round, to successful applicants. Indigenous youth aged 13-30 could apply to implement life promotion projects in their community.

The #IndigenousYouthRise: COVID-19 Support Fund provided funding and support for online events such as:

- Art based workshops & gatherings (beading, drumming, painting, weaving, carving, poetry, music, etc.)
- Online concerts, talent shows or performances
- Educational webinars (medicines, mental health, cultural teachings, language, Indigenous youth perspectives, etc.)
- Storytelling, video projects or podcasts
- Care packages
- Online community games, challenges & contests (social media, charades, scavenger hunts, IQ games, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, jigging, powwow, virtual sports, etc.)
- Indigenous youth advocacy (roundtables on specific issues, panel discussions, etc.)
- Skill and knowledge development training or courses (leadership, mental health training, masterclasses, etc.)

THROUGHOUT 2020 WE RAN 3 ROUNDS OF THE #INDIGENOUSYOUTHRISE COVID-19 SUPPORT FUND.

Round 1 - 61 Applicants and **\$12,843.00** funded

Round 2 - 8 Applicants and **\$2,686.98** funded

Round 3 - 44 Applicants and **\$21,460.44** funded

Although Ontario had the highest number of applications, there were an equal number of applications submitted across AB, SK, MB. Limited applications were received from Nunavut, NWT, Yukon, NB, Quebec, NFLD, and NS. This is an area where we are looking to improve.

Majority of applicants identified as female and were in their 20's, some were male teenagers, and a few people identified as two-spirit.



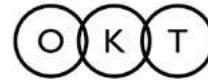
Moving forward

It has been another incredibly busy year of growth for We Matter. We continue to create spaces of support for Indigenous youth to connect with each other, learn from their strengths, and come into their power as role models and changemakers. During this critical time in the world, it is imperative that we funnel time, mentorship and resources into shaping generations of young people who know how much they really do matter, to us, and to the future. With greater team capacity and ongoing support, We Matter hopes to transition from the grow and build phase to the sustain phase, where we can continue to adapt, learn, and amplify the voices of Indigenous young people everywhere.

Team & Acknowledgments

We Matter would like to say Mársi Cho / Gila'kasla / Chi Miigwetch / Kinanaskomitin / Thank You for believing in a world where Indigenous youth live and thrive.

Special thanks to our friends, partners, and sponsors:



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Stay up to date with everything we have going on by signing up for our monthly newsletter at wemattercampaign.org and following us on social media.

@WeMatterOrg @WeMatterCampaign

#StrongerTogether