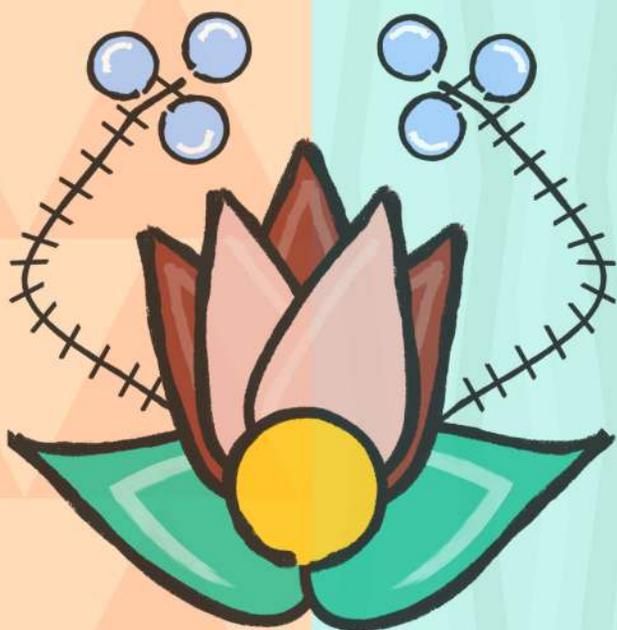


**WE MATTER**

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

**2021-2022**





**WE MATTER**

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# Letter From Our Co-Directors

**Dear Friends and Supporters,**

As we reflect on the past year, we are thrilled to report that 2021/2022 was an inspiring year for We Matter. It was also a year of transitions, growth, and newfound freedom as we continued to navigate through the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We Matter celebrated its 5th anniversary in October 2021! It has been an incredible journey so far, and we are grateful for every milestone, challenge, and success. We know that there is still much work to be done, but we are energized by the progress we have made and the impact we have had on the lives of Indigenous youth.

As the Co-Directors of We Matter, we are proud to lead an organization that is dedicated to supporting Indigenous youth nationally and beyond. We believe that every Indigenous youth deserves to feel valued, empowered, and connected to their culture and community. We work tirelessly to provide resources, tools, and programming that help young people achieve these goals and overcome the many challenges they face.

In recent years, We Matter has grown significantly, thanks to the generous support of individuals, organizations, and funders who share our vision. We have expanded our reach and impact through new partnerships, innovative programming, and a growing team of dedicated staff and Ambassadors of Hope.

Looking ahead, we are more committed than ever to making a positive difference in the lives of Indigenous youth. We have ambitious plans to continue expanding our reach, improving our programs, and advocating for the needs and rights of Indigenous youth. With your continued support, we know that we can achieve great things.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to all of our supporters, partners, and Ambassadors of Hope. Your contributions have been essential to our success and have helped us to make a real difference in the lives of Indigenous youth. We are grateful for your generosity, your kindness, and your unwavering commitment to our cause.

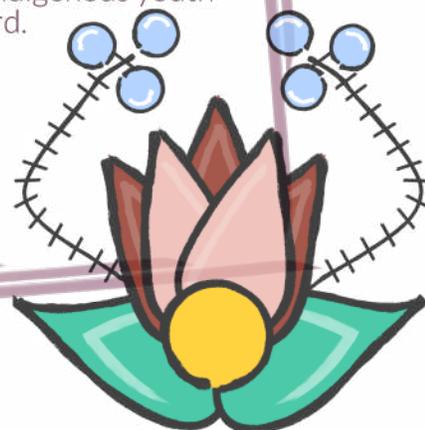
We look forward to continuing to work together to communicate to Indigenous youth that no matter how hopeless life can feel, there is always a way forward.

***#StrongerTogether***

**With gratitude and respect,**

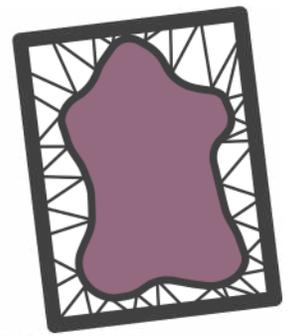
**Danika Charlebois** – Director, Partnerships & Outreach

**Lisa Neault** - Interim Director



**I Matter. You Matter. We Matter.**

# 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:

YOU ARE NOT  
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 YOURSELF AND OTHERS

**I Matter. You Matter. We Matter.**

# 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 create spaces of support for those going through a hard time. We strive to foster unity and resilience in all communities we work with, while fostering unity and resiliency.

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

## WE CONTINUE WORK TO:

CONNECT INDIGENOUS YOUTH WITH POSITIVE MESSAGES OF HOPE, CULTURE, WELLNESS, HEALING, MENTAL HEALTH, AND LIFE PROMOTION

CREATE SPACE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADIANS TO CELEBRATE AND HONOUR THE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH

GATHER AND AMPLIFY INDIGENOUS AND INDIGENOUS YOUTH VOICES

CREATE AND DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES DESIGNED TO EMPOWER INDIGENOUS YOUTH

BUILD INDIGENOUS YOUTH CAPACITY IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES BY IMPLEMENTING INDIGENOUS YOUTH-LED PROJECTS AND ENABLING PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT.

# Our Reach

## 2021-2022 Year at a Glance

We distributed **1,479** Toolkits nationally to every single province & territory

\*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

We mailed **1359** #HopePact bracelets to individuals and groups across the country

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

We Matter reached **1,123** Indigenous youth

The We Matter Team facilitated workshops and presentations for **8** communities/organizations

\*this does not include Ambassador of Hope engagements

**229** people in support worker roles and **300** people in teaching roles reached out to us for support and resources

Our social media accounts reached over **2.8 million** people

Our website received **72,152** new visits

**24,830** new YouTube channel views

The #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund granted **\$81,657** to Indigenous youth

Acquired **43** new donors

Received **\$46,306** in donations for Indigenous youth and communities from **149** donors

Thank You!



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# We Matter Campaign

## Videos & Social Media

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

In the past year, we faced similar challenges that led to decreased video submissions. Despite this setback, we are proud to say that the We Matter Campaign remains a vital platform for our work, and we continue to receive some exceptional submissions and content. However, we recognize the importance of outreach and engagement, and going forward, we are placing a stronger emphasis on this aspect of our organization. We encourage everyone to get involved by submitting messages or encouraging others to do so, and together we can positively impact the lives of Indigenous youth.

### 7 new We Matter Campaign videos were submitted



Youtube

#### Top 5 watched WM videos

Facebook:



1. Lorne Cardinal - WMC
2. What is WM 3.0
3. Don Burnstick - WMC
4. Jack Jr. - WMC
5. Jordin Tootoo

1. Do YOU want to become a National Ambassador of Hope!?
2. Ambassadors of Hope - Canada Call for Submissions!
3. #IndigenousYouthRise COVID Support Fund
4. Happy International Youth Day!
5. Indigenous Youth Video Creator Opportunity!



We Matter's top post on both Instagram and TikTok was



Violet Beaulieu - We Matter Campaign video

with 17.6K Views on Instagram and 32.6K on TikTok!

[https://www.instagram.com/reel/CUc7EV-FYy7/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/reel/CUc7EV-FYy7/?img_index=1)  
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMYGqGhAg/>

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# Two-Spirit Dictionary

In January 2020 We Matter entered into an exciting partnership with Facebook Canada and TAXI 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 imperative to We Matter that Two-Spirit peoples see themselves as important and valued 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.

In 2021-2022, We Matter continued to work with our partners on completing the Two-Spirit Dictionary. While there have been some delays in completing the hard copy of the dictionary due to various circumstances, we are excited to announce that we are nearing completion and look forward to distributing hard copies to Indigenous communities across Canada in the near future. We know that this resource will be a valuable tool for supporting Two-Spirit youth and promoting understanding and respect for Two-Spirit folks and their experiences. We are pleased to share that despite the delay in completing the hard copy, many individuals have accessed and utilized our online Two-Spirit Dictionary definitions.

Our Two-Spirit Dictionary webpage received 1,031 new visits.

Visit the We Matter Two-Spirit Dictionary webpage at <https://wemattercampaign.org/two-spirit-dictionary>.



Illustration by Nalakwasis

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# Activities

## #HopePact

The We Matter **#HopePact** was launched in 2017. It is a national pact of hope that Indigenous youth, their families, and communities can take, supporting themselves and Indigenous youth across the country.

The **#HopePact** is centered around four key promises, which include believing that no matter how hard life gets, there is always a way forward, asking for help when needed, honoring the strength within ourselves, and showing support and kindness to others. Individuals are pledging to take concrete steps towards supporting and empowering Indigenous youth by making these promises.

The **#HopePact** is critical in addressing the ongoing crisis of Indigenous youth suicide in Canada. Indigenous youth in Canada experience disproportionately high rates of suicide and mental health challenges. The **#HopePact** has already made a significant impact, with thousands of signatures from across the country.

By taking the **#HopePact**, individuals are showing their commitment to standing with Indigenous youth, listening to their voices, and supporting their mental health and well-being. Additionally, those who take the **#HopePact** are eligible to receive **#HopePact** bracelets to symbolize their commitment to the cause.

These bracelets serve as a reminder of the importance of supporting Indigenous youth and promoting positive messaging and resources. By wearing the **#HopePact** bracelet, individuals can show their support for Indigenous youth and spread the message of hope to others in their communities.

In 2021-2022 we mailed **1359 #HopePact** bracelets to individuals and groups nationwide.



To learn more about the **#HopePact**, visit [wemattercampaign.org/hopepact](https://wemattercampaign.org/hopepact)

# 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 cross-country to deliver in-person sessions while simultaneously maintaining our day-to-day operations and general outreach. We also saw an opportunity wanted to be able 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 the 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

Are mentored throughout the year, staying in touch regularly with the We Matter team and fellow youth Ambassadors

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The National Ambassadors of Hope program is a critical component of our efforts to support Indigenous youth and promote mental health and wellness. However, like many other organizations, we have continued to face significant challenges in the ongoing pandemic.

One of the biggest challenges has been maintaining the sense of community and connection that is so important to the National Ambassadors of Hope program. With many in-person events and activities cancelled or postponed, including the **#HopeForum**, we have had to find new ways to engage and support the Ambassadors.

Despite these challenges, we are proud of the resilience and creativity that the Ambassadors have shown. Through virtual meetings, social media, and other online platforms, they have continued to connect with one another and share their stories of hardship, hope, and healing.

In fact, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of the Ambassador of Hope program and the need for ongoing support and resources for Indigenous youth. We have seen firsthand the impact of isolation and uncertainty on mental health, and we are committed to continuing our work to promote well-being among Indigenous youth. Together, we can overcome the challenges of the pandemic and find hope, culture, and strength.

## **2021-2022 Impact**

**42** presentations and workshops delivered by National Ambassadors of Hope

Over **1,123** youth reached nationally through Ambassador engagements

**12** community projects reaching approximately **408** youth across Canada

**370** toolkits sent to Ambassadors for their community projects and support

### **Ambassador Projects included:**

2-Spirit Film Screening  
Self-Care and Back to School Packages  
5-Part Bullying Workshop Series  
5-Part Pre-Natal Yoga Workshop Series

### **Ambassadors facilitated workshops with:**

Hope in the Darkness  
Toronto YMCA  
Lords Tweedsmuir Secondary School



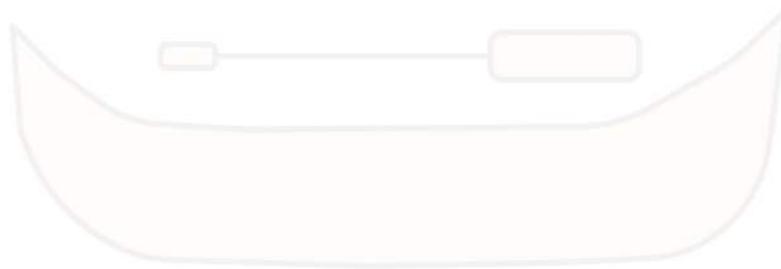
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# Ambassador Messages



"This was my first year in the AOH Program, and the height of covid. Despite not being able to meet my fellow AOH in person, I feel like we were still able to form meaningful connections with each other. I started the program off a bit timid and unsure of how to tackle the issues in my community. But, by the end of the cohort, I was able to start something amazing in my community, a reoccurring conference for Indigenous Youth in the city. Now it's expanding to include youth from nearby communities and reservations, and I am proud to be a part of it. I wouldn't have been able to start this without the support, encouragement, and training from the WM Team!"

- Logan Beauchamp, Ambassador of Hope 2021/2022

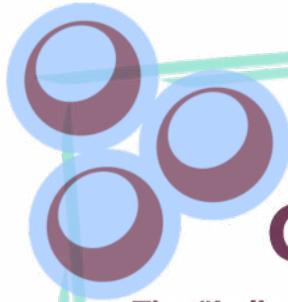


"I am proud that I was able to continue my work with we matter; they've created many opportunities for me to develop as a presenter and also take the initiative to be a leader for youth in my area, I was able to expand on that growth this year and create new connections"

- Gage Perley, Ambassador of Hope 2021/2022

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

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# #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund

The #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund has persisted in adapting to the changing protocols amid the pandemic this year. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Indigenous youth were able to complete some incredible projects with the assistance of the fund. While in-person gatherings were limited, the fund supported initiatives that could be conducted online or in a socially distanced manner. These projects showcased the resilience, creativity, and leadership of Indigenous youth, and included online workshops, cultural activities, mental health support programs, and community outreach initiatives. Despite the ongoing difficulties, the #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund remained a vital resource for Indigenous youth, enabling them to continue pursuing their goals and making positive contributions to their communities.

In addition, the #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund was increased this year, granting successful applicants up to \$1,500 to implement life promotion projects in their communities. Indigenous youth aged 13-30 were eligible to apply for funding, and the increased financial support made it possible for more youth to pursue their ideas and make a positive impact.

Throughout 2021-2022 we ran five rounds of the #IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 Support Fund:

Round 1 - 48 Applicants and \$10,000 funded

Round 2 - 23 Applicants and \$24,742 funded

Round 3 - 24 Applicants and \$16,265 funded

Round 4 - 31 Applicants and \$26,150 funded

Round 5 - 21 Applicants and \$4,500 funded



Ontario and Manitoba had the highest number of applications, with fewer applications submitted across AB, SK, BC, QC, and the East-Coast. Limited applications were received from NT, NWT, and YT. We continue to work towards improving our outreach efforts in these areas.

The majority of applicants identified as female and were over 18 years of age, followed closely by male-identifying applicants and fewer people identifying as Two-Spirit and non-binary.

### Some projects included:

Series of storytelling videos  
Baking goods care packages  
Graduation care packages  
Virtual medicine making workshops

Scavenger hunt and medicine bag workshop  
Virtual paint and snack event  
Positive letter-writing virtual event

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# Toolkits



It has now been four years since We Matter developed its Indigenous Youth, Support Worker and Teacher Toolkits, which have been instrumental in providing Indigenous youth with valuable resources and support for mental wellness. These Toolkits were designed with the aim of empowering Indigenous youth and providing them with the tools they need to navigate the challenges they face. The Toolkits use over 200 We Matter Campaign videos as a foundation and knowledge bank for facilitating conversations on intergenerational trauma, self-care, coping, identity, hope, and so much more.

Over the years, the We Matter team has continued to refine and improve these Toolkits, adding new resources and materials to better support Indigenous communities. The Toolkits have become an essential component of We Matter's work and have helped to reach and support thousands of Indigenous youth, teachers, and support workers across the country. As We Matter moves forward, the organization remains committed to providing the best possible resources and support to Indigenous youth, building on the solid foundation established by its Toolkits.

Despite the success of the Toolkits in providing valuable resources and support to Indigenous youth, the pandemic has presented ongoing challenges for our outreach and distribution efforts. With restrictions on travel and gatherings, it became more challenging to engage with communities in person and distribute physical copies of the Toolkits. As a result, we had to shift our efforts towards online outreach and distribution, which presented its own set of challenges. The team worked hard to ensure that the Toolkits were accessible online and promoted through various channels, but reaching Indigenous youth in remote areas with limited internet access remained a challenge. Nevertheless, we remained committed to finding new ways to reach and support Indigenous youth, and continued to adapt our outreach and distribution strategies to meet the changing needs presented by the pandemic.

**IN 2021-2022, WE MATTER WAS ABLE TO DISTRIBUTE:**

**301 INDIGENOUS YOUTH TOOLKITS**

**300 TEACHER TOOLKITS**

**229 SUPPORT WORKER TOOLKITS**

**133 MINI KIDS TOOLKITS**

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# Other Highlights

## 5 Year Anniversary

To celebrate our 5-year anniversary, We Matter hosted a virtual event that brought together Indigenous youth, Elders, community leaders, and supporters from across Canada. The event featured performances, panel discussions, and celebrated Indigenous youth. The aim of the event was to recognize the achievements of the campaign over the past five years while also renewing our commitment to supporting Indigenous youth on their journeys.



## Workshops & Presentations

This year, We Matter remained committed to providing virtual workshops and resources to support Indigenous youth despite ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic. As restrictions on travel and gatherings persisted, the team continued to adapt and find new ways to engage with communities virtually. Although there were still fewer requests for presentations due to remote operations in schools and workplaces, We Matter persisted in its efforts to provide valuable resources to Indigenous youth and organizations supporting Indigenous youth.

### ***Some workshops included:***

**Together for Tomorrow: Learning and Healing for Workforce Development**  
CAMH - Shkaabe Makwa

**We Matter Toolkit Tutorial**  
Interior Health

**We Matter Workshops**  
Boys and Girls Club Thompson

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# We Matter in the Media

We are pleased to report that We Matter has continued to receive significant media attention, further amplifying our message and expanding our reach to Indigenous youth. Here are some highlights from 2021-2022:

## We Matter Helps Indigenous Youth See That They MATTER

The article discusses We Matter and how it is making a positive impact on Indigenous youth in Canada by providing them with a platform to share their stories and experiences, and reminding them that they matter.

<https://stigmafreesociety.com/blog/we-matter-helps-indigenous-youth-see-that-they-matter/>

## Panel to discuss resources for Indigenous youth during times of crisis

The article announced an upcoming virtual panel discussion with We Matter at Brock University in Canada that explored the available resources for Indigenous youth during times of crisis, with a focus on mental health and wellness.

<https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2021/02/panel-to-discuss-resources-for-indigenous-youth-during-times-of-crisis/>

## Part 2: 14 reasons 2021 didn't totally suck. PS: it's mostly because of Indigenous youth and their acts of resistance

The article mentions Scott Wabano, 2021-2022 National Ambassador of Hope. It celebrates their efforts and highlights them as a positive role model for Indigenous youth.

<https://raventrust.com/14-reasons-2021-didnt-totally-suck-part-2/>



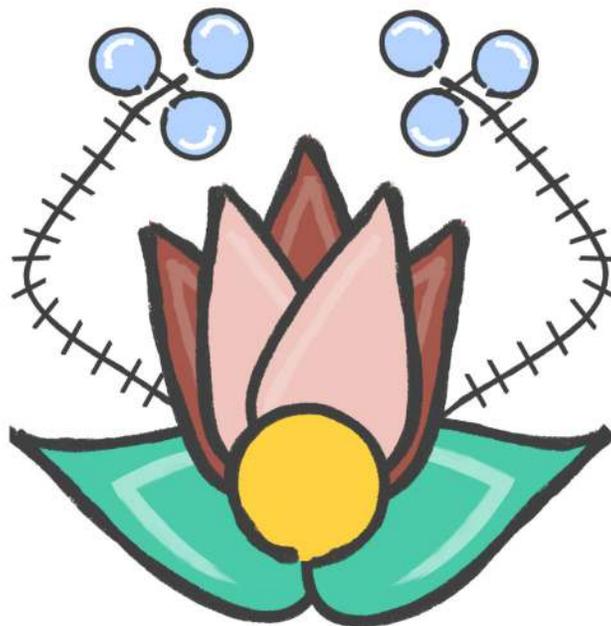
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# Moving Forward

As we celebrate our 5th year as an organization and look forward to the post-pandemic future, We Matter is excited to continue our work promoting hope, culture, and strength among Indigenous youth. We are eager to resume our regular programming, including in-person events, workshops, and community outreach efforts.

While the pandemic has presented significant challenges, it has also highlighted the importance of our work and the need for ongoing support and resources for Indigenous youth. We have seen firsthand the impact of isolation and uncertainty on mental health, and we are committed to continuing our efforts to promote hope, culture, strength, healing, and life promotion among Indigenous youth.

Above all, we remain committed to our mission of communicating to Indigenous youth that they matter and creating spaces of support for those going through a hard time while fostering unity and resiliency. We look forward to continuing this journey with our supporters, volunteers, and partners.



# Acknowledgments

On behalf of We Matter, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported our efforts to promote hope, culture, and strength among Indigenous youth.

Thanks to the dedication and generosity of our donors, supporters, and volunteers, we have been able to reach thousands of Indigenous youth with our messages of hope. Your contributions have helped us to create resources and tools that are making a real difference in the lives of Indigenous youth, and we are so grateful for your support.

We would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the National Ambassadors of Hope, who have shown incredible resilience and commitment to their own growth and to supporting others. Your courage and strength inspire us every day, and we are honoured to be able to work alongside you.

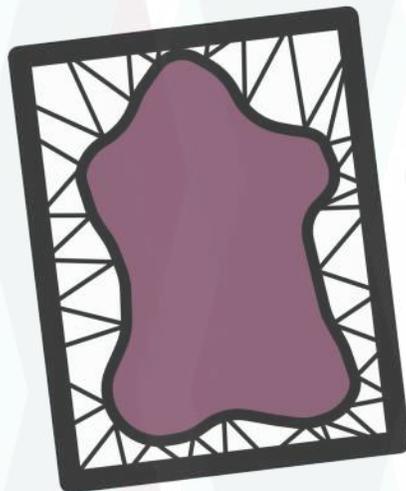
Finally, we would like to thank the Indigenous youth who have shared their stories and experiences with us. Your voices are powerful and important, and we are grateful for the opportunity to learn from and listen to you.

Mársi Cho / Gila'kasla / Chi Miigwetch / Kinanaskomitin / Ekosi / Wela'lin / Qujannamik / Maarsii / Thank You for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared mission.

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