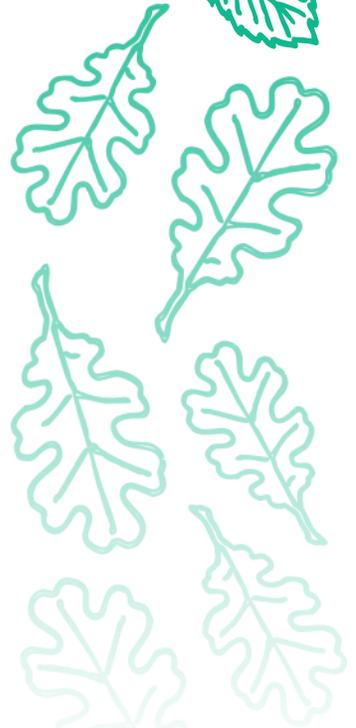
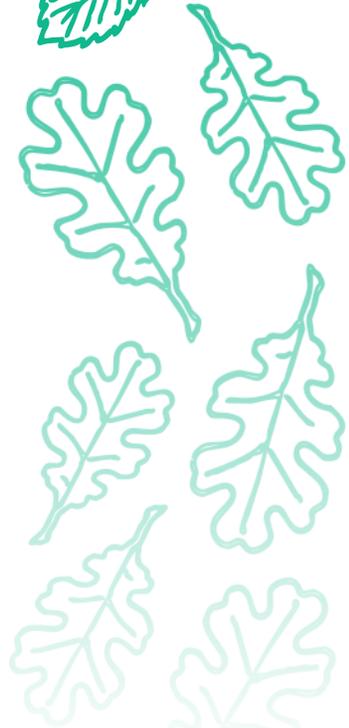




**WE MATTER**

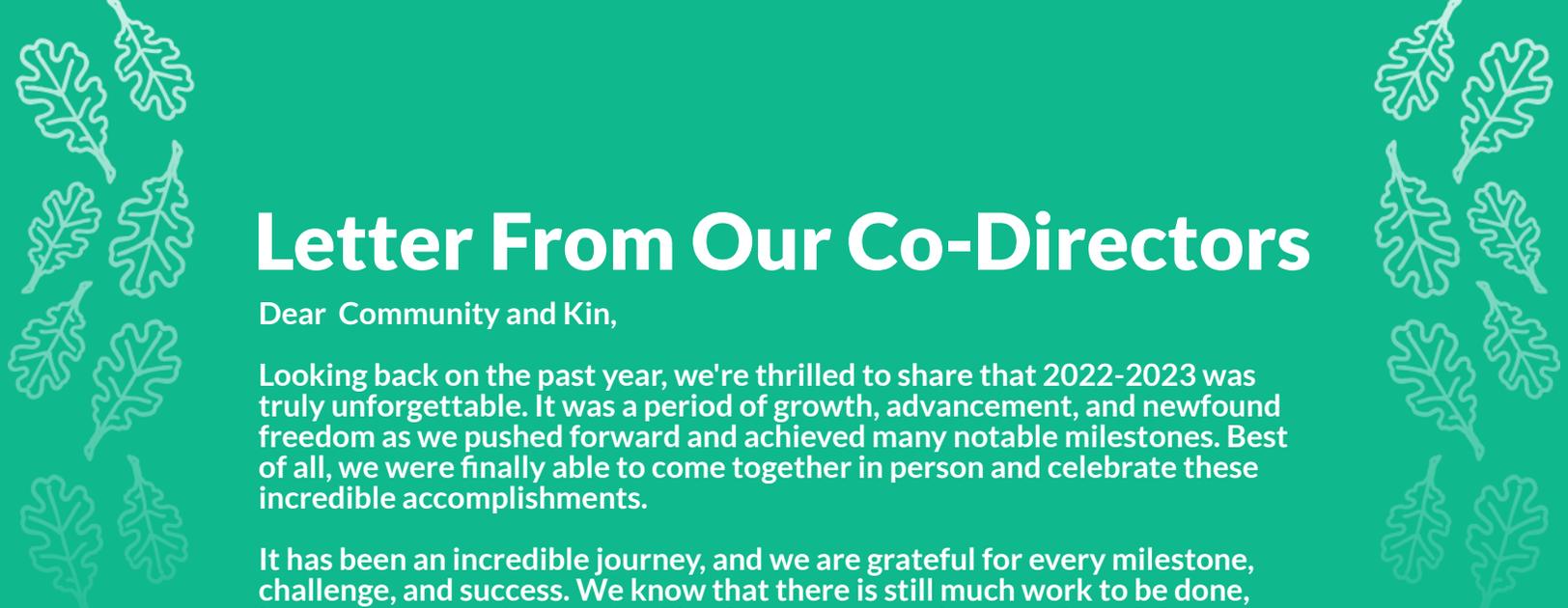
**ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT  
2022-2023**





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# Letter From Our Co-Directors

Dear Community and Kin,

Looking back on the past year, we're thrilled to share that 2022-2023 was truly unforgettable. It was a period of growth, advancement, and newfound freedom as we pushed forward and achieved many notable milestones. Best of all, we were finally able to come together in person and celebrate these incredible accomplishments.

It has been an incredible journey, and we are grateful for every milestone, challenge, and success. We know that there is still much work to be done, however we remain energized by the progress we have made and the new initiatives that were introduced this past year.

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.

As we forge ahead, broadening our horizons and extending our reach, our unwavering mission to uplift Indigenous youth remains at the forefront. Our tireless efforts to provide access to vital resources and advocacy for Indigenous youth needs and rights will only intensify as we press on. With your unwavering support, we know that we can accomplish remarkable things together.

We want to express our deepest gratitude 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 shared mission.

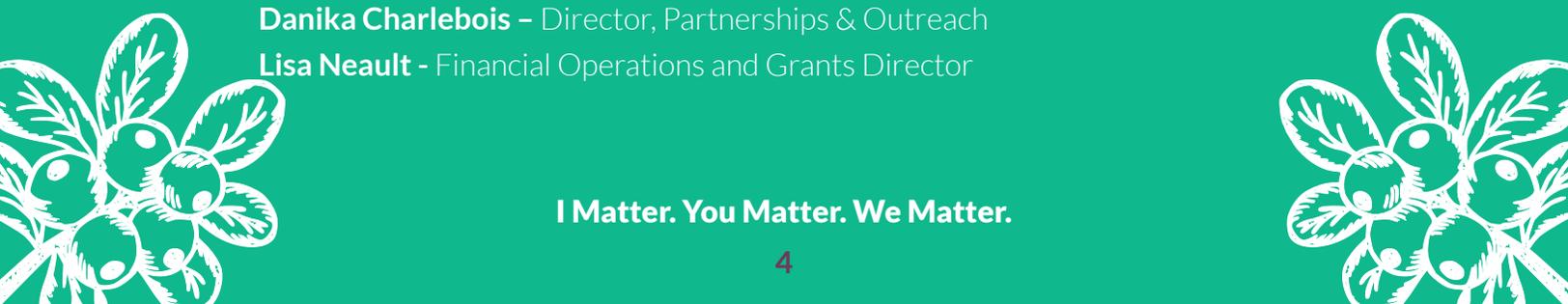
We look forward to continuing to work together to communicate to Indigenous youth that no matter how hopeless life can feel, there is always a way forward.

***#StrongerTogether***

**With gratitude and respect,**

Danika Charlebois – Director, Partnerships & Outreach

Lisa Neault - Financial Operations and Grants 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

# 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;
- Gather and amplify Indigenous and 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.



# Our Reach, 2022-2023 Year at a Glance

We distributed **5,224 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 **2,219 #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

The We Matter Team facilitated workshops and presentations for **4 communities and organizations**

\*this does not include Ambassador of Hope engagements

Social media accounts reached over **2.8 million people**

**17, 937K** new Youtube channel views

#IndigenousYouthRise Support Fund granted **\$85, 627.00 to Indigenous youth**

The Regalia Grant granted **\$150, 584.00 to Indigenous youth**

We have received a total of **\$36, 240.00 in donations for Indigenous youth and communities**. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support.

**Chi Miigwetch!**

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

# 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.

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!

### Top watched We Matter videos

#### Facebook Reels

- Lorne Cardinal 16K
- Ashley Callingbull 15K
- You Are Loved 5.3K

#### AOH Holidays of Hope Series 2022

- Kayla 13K
- Natasha 4.1K
- Kennan 3.9K



#### Instagram Reels

- World Mental Health Day- 3.3K Plays
- Happy Nunavut Day 12K Plays

- Megan shares HOPE 4.5K Plays

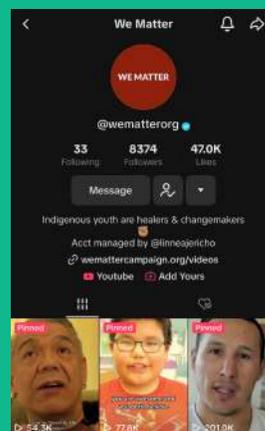
#### AOH Holidays of Hope Series 2022

- Natasha 2.9K Plays
- Justin 5.5K Play
- Kayla 5K Plays



#### TikTok

- Jordin Tootoo 201K
- World Mental Health Day - 77.8K
- Lorne Cardinal 54.3K
- Happy Nunavut Day -24K
- Elder Laurie- 10.2K



#### YouTube

- Jack Jr. 8.6K
- Don Burnstick 8.2K
- Lorne Cardinal 6K
- Kawennahere Devery Jacobs 5.5K
- Ashley Callingbull 5.2K



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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 2022-2023, We Matter continues to work with our partners on completing the Two-Spirit Dictionary. 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 many individuals have accessed and utilized our online Two-Spirit Dictionary definitions.

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

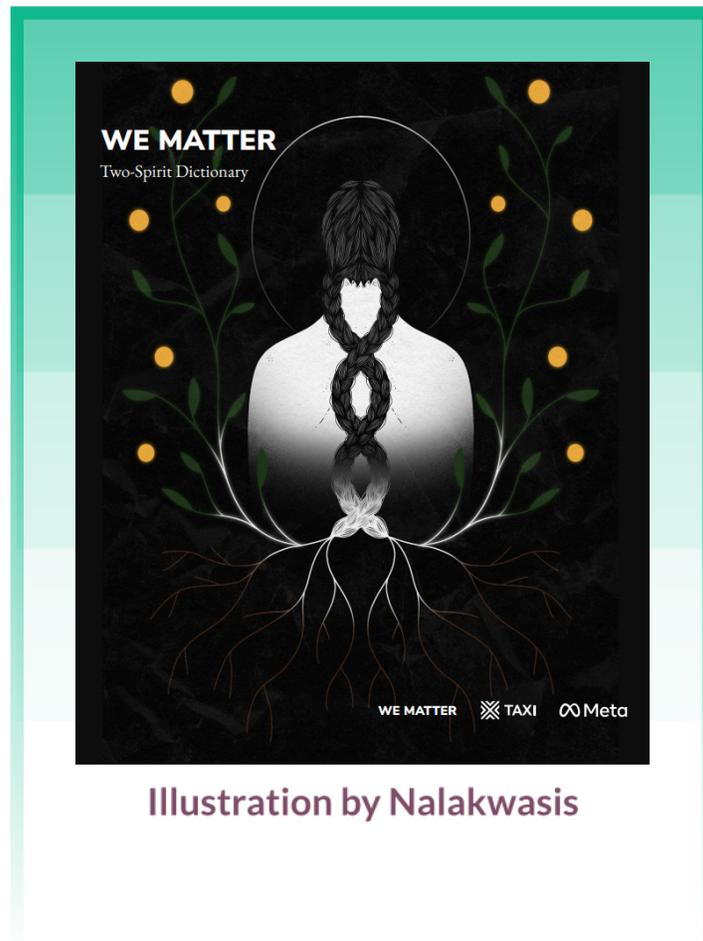


Illustration by Nalakwasis

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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 centred 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.

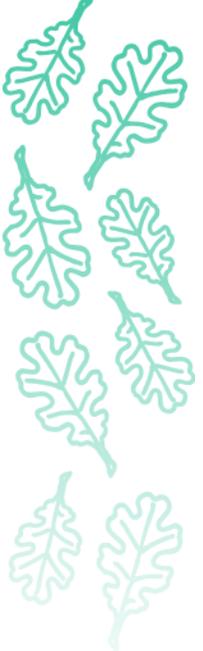
These bracelets serve as a reminder of the importance of supporting Indigenous youth and promoting positive messaging and resources. By wearing the #HopePact bracelet, individuals can show their support for Indigenous youth and spread the message of hope to others in their communities.

In 2022-2023 we mailed 2,219 #HopePact bracelets to individuals and groups nationwide and received over 4,292 signatures!

To learn more about the #HopePact, visit <https://wemattercampaign.org/activities/hopepact>



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# 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 16-29 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.

- 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

# The 2022-2023 National Ambassadors of Hope Program

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 navigate challenges. Despite some challenges, we are proud of the resilience and creativity that the Ambassadors of Hope have shown.

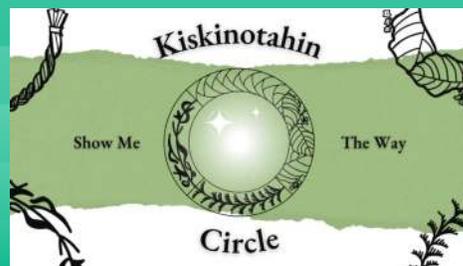
It's really inspiring to see how the Ambassadors have overcome various challenges with their resilience and creativity. In order to create a sense of community and connection, AOH has taken the initiative to develop the 'Kiskinotahin Circle- Show Me The Way' led by peers in the Ambassadors of Hope Program, youth who have been through the AOH program for several years. The Kiskinotahin Circle is a mentorship project that focuses on building interpersonal skills and the capacity for young leaders to empathize with peers while fostering growth through connections. It is heartwarming to see how AOH are supporting each other and creating a positive impact.

Being able to finally gather together in person after two and a half years for our annual #HopeForum in Vancouver, British Columbia, was truly an unforgettable experience. We were able to celebrate each other's incredible achievements and reignite excitement and inspiration for the future.

## AOH COMMUNITY WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS:

Ambassadors of Hope Keenan and Kayla travelled to the Northwest Territories to deliver workshops for the Youth Mental Wellness Gathering that took place in Inuvik in December 2022, where the AOH was connecting with other youth and communities.

Ambassadors of Hope Ally and Keyhew travelled and connected with students and teachers in Cree Nation of Chisasibi, where they ran various workshops on healthy coping skills.



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# National Ambassadors of Hope

## Ambassadors of Hope Projects included:

Land Based learning activities like snowshoeing

Mental Health Kits for Indigenous Student Centres

Self-Care Kits for Indigenous Students

Wellness Nights

Yoga Wellness Nights

Youth Sports Nights

Men's Circle

Ribbon Skirt Workshop

## Ambassadors facilitated workshops with:

Kids Help Phone

North Battleford Friendship Centre

Inuvik Justice Committee

Western Arctic Youth Collective

Meadow Lake School

Red Deer Public Schools

Saskatchewan Polytechnic College

Skownan First Nation

Cree Nation of Chisasibi

Nelson House Cree Nation



# Ambassadors of Hope Messages

“My biggest highlight is always having the support I need to run with my ideas and make them possible” - Kara Knaypaysweet, Ambassador of Hope 2022/2023

“I would definitely recommend the AOH program to a friend. I think it can teach more people and let them know they are not alone which is a great thing. And being an AOH teaches you so much it's very healing in it's own ways and exciting.” - Nicole Tornquist, Ambassador of Hope 2022/2023

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



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# #IndigenousYouthRise Support Fund Grant

The #IndigenousYouthRise Support Fund Grant has persisted in adapting to the changing protocols. Indigenous youth were able to complete some incredible projects with the assistance of the fund. The fund supported initiatives that could be conducted online both online and in-person. 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. The #IndigenousYouthRise Support Fund Grant 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 Support Fund Grant was increased this year, granting successful applicants up to \$2,000 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 2022-2023 we ran four rounds of the #IndigenousYouthRise Support Fund Grant and introduced the Regalia Grant:

Round 1 – 61 Applicants and \$26, 6015 funded

Round 2 - 29 Applicants and \$11,687 funded

Round 3 - 18 Applicants and \$19, 817 funded

Round 4 - 34 Applicants and \$27,538 funded

Regalia Grant - 2000+ Applicants and \$150,584 funded



## The Regalia Grant

The year 2023 saw the launch of an exciting initiative by We Matter - The Regalia Grant!

The Regalia Grant was extremely important for Indigenous youth and the community that had a significant impact. There were an overwhelming number of applications, with over 2000 applications. Although we wish we could have funded every single one, we were able to approve 320 applications. The Regalia Grant promoted hope, culture, and strength, and it was amazing to see how it brought youth creatives together. It was truly a joy to witness the positive impact that the Regalia Grant had on the community.

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# Toolkits

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. The team continues to work hard to ensure that the Toolkits are accessible online and promoted through various channels, however, 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.

## Resources distributed:

\*reached out to us for support and resources

1155 Support Worker Toolkits

1123 Teacher Toolkits

1164 Indigenous Youth toolkits

103 Mini Kids Toolkits

1022 Kids Toolkits

657 Lesson Plans

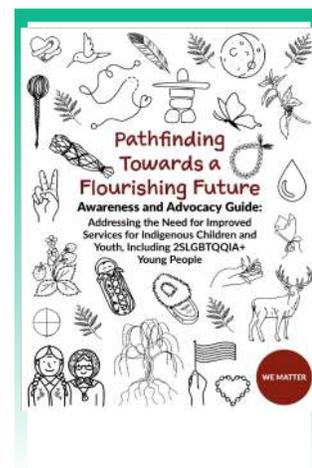
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# NEW RESOURCES

## Pathfinding towards a Flourishing Future an Awareness and Advocacy Guide

In 2022, We Matter introduced the Pathfinding towards a Flourishing Future, an Awareness and Advocacy Guide. The purpose of this resource stemmed from there being a dire need to improve support and services for Indigenous children, youth, and 2SLGBTQIA+ young people to ensure their well-being. This Awareness and Advocacy Guide will raise awareness and inform ways to address the support needs of Indigenous children, youth and 2SLGBTQIA+ young people.

The document is created from gathering knowledge from the lived experiences of a diverse group of Indigenous youth. And now is the time for adults to listen and act. This document describes the struggles that Indigenous youth experience and the barriers they face. It's our job as a collective society to recognize and remove these barriers through resources, systemic changes and individual support.



To learn more about the Pathfinding Guidet visit: <https://wemattercampaign.org/toolkits/pathfinding-toolkit>

## Collective Healing Guide

In 2022, We Matter began to bring the Indigenous Collective Healing Guide-Keepers of the Fire, into fruition. The purpose of this proposed project is for We Matter to develop a Collective Healing Guide that accurately reflects the distinct Indigenous people and communities that We Matter serves. As referenced above, providing information that promotes individual ability to build relationships based on mutual trust and respect is necessary to maintain connections with the people and communities an organization works with.

The developed Collective Healing Guide will be used by We Matter employees, representatives, associates, youth who access services, and others who come into contact with the organization. As a well-developed youth-centred resource with related presentations and illustrations, it will be utilized as a learning tool to assist Indigenous youth who want to learn how to better foster collective healing within their communities, especially from teachings directly from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This resource will include teachings and protocols as outlined by Elders and Knowledge Keepers, where appropriate to share. The Indigenous Collective Healing Guide will launch in 2024!

# Other Highlights

## Workshops & Presentations

Throughout this year, We Matter has remained steadfast in our commitment to supporting Indigenous youth, despite the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic. With virtual workshops and resources, the team has worked tirelessly to ensure that Indigenous youth have access to the tools they need to succeed. Even as the pandemic has forced the team to adapt and find new ways to engage with communities, We Matter have persevered, slowly integrating in-person events as well. The dedication of We Matter to providing valuable resources to Indigenous youth and organizations supporting them is truly inspiring.

Other workshops included:

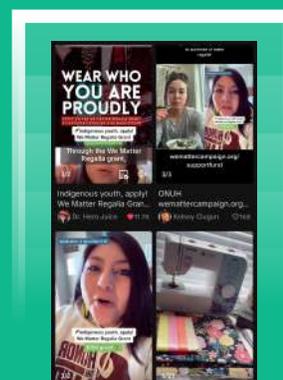
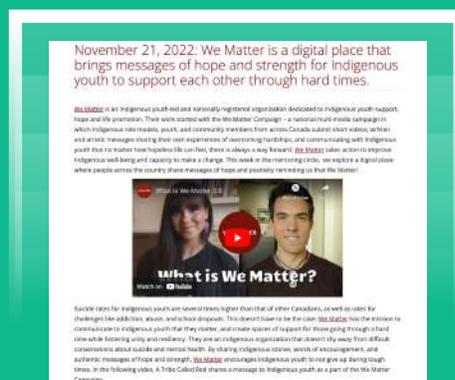
- Indspire
- Keepers of the Circle
- Onikaniw - Peer Support & Relapse Prevention & Awareness
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic

### Media and Public Relations:

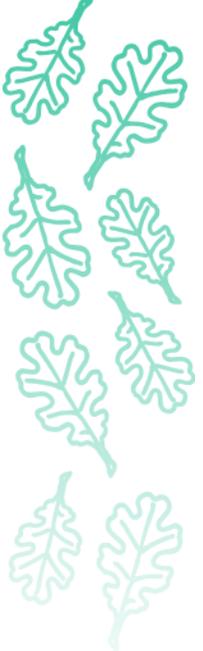
We Matter has been actively fostering and developing our relationships in media and communications. Our message has resonated strongly, allowing us to connect with an ever-growing number of Indigenous youth across various platforms, including a vibrant TikTok community. One unforgettable highlight from 2022-2023 was when the Regalia Grant went viral, reaching audiences far and wide on multiple platforms. This has invigorated our passion to continue making a positive impact and empowering Indigenous youth!

As a result, we have been successful in spreading our message and connecting with more Indigenous youth. Here a highlight from 2022:

[We Matter is a digital place for messages of hope and strength for Indigenous youth to support each other through hard time.](#)



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# Moving Forward

As we enter our seventh year as an organization and look to the future, We Matter is excited to carry on with our mission of promoting hope, culture, and strength among Indigenous youth.

We have looked forward to continue meeting and connecting with youth and hosting in-person gatherings, events, workshops and community engagements.

Our goal is to further emphasize the significance of the work that We Matter does and the ongoing need for support and resources for Indigenous youth. We believe that by providing these opportunities, It is crucial to acknowledge and address the ongoing need to support the younger generation within their communities. We must ensure that Indigenous youth feel heard, valued, and supported in every possible way.

We have seen firsthand the impact of isolation and uncertainty on mental health, and we remain committed to promoting 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 experiencing difficult time while fostering unity and resiliency. We are excited to continue on this journey with the community, supporters, volunteers, and partners.



# Acknowledgments

We are absolutely thrilled to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our supporters who have helped us to promote hope, culture, and strength among Indigenous youth through We Matter.

Miigwetch for your incredible dedication and generosity, we have been able to reach and inspire thousands of Indigenous youth with our messages of hope. Your contributions have enabled us to create resources and tools that are making a tangible difference in the lives of Indigenous youth, and communities, we couldn't be more grateful for your unwavering support.

We would also like to give a massive shoutout to the National Ambassadors of Hope, who have shown incredible resilience and commitment to their personal growth and supporting others. Your bravery and unwavering spirit inspire us every single day, and we are honored to work alongside you. Last but not least, we want to express our gratitude to the Indigenous youth who have shared their stories and experiences with us. Your voices are powerful and essential, and we thank you for allowing us 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!

## Friends, partners, and sponsors:

Government of Canada

Hot Soup Group

BDO Canada

Olthuis Kleer Townshend

Cochrane Saxberg LLP

Kids Help Phone

Jack.org

TAXI

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

Stigma Free Society

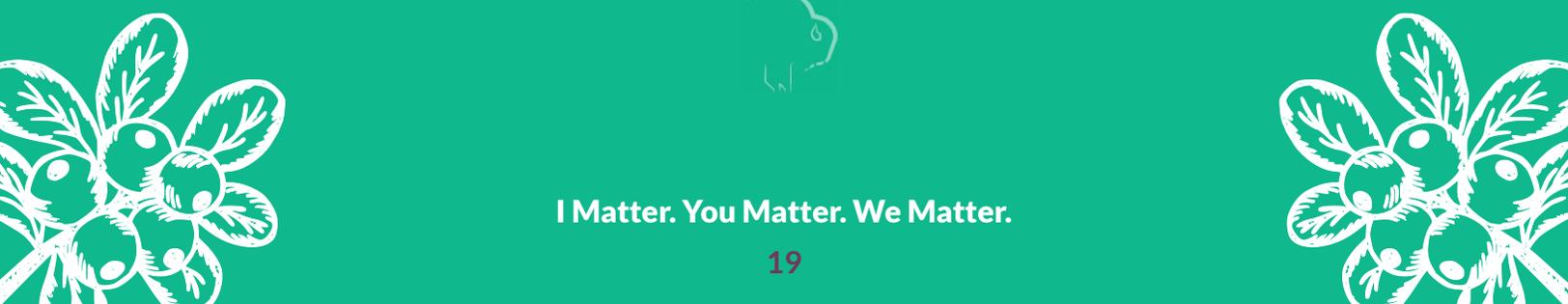
TikTok

Facebook Canada

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto

Institute for Change Leaders

Report Layout and Design by BuffaloHyde Creative



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# WE MATTER

Stay up to date with everything we have going on by signing up for our monthly newsletter at [wemattercampaign.org](https://wemattercampaign.org) and following us on social media



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