



**Feel
Out
Loud**



**RiseUp and Finding Hope:
Creating a Future Where
Black and Indigenous Youth
Thrive in Possibility**
A Report on the Impact of Your Generosity

Dear Renée, Conner and the Sobeys' team,

Your generosity is making a profound difference for Black and Indigenous young people from coast to coast to coast.

We are so grateful to show you how in the pages that follow.

As you will read, the past year brought significant progress in our efforts to create truly barrier-free access to e-mental health services for youth across Canada. We are deeply inspired by your commitment to mental health equity, and are incredibly grateful for your profound generosity as we walk this critical journey together.

Because of you, Kids Help Phone has made significant progress in our mission to break down barriers to support youth from across the Afro-diaspora. The launch of RiseUp powered by Kids Help Phone — Canada's first and only 24/7 e-mental health service for Black youth — has directly led to continued and persistent growth in the number of Black youth reaching out via text, Live Chat and phone. With a new action plan underway to deepen engagement, raise awareness and drive innovation, we will continue to break down barriers and create impact for Black youth to thrive in their world.

Last October, with your support, we launched the next phase of Finding Hope: KHP's Action Plan for Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Young People. Developed and led by the Indigenous Advisory Council, it is now being implemented by the Indigenous Initiatives team — both of which are made up of diverse Indigenous leaders and staff committed to uplifting the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of the young people we serve.

We are also continuing to focus on raising awareness of KHP's services in Indigenous communities across Canada, including some of the hardest-to-reach areas in the country. For young people living in small communities where mental health counsellors are neighbours, friends or even family members, having confidential, 24/7 access to e-mental health support can mean the difference between life and death.

These realities make our work together more crucial and necessary than ever before.

It is an honour to share a look at these updates and more in this report. As you read, please know that none of this work would be possible without you.

From all of us here at KHP, thank you.



Aaron Sanderson, MA, FAHP, ACFRE

EVP & Group Head, Advancement & Donor Experience



RiseUp: Accelerating Mental Health Access, Equity and Justice for Black Youth

Your transformational support of [RiseUp powered by Kids Help Phone](#) continues to drive meaningful progress in our efforts to break down barriers to mental health support for Black youth from coast to coast to coast.

The RiseUp Action Plan takes flight

Last year, we launched the RiseUp Action Plan to Support Black Youth. Developed through extensive engagement with Black youth, Black community leaders and Black-led organizations, the RiseUp Action Plan has five key priorities — Innovate, Amplify, Increase, Evolve and Empower — to maximize access to support for Black youth while working toward a future free from systemic anti-Black racism.

Building on the initial plan, we have now identified 29 key actions to drive progress toward these five priorities. These actions, many of which are already in motion, are detailed in the full [RiseUp Action Plan for 2023-2026](#). We can't thank you enough for helping to bring this crucial action plan to life!

Launching We Rise: A Black Engagement Program

At the start of 2024, Kids Help Phone launched [We Rise: A Black Engagement Program](#). Developed in response to feedback from Black youth, who note that fear, distrust and a lack of representation are key barriers to accessing support, We Rise aims to recruit volunteer champions committed to fostering connections between Kids Help Phone and Black communities across Canada.

Rooted in learnings established through [Weaving Threads: An Indigenous Engagement Program at Kids Help Phone](#), We Rise will build awareness of RiseUp powered by Kids Help Phone, nurture trust among Black youth and create pathways to support, wellness and healing for Black youth through enhanced connection to Kids Help Phone. We Rise engages volunteers (both young people and trusted adults) in a variety of awareness-raising and community engagement activities.

We Rise is open to African, Caribbean and Black individuals over the age of 15 with strong connections to the Black community. We are currently actively recruiting volunteers through community engagement with Black-led organizations, information sessions and upcoming social media campaigns. These efforts have resulted in 57 We Rise volunteer champions now being on-boarded to the program.



"I feel much better. I do feel like I have way more, deeper issues that I've never talked to anyone about, this was my first time ever seeking out help like this and it was a positive experience. I am way too guarded to use the phone, video calling or real life therapy. And the costs... I hope when I am making more I can make a donation."

– Black youth who reached out to Kids Help Phone

The RiseUp dashboards: Identifying key trends and taking action

Since 2020, we have been collecting survey information from service users who self-identify as Black to understand the service gaps they experience when it comes to accessing mental health support. These surveys underpin the RiseUp dashboards, which provide snapshots of key trends and are updated on a monthly basis, allowing us to constantly monitor the issues Black youth are facing.

To enhance the impact of the RiseUp dashboards, our data team has recently started using Sisense — a powerful analytics program that creates visualizations of key data points and trends.

In 2024, some key trends from the RiseUp dashboards about Black Youth revealed that:

- 87% found their conversation helpful.
- 81% said they got the support they were looking for.
- 91% said they would recommend Kids Help Phone to others.
- 76% shared something with KHP that they have never shared before.
- 56% said if they had not reached out to KHP, they would have ignored the issue or hoped it went away.

We are leveraging the data-driven findings from the RiseUp dashboards to proactively improve our service strategies and outreach based on the needs of Black youth.

Top 5 Issues Black Youth sought support for:

1. **Physical Abuse**
2. **Emotional Abuse**
3. **Bullying**
4. **Grief**
5. **Suicide**

Responding to community feedback on the RiseUp texting shortcode

In our 2022 report, we noted that we were evaluating the creation of a short code that Black youth could use to access a dedicated texting service specifically designed with their needs and unique challenges in mind.

However, after receiving feedback from young people and our Black Advisory Council, we are now focusing on our dedicated queue where Black youth can connect directly with a Black crisis responder after entering the texting service using our standard texting shortcodes — 686868 for youth and 741741 for adults — plus the dedicated texting word RISE.

Our goal is to increase awareness of the RISE texting word while ensuring the strength and sustainability of a dedicated queue model. There are currently 176 active Black Crisis Responders recruited to the texting service to enhance diversity and ensure culturally-responsive support is always available.



“Hi CR, I really enjoyed speaking with you tonight. It may seem like an overstatement but as a deeply isolated person undergoing such a tumultuous period of my life, conversing with someone who has my best interest at heart and who does what they do of their own volition is incredibly valuable and gratifying!”

– Black youth who reached out to Kids Help Phone

Building Scale through the Power of Partnerships

Igniting true landscape change for the future of youth mental health in Canada is only possible when we join forces with those who share our vision.

Over the past year, we have focused on deepening existing partnerships, building new ones and strengthening the capacity of the entire youth mental health sector. In total, we engaged with 115 Black-led and Black youth centered organizations — all with a goal to reach more young people and break down barriers to the support they need to thrive.



KHP representatives attend the BlackNorth Initiative Excellence Gala

In May, KHP staff and council members attended the BlackNorth Initiative Excellence Gala to celebrate our ongoing partnership. Since the event, the BlackNorth Initiative has requested KHP's representation on its BlackNorth Initiative Youth Committee.

From L to R: Stephanie Vasiliou, Executive Director, Equity, Programs & Innovation Implementation, The Slight Family Foundation Chair in Equity Programs & Partnerships; Might Gouta, KHP National Youth Council Member; Lianne Hannaway, KHP Board member and Founder, Wealthnuvo Financial

RiseUp Youth Outreach

In 2024, we reached 2,000+ Black youth across Canada through targeted outreach packages, which include:

- Distributing over 600 outreach materials to Black youth, including Kids Help Phone wallet cards, stickers and posters, in collaboration with the African Canadian Development and Prevention Network in Montreal
- Hosting 30 information sessions, including an engagement session with young people attending the 2024 Raptors 905 Summer Reading Challenge Kickoff event.
- Collaborating with Communities Care to distribute over 100 RiseUp outreach materials to Black youth.
- Completing an East Coast community engagement trip to towns and cities in Quebec and Nova Scotia, connecting with 10 organizations, distributing outreach materials, and gathering insights on community mental health needs to tailor resources effectively.

“It was something very small such as just talking to me but it went a long way I’m so glad I reached out and it was definitely the right thing to do and I just appreciate you for being here and doing this.”

— Black youth who reached out to Kids Help Phone

What’s Next?

As we continue to grow the reach and impact of RiseUp to more Black youth in every part of Canada, we are focused on the following key goals throughout 2025:

- Launching the quarterly RiseUp Network e-newsletter to keep our community informed, engaged and up-to-date.
- Building on work in 2024 to recruit new Black Advisory Council Members. For the 2025 term, we will deepen our relationship with the Black Advisory Council and enhance their engagement through regular meetings and touch points.
- Deepening relationships with Black-led organizations and insights on Black communities through community trips and direct engagement with organizations.
- Investigating a Black texter matching initiative that would allow texters the option to be matched to a Black Crisis Responder.
- Reaching 12,000 Black Youth across Canada through targeted outreach.
- Hosting Black youth centered community engagement and events.

Speaking Engagements and Events

Since 2023, members of the RiseUp team participated in a variety of speaking, publicity and community engagement opportunities to raise awareness of RiseUp, powered by Kids Help Phone and the unique barriers faced by Black youth when it comes to their mental health. These included:

- Fireside chat on the origin, evolution and impact of RiseUp to mark the launch of the RiseUp Action Plan. [Watch the fireside chat on YouTube.](#)
- March 2024 feature in the Globe and Mail highlighting our commitment to support Black youth through RiseUp. Read the [article here.](#)
- Media engagement with CBC-PEI on Island Morning with Mitch Cormier on the launch of the RiseUp Action Plan and its importance for Black youth in PEI. [Listen to the recording.](#)
- During Black History Month 2023, Kids Help Phone hosted two employee cultural awareness trainings in partnership with Culture Ally. Facilitators guided staff through a conversation about Canada's history of anti-Black racism and what authentic allyship looks like.
- A representative of the RiseUp team participated in a webinar hosted by the Toronto Catholic District School Board on the topic of Black well-being and accessing mental health resources during the summer months.
- Led information sessions for staff at the Federation of Black Canadians on the importance of Black spaces for connection and support.
- A member of the National Youth Council attended and spoke at a panel at the National Black 2SLGBTQI+ Futures Summit in Ottawa.
- Launched a major RiseUp promotion campaign in collaboration with Wattpad and Fallon Demonray, featuring the branded story '[The Weight of a Heartbeat](#)' to boost engagement and increase awareness of RiseUp programs and service.



A New Era for Finding Hope

In October 2023, we announced the launch of the next phase of Finding Hope with the release of [KHP's 2023-2026 Action Plan for Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Young People.](#)

Building on the remarkable progress made since the first version of Finding Hope launched in 2019, the new action plan will ensure our e-mental health services for young Indigenous people are more equitable, accessible and culturally attuned.

Led and developed by KHP's [Indigenous Advisory Council](#), Finding Hope 2023-2026 outlines 32 specific actions that KHP will take to achieve six ambitious goals:

1. Build trust through meaningful partnerships with Indigenous people and organizations
2. Amplify access and awareness of Kids Help Phone programs and services
3. Empower Indigenous communities through data
4. Support skills development, knowledge and literacy that promotes the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of Indigenous young people
5. Foster a workplace that is inclusive and informed on the realities of Indigenous youth
6. Seek out opportunities to support Indigenous peoples through advocacy and knowledge sharing

Together, we are creating a future where every Indigenous young person across Canada has access to the mental health support they need, at the moment they need it. **We couldn't do it without you.**

Impact by the numbers

January 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024

Indigenous service use in crisis response reached an all-time high in Q3 this year, with 11.1% of texters identifying as Indigenous.

We're excited to share that our Indigenous outreach packages have exceeded expectations, serving 313,000 youth in 2024 — far surpassing our target of 175,000.

On average, 86 per cent of young Indigenous people say their conversation with Kids Help Phone was helpful.



KHP Board of Directors and staff in Winnipeg, MB on their way to Dauphin for the 2024 annual retreat.

Breaking Down Barriers Online

No matter where they're located, Indigenous young people can all be found regularly in the same place: online. That's why we've spent the past year updating our website to ensure our e-mental health services are as accessible as possible.

New web-based messaging service offers critical new access point

Our data shows a high volume of Indigenous youth are reaching out to KHP outside of regular work hours. To ensure help is always available, we recently introduced a direct link to a new web-based messaging service accessible during the hours that Live Chat is closed. This new service is particularly impactful for Indigenous youth living in rural communities, who may have limited access to cell phone service and devices.

We will also be providing this service as a free widget to interested non-profits to add to their websites, ensuring more Indigenous youth can get the support they need.

New digital resource launched for Indigenous youth leaving care

Indigenous youth represent more than half of all young people being raised in the child welfare system. When they "age out" of the child welfare system and must leave their foster or group homes, this population of youth can face many complex challenges.

Earlier this year, at the encouragement of Indigenous leaders who trust KHP to be at the table, Indigenous Services Canada renewed an agreement with KHP for supports for First Nations youth leaving care. Building on this work to address the specific needs of Indigenous youth leaving care, [we recently launched a new digital resource in multiple First Nations languages](#), including Inaakonon inawewin (Ojibway), nawasôna pîkiskwewina (Plains Cree) and Mekenasik Klusuaqn (Mik'maq).

Translating KHP content into more Indigenous languages

To break down language barriers to mental health support, we are continuing to expand the amount of content available at KidsHelpPhone.ca in multiple Indigenous languages. For example, the Glowing Fire Body Scan activity, which promotes self-directed solutions to addressing anxiety in the moment. [Try it now!](#)

Improving Access to Indigenous-Focused Resources Through RAM 2.0

KHP's [Resources Around Me \(RAM\)](#) is the most comprehensive list of clinically vetted youth-focused resources in the country — including more than 5,500 Indigenous-focused resources. Over the past year, we updated 621 Indigenous-focused resources in the database and added 132 new resources. We also launched RAM 2.0, featuring an improved search tool, a robust guided navigation experience and more. As part of the launch the Red Cross offered a webinar in September 2024 on using RAM for searching out local resources for Indigenous youth.

A RAM 2.0 widget has been made available to youth-serving organizations across Canada at no cost to extend the reach and impact of this vital service. Within two months of this launch, we already have Indigenous organizations and Friendship Centres interested in adding the widget to their websites.

“They re-assured me that everything I said was completely confidential and that allowed me to open up and talk about something I wouldn't tell other people.”

— Indigenous Texter

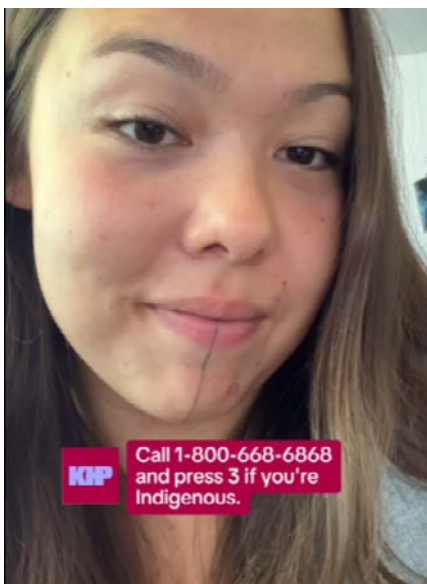
Promoting Indigenous Programming through Community Collaboration

To raise awareness of KHP in Indigenous communities and demonstrate our commitment to supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis young people, we have been partnering with several community-based collaborators.

Weaving Threads volunteers spread the word

Weaving Threads: An Indigenous Engagement Program is a Canada-wide network of volunteers who are committed to helping Indigenous youth connect with KHP.

Cheyenna Hunt is a Weaving Threads volunteer based in Saskatchewan and an example of how powerful this program is. She has gone above and beyond in her efforts to help Indigenous youth access support. Over the past year, Cheyenna distributed KHP information during a STEM conference for Indigenous girls at the University of Saskatchewan; promoted KHP during a radio campaign on mental health; shared posts from KHP on the Facebook page for English River First Nation; and more.



Indigenous influencer Cailyn Nanaug promotes KHP on TikTok

To expand our reach and continue building our presence as a place that Indigenous youth can turn to for support, we partnered with Inuk and Cree content creator [Cailyn Nanaug](#). Through eight different TikToks, Cailyn used popular social media themes like “get ready with me” to describe how she reaches out to KHP when she needs someone to talk to, as well as the ways Indigenous youth can get in touch. These dedicated videos were promoted via paid marketing in August and September and generated over 6.6 million impressions and 23,000 click-throughs to Indigenous resources on the KHP website.

Spreading the word with Little NHL

We’re reaching young people through the power of sport! Over the past year, KHP has had a strong presence at Indigenous hockey tournaments across the country, including through the Little Native Hockey League (Little NHL). During the year, 3,500 First Nations youth received KHP gloves with attached wallet cards, and messaging was amplified with board advertising in multiple rinks.

Partnering with Waakebiness Insitute for Indigenous Health at the University of Toronto

The Indigenous Initiatives team has been collaborating with the Waakebiness Institute for Indigenous Health team, a group of University of Toronto researchers and educators working to address the complex factors underlying health disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The team is supporting our work by processing data for the Brighter Days program; in exchange, we provide them with access to the Weaving Threads volunteer program and network.



“In 2018, the KHP Indigenous Advisory Council advised us to partner with people in communities who Indigenous youth already know and trust. If they hear about our services that way, it’s going to mean a lot more and have the biggest impact. So that’s what we’ve done.”

— Deanna Dunham, Director, Indigenous Initiatives, KHP

Capacity Building and Thought Leadership

As we pursue the 32 actions and six key goals of Finding Hope 2023-2026, we are continuing to build capacity across KHP and share what we've learned.

Onboarding new members of the Indigenous Advisory Council

KHP recently welcomed six new members to the [Indigenous Advisory Council](#), a group of Indigenous and community leaders who play a crucial role in guiding Finding Hope and all our work to support Indigenous young people.

KHP hosts Board retreats in Iqaluit and Dauphin

In October 2023, Kids Help Phone's Board of Directors held a strategic retreat in Iqaluit, Nunavut, and in October 2024, in Dauphin, Manitoba. Special thanks to AIR MILES for sponsoring Miles towards the flights. These meaningful experiences allowed KHP Board Members and leadership to connect and build community ties, and deepen their understanding of KHP's journey of Truth and Reconciliation.

Sharing knowledge and insights

Over the course of the past year, the Indigenous Initiatives team have regularly presented at conferences and webinars to share insights and learnings about work taking place across the youth mental health landscape. Examples include Deanna Dunham, KHP's Director, Indigenous Initiatives, presenting a workshop at a First Nations educator conference to share information and resources about KHP. KHP also hosted the 3rd Weaving Threads forum on November 11-12, 2024, bringing volunteers together for training and learning sessions, group collaboration and networking.



What's Next?

Empowered by your generous support, our key priorities in the months ahead will include:

- Building out separate landing pages on KHP's website for First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth to ensure users can more easily find relevant resources in their own languages.
- Planning a new series of events called "Knowledge Exchange Forums for Indigenous Youth Wellness" across Canada. These events will be opportunities for learning and reflection, focused on how wellness of youth requires a balance of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being.
- Building out the Indigenous Initiatives team to increase capacity and scale up programming.
- Growing the New Trails program, launched in 2023 to raise awareness of KHP's services for Indigenous youth through billboards, road signs and other signage.
- Exploring the launch of a pilot mentorship initiative in partnership with an Indigenous post-secondary institution.



To the team at Sobeys, from all of us here at KHP, thank you so much for being an invaluable partner on our journey to unlock hope for every young person across Canada.

Empowered by your generosity and support, we are making remarkable progress toward a future in which all Black and Indigenous young people across the country can access the life-changing support they need — when, where and how they need it most.

We could not be more grateful.



Photography Credit: Charlene “Lensqueen” Halkett of Pinehouse Photography Club

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