

# 2025 Impact Report



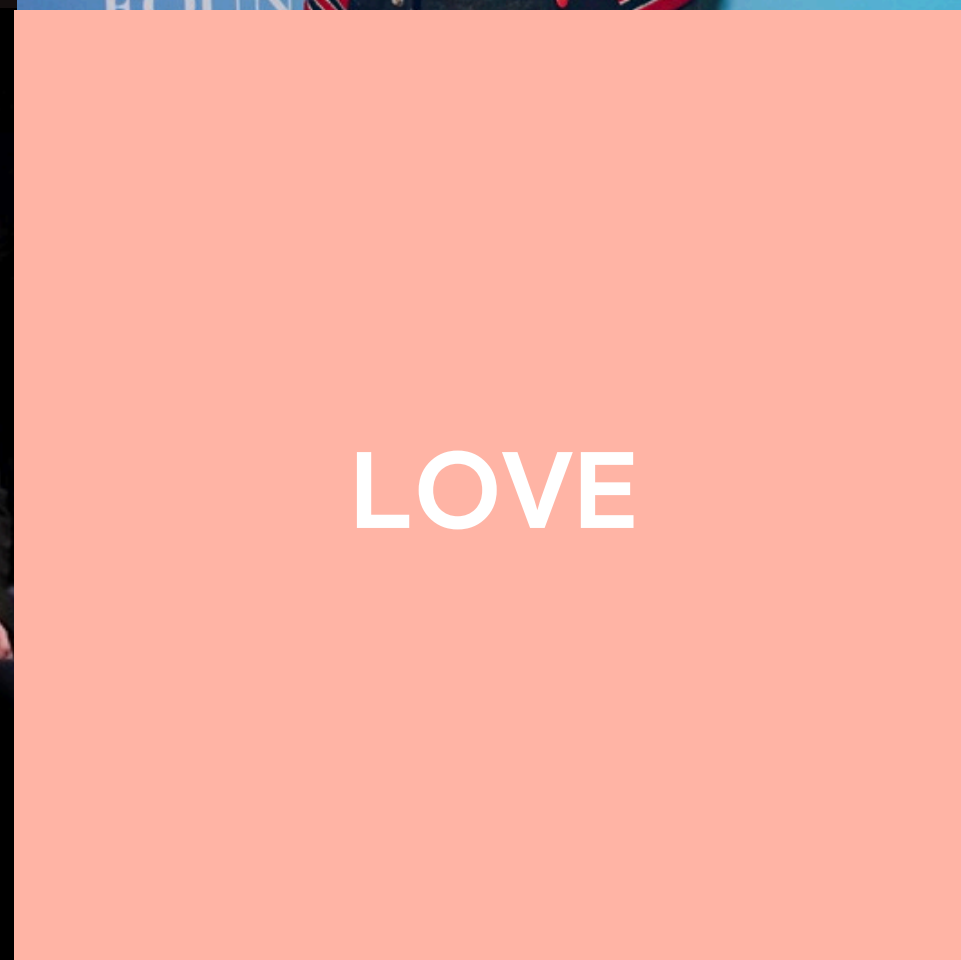
KINDNESS



BRAVERY



ACCEPTANCE

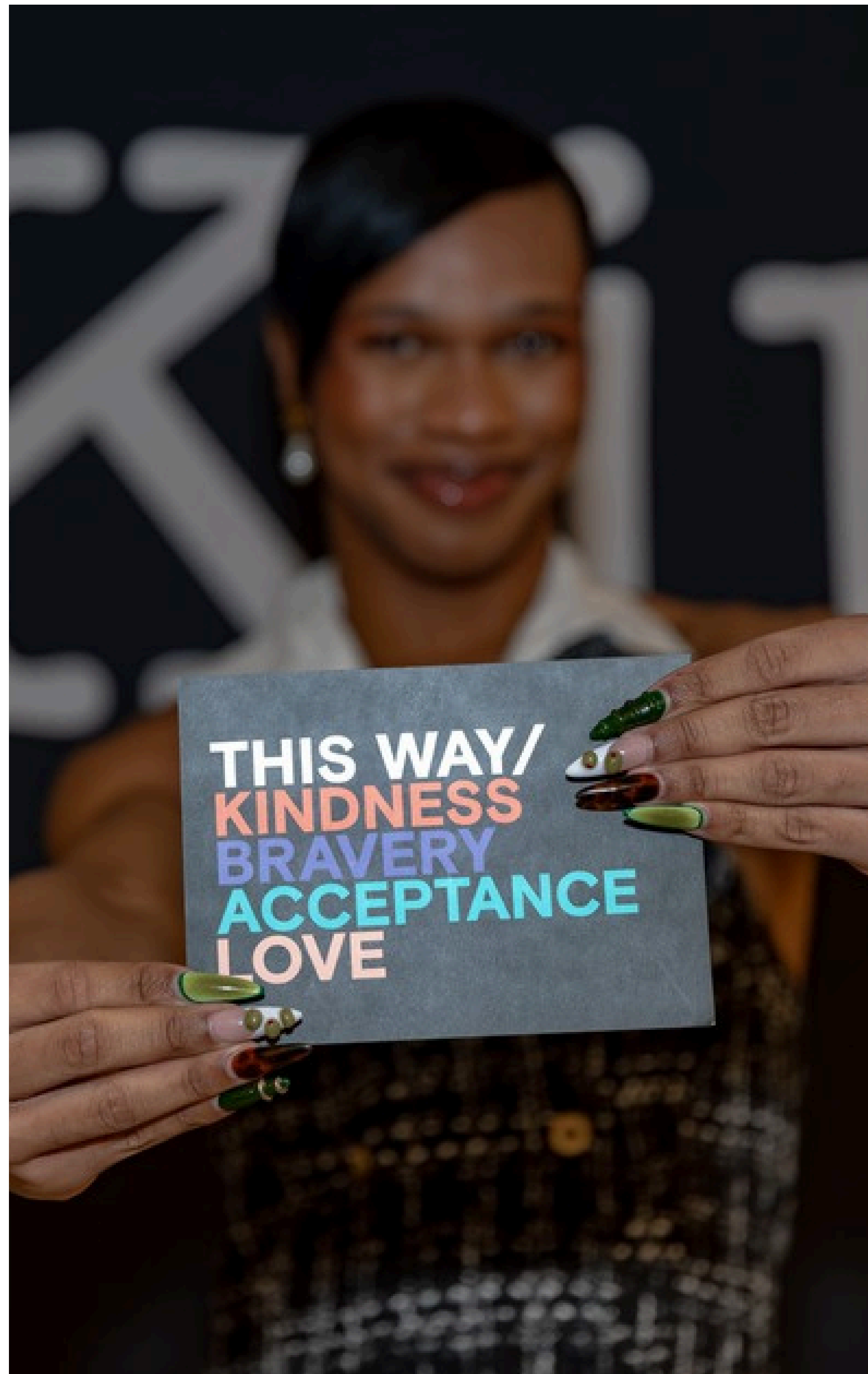


LOVE

**BORN THIS WAY/  
FOUNDATION**

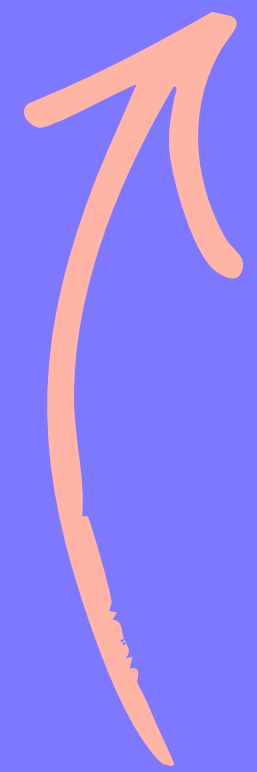
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# OUR MISSION

Our mission is to **empower** and **inspire** young people to build a kinder, braver world that supports their mental health.



*heart of  
our work!*

# LOOKING AHEAD

Dear friends,

**Connection is at the heart of mental health**, and young people are telling us they **need more spaces and tools that help them build the confidence and skills to support themselves and show up for one another.**

As we navigated uncertainty and changes in the world, our team focused on fostering opportunities for connection through storytelling, skill-building, research-informed resources, and in-person gatherings that brought young people and their communities together in meaningful ways for 2025. **Young people's stories, ideas, and solutions continue to shape and inspire our work.**

This report reflects what young people shared with us through our Youth Advisory Board, research initiatives, and programs including Channel Kindness, #BeKind365, Be There Certificate, and the Kindness in Community Fund. Their experiences, insights, and ideas helped shape our programs and storytelling, ensuring **our work stays grounded in what they need.**

**Young people are already building this kinder, braver world we imagined from the start.** We look forward to helping equip a generation with the tools, confidence, and community support to care for themselves and one another through opportunities to lead, share stories, build practical skills, and expand access to mental health resources—with their perspectives at the center of it all.

In Kindness,  
Team Born This Way Foundation



# OUR VISION + APPROACH

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We envision a world where **every young person has access to resources, communities, and platforms** to proactively support their own and their peers' mental health and wellbeing – kindly and bravely.

## Engage young people where they are

Online and in-person, by elevating young people's perspectives and inspiring them to take kind action

## Connect young people with resources

Mental health resources preparing young people and communities with the skills and knowledge to support themselves and each other

More young people building a kinder, braver world who are **equipped with resources and inspired to take kind action**



# OUR IMPACT TO DATE

90K+

Be There Certificates  
Earned

65K+

Pledges to  
Take Kind Action

50K+

Young people engaged in our  
research, including through  
surveys and events.

\$9M USD

Committed through  
the Kindness in Community Fund



## THAT MEANS...

More young people prepared with evidence-based mental health support skills to care for themselves and others.

Young people across 100+ countries pledging to take kind action for themselves and their communities, while inspiring others to join them.

Strong data directly from young people to guide our work and strengthen understanding of youth wellbeing.

Young people across 10+ countries who have better access to mental health resources and safe, supportive spaces.

# YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

*Youth-led*

Our Youth Advisory Board - composed of 34 young leaders located across 6 continents, ensures our work is authentically youth-led by collaborating directly with staff to shape programs, provide insights, and serve as ambassadors online and in their communities.

Their perspectives are central to our work:

- **Advising on our programs, including reviewing Kindness in Community Fund applications and guiding final grantee selections.**
- **Engaging in Research Learning Labs to shape our research-informed work and provide actionable recommendations based on findings.**
- **Writing for our storytelling platform, Channel Kindness, and participating in and co-hosting Channel Kindness Storytellers Club sessions.**
- **Serving as ambassadors for our work through virtual and in-person speaking opportunities, amplifying mental health resources like the Be There Certificate and platforms like #BeKind365.**



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# RESEARCH

In 2025, Born This Way Foundation amplified our role as a strong, trusted, credible source of science for our community. Young people shaped our research and directly informed how we used our data to drive real-world change.

## Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is always at the core of our research process. Young people actively shape our research from co-creating instruments to disseminating our findings.

This year, we launched our **Research Learning Labs**, a space for our Youth Advisory Board to learn about our research process, provide feedback, and improve our work in real time. The 5 sessions hosted in 2025 developed our **iterative feedback loop** to foster strong science, encourage two-way learning, and build a foundation for youth-engaged, science-backed impact.

## Rigorous Science

In 2025, we collaborated with **9 Research Partners** – leading scientists, educators, practitioners, and industry leaders – to:

- Use science to better **understand the needs** of young people
- Examine intersectional factors related to **youth mental health**
- Expedite the **translation of research** into real-world settings



## IMPACT SNAPSHOT

In 2025:

15

**publications** including reports, resource guides, and peer-reviewed papers

12

**research-informed opinion pieces** including op-eds, commentaries, and Channel Kindness stories

27

**speaking engagements** including news segments, events, and Research Learning Labs



### 1 Survey → 3 Reports

### Collaborating to go Deeper

### Translating into Action

### Connecting with Community

In partnership with Hopelab, we surveyed 1,200+ LGBTQ+ youth. From that data, we released 3 reports examining overall findings + the unique experiences of **trans and gender expansive youth** and **youth in rural communities**.

Researchers from Yale and University of Michigan conducted a deeper analysis of this rich dataset to better understand the experiences of Black and Indigenous LGBTQ+ youth. **These findings have been accepted into peer-reviewed journals and academic conferences.**

With feedback from LGBTQ+ youth + adult experts on our findings, we created **3 resource guides** tailored for families, technology + social media companies, and active allies.

#### Youth-Engaged Dissemination:

- Traditional media
- Social media + working with content creators
- Webinars
- Academic and non-academic conferences
- Workshops
- Born This Way Foundation-hosted events + convenings



We're also proud that this report received an **Audience Honor at the 17th Annual Shorty Awards**.

*Click here to check out our reports and resource guides!*



# KINDNESS IN COMMUNITY FUND

The Kindness in Community Fund is our **grantmaking program funding community organizations that support youth mental health and wellbeing.** **Young people drove the process at each step** - from nominations and shortlisting, all the way to the final selection. We're grateful to our partners including Pivotal, Cotton On Foundation, Sephora, and Haus Labs who helped support this critical program.



## IMPACT SNAPSHOT

In 2025:

**4K+**

Global nominations

**55**

Community organizations funded

**85%**

Nominations coming from young people

## Who we fund and why

We fund organizations that meet the specific needs of their communities with **accessible mental health resources.** We prioritize organizations that **provide in-person services, are informed and/or led by young people, and are rooted in practices of cultivating community, inclusion, and equity at all levels.**





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# BE THERE CERTIFICATE

Launched in 2022, the Be There Certificate is a free online course, created by Jack.org in partnership with Born This Way Foundation, that **provides knowledge, skills, and confidence** needed to safely support anyone who may be struggling with their mental health.

*build the skills  
to be there*

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To Date:

# 90K+

**Be There Certificates  
completed!**

*People who have earned their  
Be There Certificate say...*

93%

“Improved my **ability to recognize if someone is struggling** with their mental health.”<sup>2</sup>

94%

“I feel **better able to safely support someone** who is struggling with their mental health.”<sup>2</sup>

90%

“I feel **better able to take care of my own mental health.**”<sup>2</sup>

*Earn your  
Be There Certificate here!*



# CHANNEL KINDNESS

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Channel Kindness is a **digital storytelling platform** where young people ages 15 to 24 share their experiences, uplift their communities, and inspire acts of kindness and bravery around the world. Through the platform's interactive features and the **Channel Kindness Storytellers Club** workshop, we help young people turn their stories into community care.



## Building community

The Channel Kindness Storytellers Club is a free virtual and in-person writing workshop that helps young people develop the skills and confidence they need to share their stories. In fact, **84% of 2025 participants say the workshops showed them they could become a storyteller.**

## Sharing stories

Channel Kindness **centers young people**, creating a safe space for them to **share experiences of mental health, identity, culture, community, and care in their own words.**

## Inspiring action

Every single Channel Kindness story is **accompanied by ways our audience can take action.** Whether it's supporting a nonprofit, volunteering, or encouraging self-care, **we encourage our community to put kindness into action.**

## IMPACT SNAPSHOT

To Date:

71

Countries represented

14K+

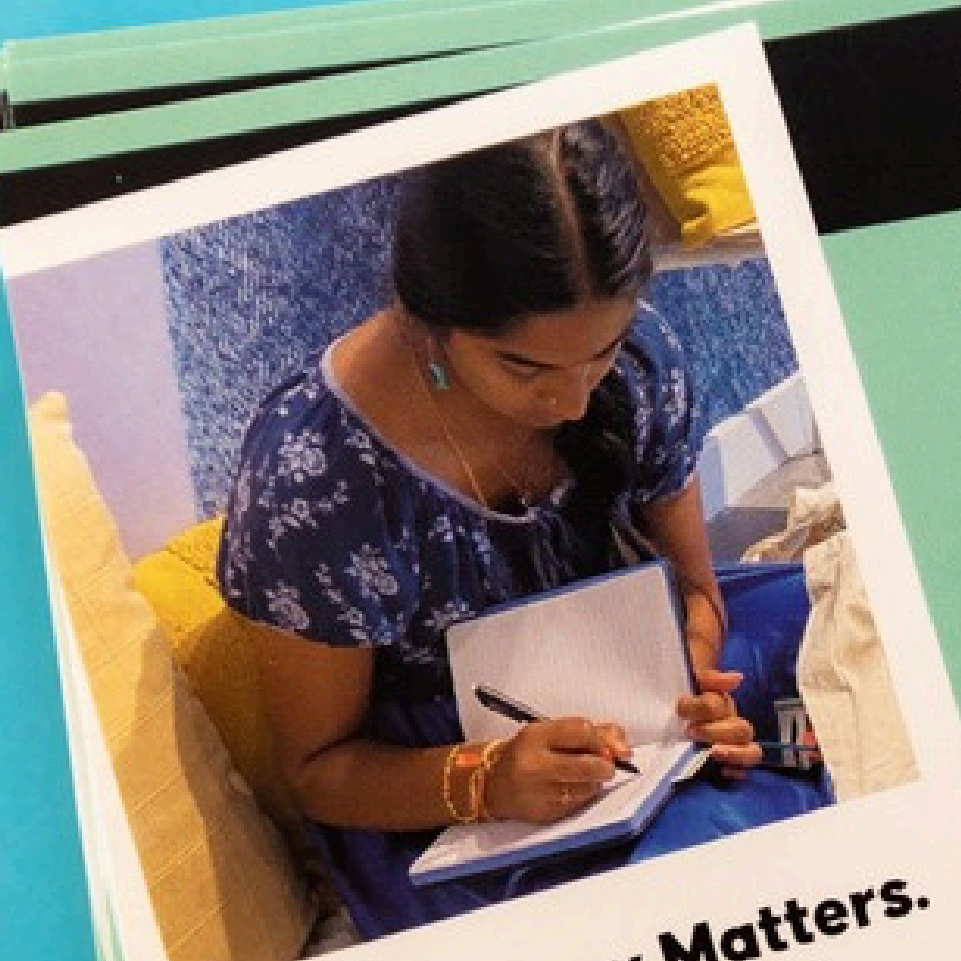
Acts of kindness pledged

1K+

Storytellers Club participants



**channel kindness**  
A Project of Born This Way Foundation




**Your Story Matters.**

**The Storytellers Club**  
Through the power of storytelling, learn to process life and your mental health creatively through timed prompts and community discussions using the freewriting technique.

**60** Minute Writing Workshop

**Attend an upcoming virtual Storytellers Club workshop!**  
RSVP + learn about story submissions at [ChannelKindness.org!](https://ChannelKindness.org)




# #BEKIND365

#BeKind365 is a **digital platform that helps participants practice intentional kindness every day, wherever they are, and whenever they can**, in support of themselves, their loved ones, and their community.

## IMPACT SNAPSHOT

THIS  
WAY/

To Date:

# 132

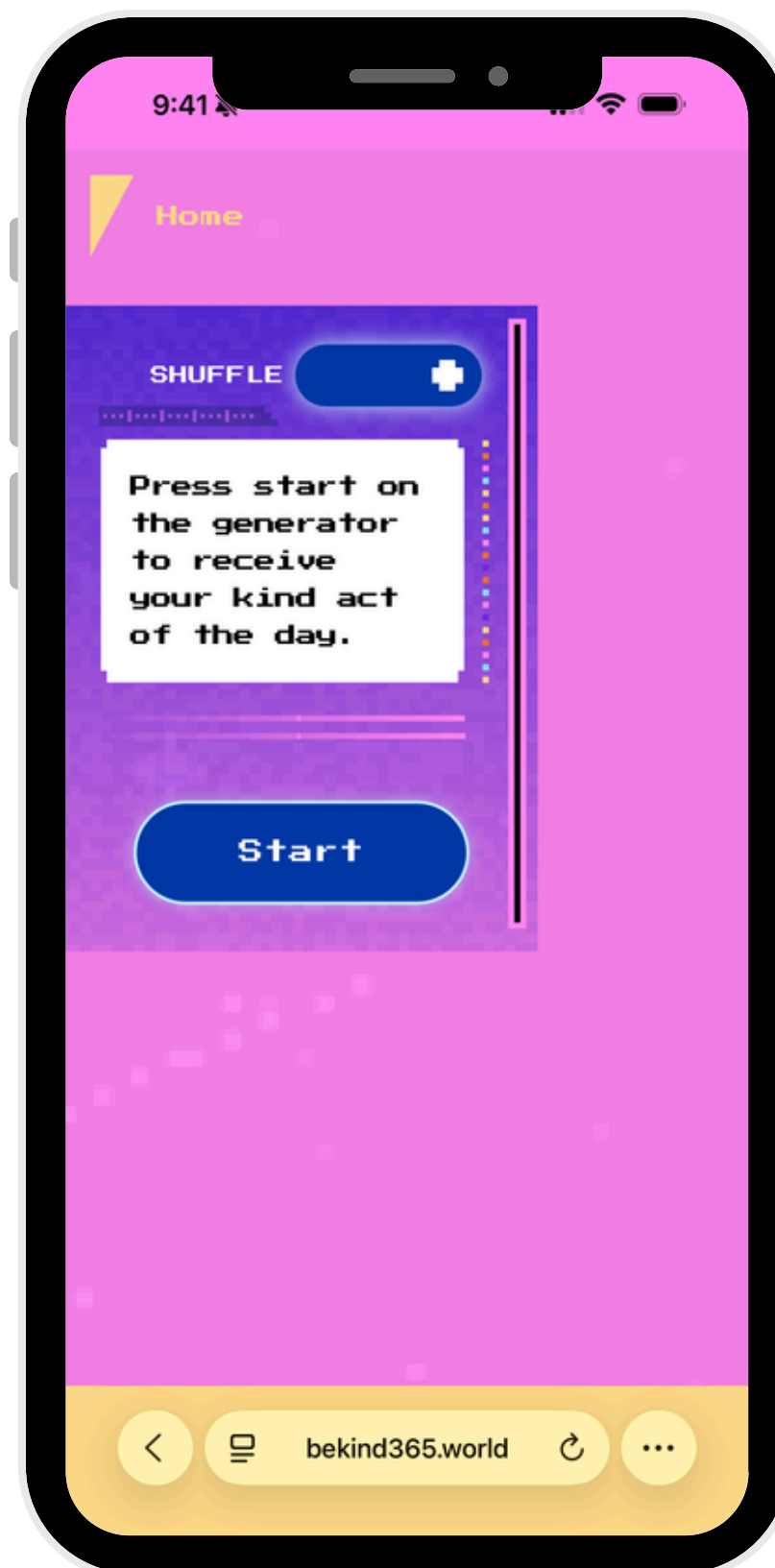
Participating countries

# 59K+

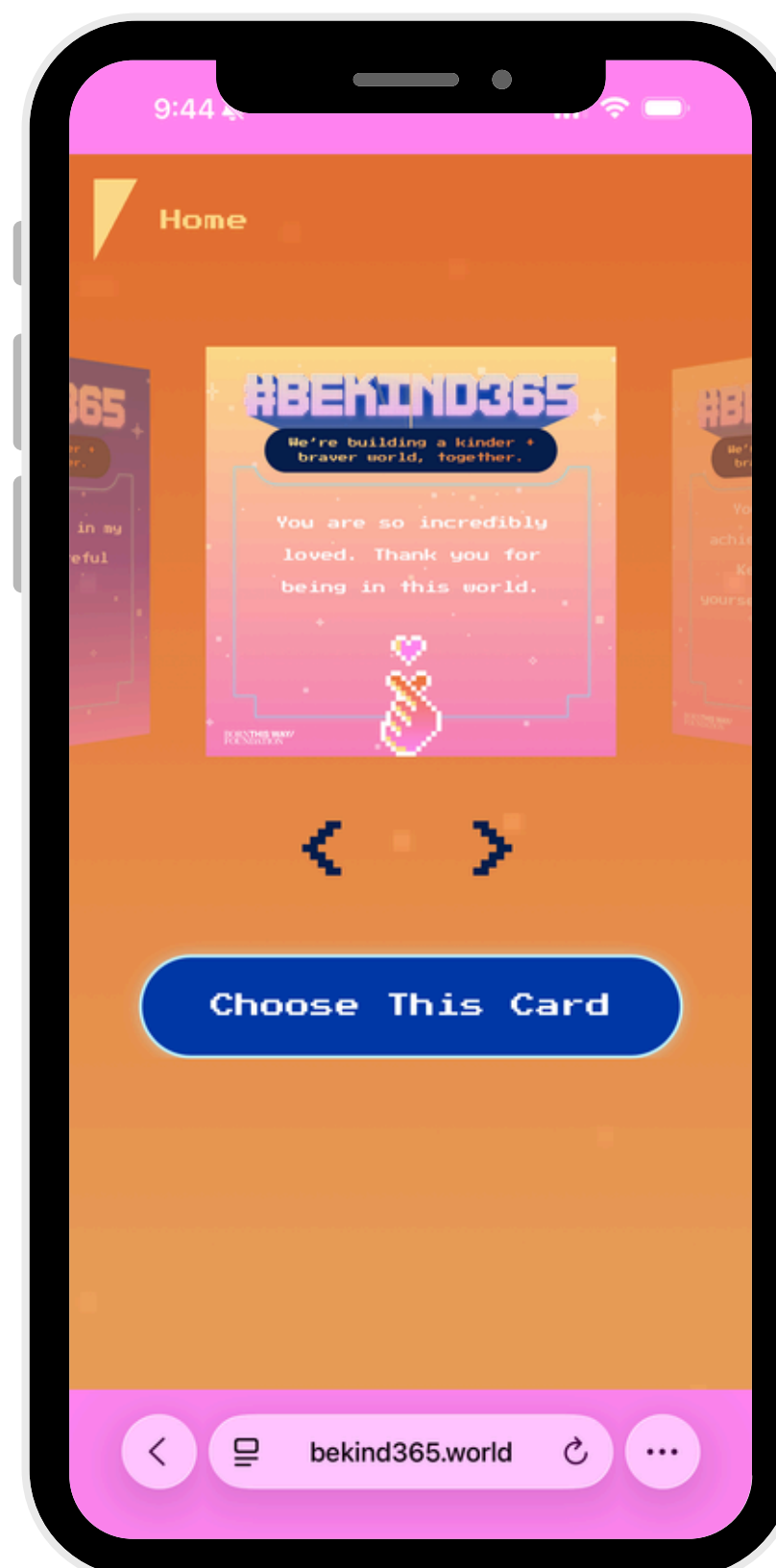
Participants to date

# 21M+

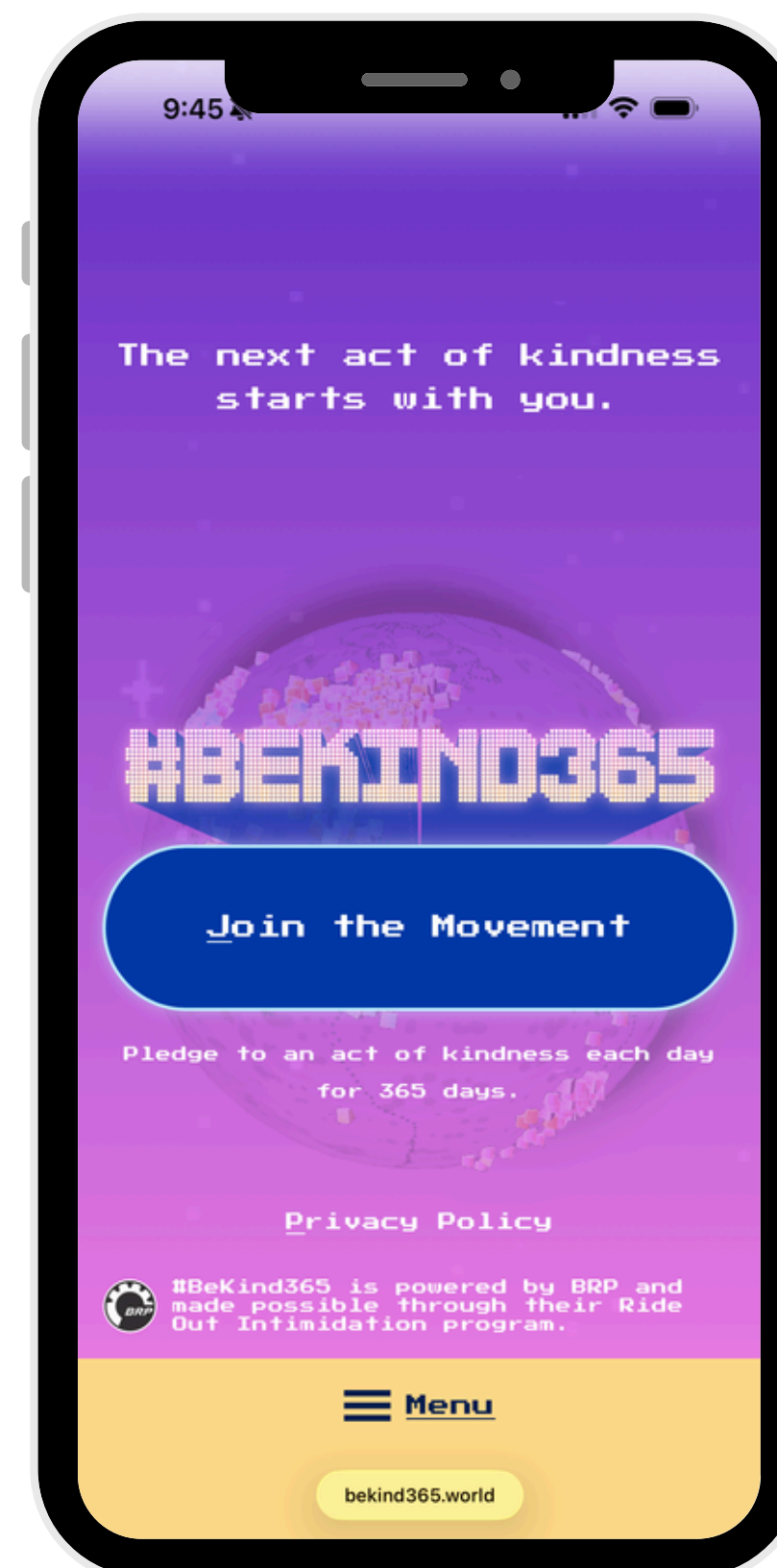
Total pledged acts of kindness



Use the **Kindness Generator** to find suggested acts of kindness to build a daily practice.



Use the **Gratitude Postal Service** to send a kind, uplifting message to anyone in the world.



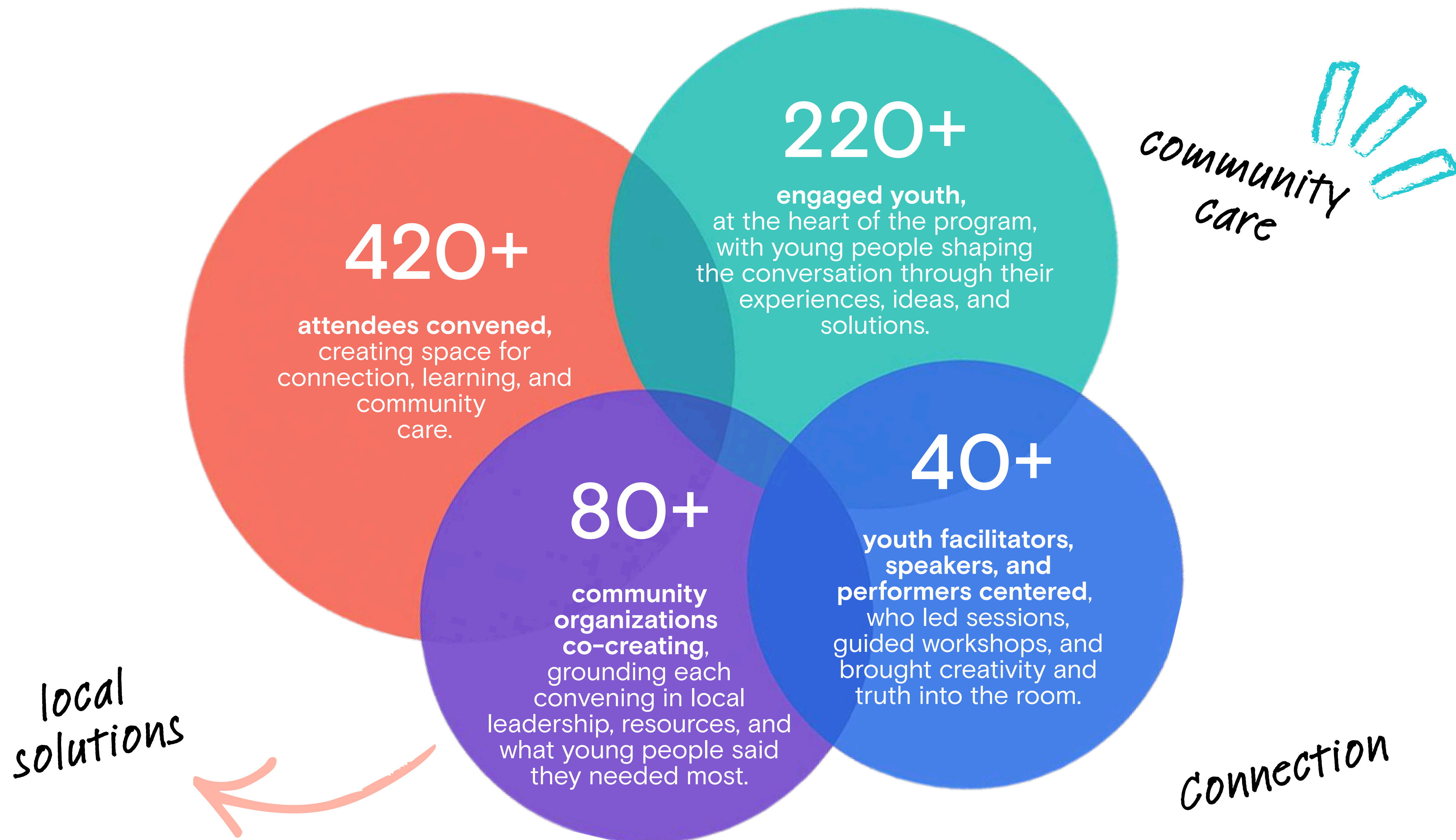
Use the **Kind Connector** to witness the global ripple effect of your kind acts.

*Click here to pledge to #BeKind365!*



# KINDNESS IN ACTION EVENTS

Our **Kindness in Action: Convenings on Youth Mental Health, Community Care, and Local Solutions** events in 2025 took place **across four cities**. **Curating spaces for young people** to share their experiences and ideas, celebrate the work they are already leading, and connect participants with tools, resources, and local organizations supporting mental health and wellbeing. These events were made possible with support from Cotton On Foundation and other partners.





# OUR TEAM

## Keemia Abbaszadeh

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, RESEARCH, OPERATIONS,  
+ ENGAGEMENT

SHE/HER/HERS

## Alex Aide

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMS + IMPACT

HE/HIM/HIS

## MJ Bradley

SENIOR MANAGER, PARTNERSHIPS

THEY/SHE

## Katy Butler

DIGITAL MEDIA PLANNER

SHE/HER/HERS

## Shadille Estepan

SENIOR MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS

SHE/HER/HERS

## Dr. Claudia-Santi F. Fernandes

VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH + EVALUATION

SHE/HER/HERS

## Cynthia Germanotta

PRESIDENT + CO-FOUNDER

SHE/HER/HERS

## Francesca Giannattasio

MANAGER, RESEARCH + CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE

SHE/HER/HERS

## Josh Hollin

MANAGER, DIGITAL

HE/HIM/HIS

## Mariah Karis

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, PROGRAMS

SHE/HER/HERS

## Aysha Mahmood

SENIOR MANAGER, PROGRAMS

SHE/HER/HERS

## Rachel Martin

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

SHE/HER/HERS

## Josh Meredith

CHIEF OF STAFF

HE/HIM/HIS

## Allison Olson

SENIOR MANAGER, PROGRAMS, GRANTMAKING

SHE/HER/HERS

## Mitu Yilma

VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS

SHE/HER/HERS

# OUR BOARD

## Stefani Germanotta

CO-FOUNDER + DIRECTOR

SHE/HER/HERS

## Charles B. Ortner

DIRECTOR

HE/HIM/HIS

## Tamika L. Tremaglio

DIRECTOR, TREASURER

SHE/HER/HERS

## Cynthia Germanotta

CO-FOUNDER + DIRECTOR, PRESIDENT

SHE/HER/HERS

## Alex Roque

DIRECTOR, SECRETARY

HE/HIM/HIS

Thank you for building a kinder, braver world with us!

Lady Gaga

Cynthia Germanotta

Keemio  
Abdullah

Max J. Dale

Francesca  
Giamattasio

Joshua  
Hallin

Matt M.

Aysha Mah

Rachel Martin

Christy

Kathy Burt

Shadille Estepan

Megan Bradley

John

Alicia Olson

Mitzy

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