

2024 IMPACT REPORT

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**BORN THIS WAY/
FOUNDATION**

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Dear Friends,

Our team is brimming with joy and gratitude as we reflect on the past year, and we are so proud to share Born This Way Foundation's 2024 Impact Report – **a celebration of all we've accomplished together as a global kind community with young people leading the way.**

In a time when younger generations are navigating an extraordinary, ever-changing set of pressures and challenges that impact their mental health, **we remain inspired by their unwavering commitment and passion for building a kinder, braver, world.** This past year, we've witnessed their resilience and innovation in the incredible ways they support one another through their ideas and actions.

From the stories shared on Channel Kindness to the daily commitments made through #BeKind365, young people are proving that kindness is transformative. With each Be There Certificate earned and each grant awarded through the Kindness in Community Fund, they are building kind communities by **reaching out to one another, fostering connections, and creating safe spaces** that invite others to be brave, too.

Young people have shown us, time and again, that they are leading the conversation about mental health and kindness. **We're honored to work with them to bring their ideas and solutions to life.** As we begin a new year, we are more committed than ever to equip all young people with the agency, resources, and skills they need to support themselves and one another in order to build a kinder, braver world.

Thank you for being part of this movement and for believing, as we do, in the power of youth-led kind action. **We hope you find inspiration in these pages and join us in making this vision of a kinder, braver world a reality.**

With all my gratitude and optimism for the future,

Team Born This Way Foundation



Our Mission

Born This Way Foundation empowers and inspires young people to build a kinder, braver world that supports their mental health.

Our Approach

We **engage** young people to center their perspectives, uplift their stories, and celebrate the kinder, braver world they are building—online and in-person.

We **connect** young people with accessible mental health resources, equipping them with skills to support themselves and one another.

OUR PROGRAMS





KINDNESS IN COMMUNITY FUND

Supporting grassroots organizations is one of the most powerful ways to drive meaningful, community-centered change, ensuring resources reach those who need them most while amplifying local voices and solutions.

The Kindness in Community Fund is **a youth-driven grantmaking initiative empowering community organizations** that are addressing young people’s diverse needs globally. Guided by young people’s input from nomination to selection, we support organizations that are informed or led by young people, rooted in equity and inclusion, and provide free, accessible mental health resources – creating lasting global impact.

In 2024, the Kindness in Community Fund, **with support from our partners at Cotton On, distributed \$3,000,000 USD to 65 organizations across 10 countries**, supporting clinical care, housing, food, and inclusive, safe spaces. To date, the Fund has awarded \$5,000,000 USD, supporting 260 organizations.

Our team is dedicated to strengthening collaboration and building community in partnership with our grantees.

[**LEARN MORE + MEET OUR GRANTEES**](#)

To Date:

\$5M USD

Awarded

260

Organizations Supported

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: GLOBAL STORIES OF IMPACT



📍 MALAYSIA

“Shortly after completing the Listener workshop, a high school student noticed a classmate showing signs of stress and isolation. Using his new skills, **he approached the classmate and offered a supportive, non-judgmental space to talk.** The classmate opened up about the pressures he was facing with academics and family expectations. The student was able to guide him to the [Tongle’s] Listener App and other mental health resources. The classmate later expressed gratitude, saying **the conversation helped him feel less alone and more open to seeking help.**”

– High School Teacher
Tongle



📍 THAILAND

“I would like to express a huge thank you for the mental health counseling program you’ve provided for us. It’s been such a helpful resource, and I’m really grateful to have access to it. In many parts of Asia, especially in developing countries, **there just isn’t enough support for mental health, so having this program available is a big relief.** The counselor that I have met has been incredibly professional, kind and supportive, making it feel safe and easy to talk about things that might otherwise be hard to share. Thank you for all the hard work you put into making this support accessible. **It’s making a real difference.**”

– Student
Daughters Rising



📍 UNITED STATES

“Marcus, a 20-year-old dealing with homelessness and substance abuse, initially struggled with trust and emotional pain. Through AMP’s art program, where he could express his struggles through graffiti, **Marcus gradually opened up.** He participated in workshops and began managing his anxiety. By the end of 2024, **Marcus had transformed into a mentor, leading workshops for new youth participants and using art as a tool for positive self-expression.** Marcus’s journey highlights how AMP’s programs foster growth, resilience, and leadership among youth.”

– Program Facilitator
Artist Mentorship Program



📍 UNITED KINGDOM

“Stretton Sugwas Primary School pupils, who are part of our ambassador programme, started a Kind Podcast in their school, run entirely by the pupils. **It was their idea, and they ran with it!** They rotate hosts and chat about kind things happening in the school and encourage pupils to support each other. They won a national Kindness Award for this initiative.”

– School Teacher
52 Lives School of Kindness

BE THERE CERTIFICATE

Accessible mental health resources that empower young people to support one another are essential for building stronger, more connected communities.

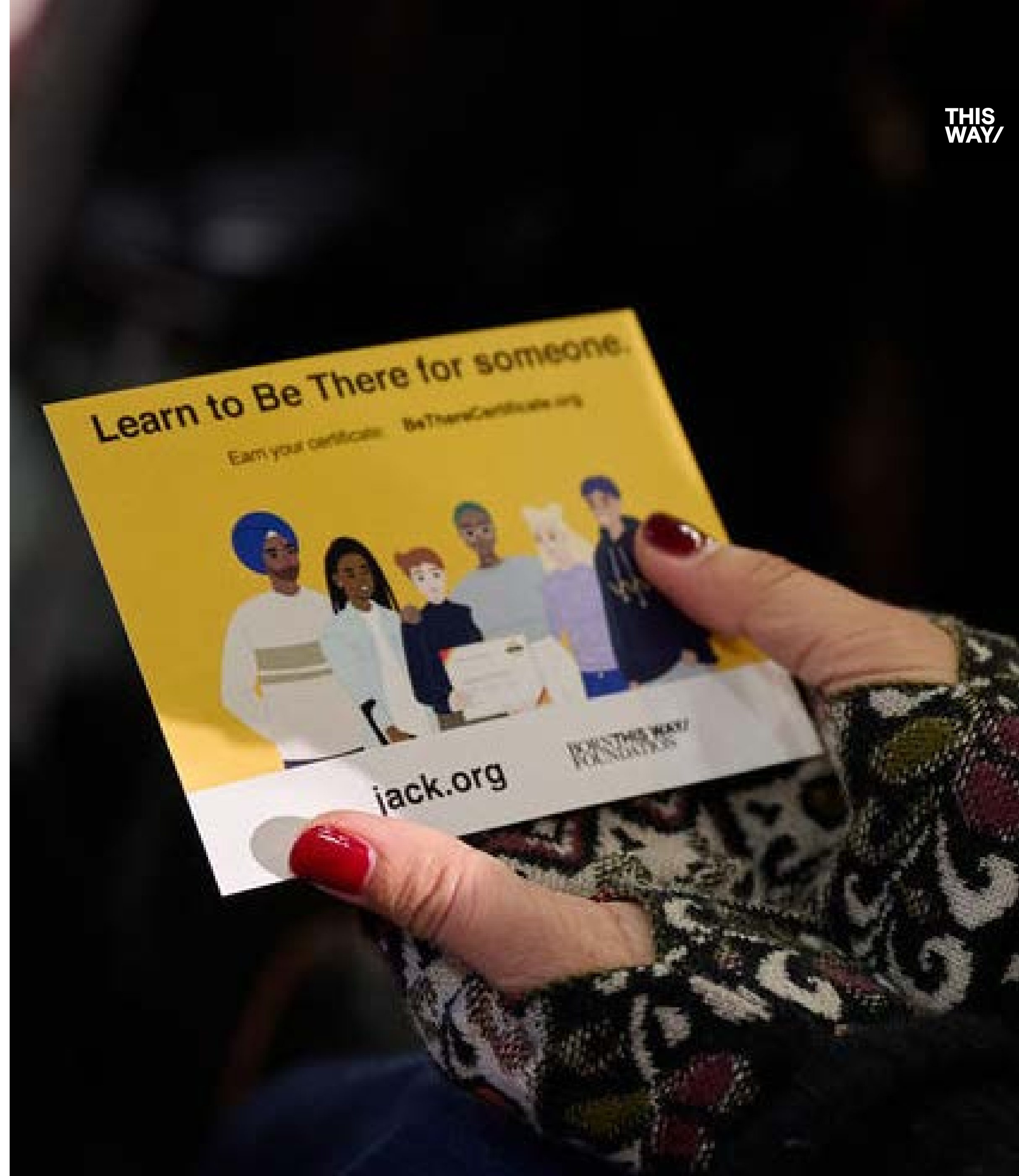
The Be There Certificate is **a free online mental health course that equips young people with the tools to confidently and compassionately support one another**, created in partnership with Jack.org. Through six self-paced lessons, available in English, French, and Spanish, young people and youth advocates learn how to recognize when someone is struggling, provide support, and connect others to the help they deserve.

Since its 2022 launch, **over 60,000 young people and youth advocates have earned their Be There Certificate**, with over 50 completed daily in 2024.

Surveys show that within six months of completing the course, **79% of participants have used the skills they learned to support someone, 96% feel more confident offering support, and 95% can better recognize signs of struggle.**

The Be There Certificate was also recognized as a 2024 Webby Award Honoree.

[EARN YOUR BE THERE CERTIFICATE](#)



To Date:

60K +

Be There Certificates Earned

96%

Feel More Confident Supporting Others



CHANNEL KINDNESS

Amplifying the stories of young people fosters connection, breaks stigma, and highlights the link between storytelling and mental health.

Channel Kindness is a digital platform where young people ages 15-24 can share their stories and inspire action, showcasing the transformative power of storytelling. Each story invites readers to connect with their communities through interactive features, including a map that visualizes the origin of each story and its act of kindness pledge, creating a space where compassion meets action.

In 2024, our team of editors helped 142 young people share their stories, each paired with suggested actions to inspire meaningful change. To date, the platform has featured over 2,000 stories, inspired more than 11,000 acts of kindness, and engaged participants from 61 countries, celebrating young people's courage, creativity, and drive to make a difference.

Channel Kindness also hosts the Storytellers Club, a free writing workshop designed to empower young people with the tools and confidence to craft and share their stories. In 2024, we partnered with various organizations to engage 249 participants in tailored workshops both virtually and in person, transforming their unique perspectives into powerful narratives.

[SHARE YOUR STORY + TAKE ACTION](#)

To Date:

2,000

Stories Published

61

Countries Represented

BEYOND THE NUMBERS: STORIES OF KINDNESS + CONNECTION

“

“Seeing so many people excited to share their writing and support each other made me feel empowered and seen in this community.”

- Isabella (She/Her)



“

“Meeting someone with similar experiences and creating a support system was incredibly meaningful.”

- Emily (She/Her)



“

“Kindness is being vulnerable and sharing your story to help others learn, grow, and achieve their goals.”

- Dylan (He/Him)



“

“Hearing my peers' perspectives and seeing their unique writing styles was enlightening and inspiring.”

- Faith (She/Her)



“

“Finding a shared experience of stress and discovering ways to stay happy created a powerful moment of connection.”

- Stephanie (She/Her)



“

“When people shared their stories and I was able to relate to them, it made me feel truly seen and empowered.”

- Jessica (She/Her)



#BEKIND365

Supporting intentional kindness every day is a transformative way to nurture self-care, strengthen communities, and create a global ripple effect of compassion.

#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. Features like the Kindness Generator, which inspires daily kind acts, and the Gratitude Postal Service, which allows users to send messages of appreciation worldwide, make intentional kindness accessible. Participants can also take the Kindness Pledge, committing to practice kindness every day.

To date, #BeKind365 has engaged 55K+ participants across 119 countries, pledging 20M+ kind acts. Tools like the Kind Connector help visualize the global ripple effects of this kindness movement, highlighting the collective impact of small, intentional actions.

Powered by BRP's Ride Out Intimidation program, #BeKind365 fosters compassion that transcends the digital space. By inspiring participants to care for themselves, their communities, and the planet, the platform demonstrates how everyday acts of kindness build a kinder, braver world for us all. #BeKind365 was also recognized as a Shorty Award Gold Honoree in the Website/App category.

[SIGN UP FOR #BEKIND365](#)



To Date:

116

Countries Represented

20M +

Pledged Acts of Kindness



RESEARCH

Born This Way Foundation's research strategy is rooted in a youth-engaged approach to deepen our understanding of mental health and wellbeing among young people. From program evaluation to resource sustainability, our efforts ensure every initiative is grounded in scientific rigor and informed by youth voices.

Our research prioritizes aspects of youth-led participatory action research to inform the design and development of high-impact programming, the rigorous evaluation of such programs, and the identification of strategies to improve dissemination of evidenced-based resources and care to young people. **To date, we've engaged more than 50,000 young people through surveys, generating 32 reports and publications.**

In 2024, we partnered with Hopelab to survey 1,267 LGBTQ+ youth, where 50% identified as BIPOC and 50% as trans and gender expansive, exploring their needs in building supportive online spaces. We anticipate using our findings to continue working with young people, decision-makers, and content creators in the future.

These findings will help us continue working alongside young people, community organizations, decision-makers, and advocates to improve practices and build awareness.

[LEARN MORE + READ OUR REPORTS](#)

To Date:

50K +

Young People Surveyed

32

Reports + Publications Shared

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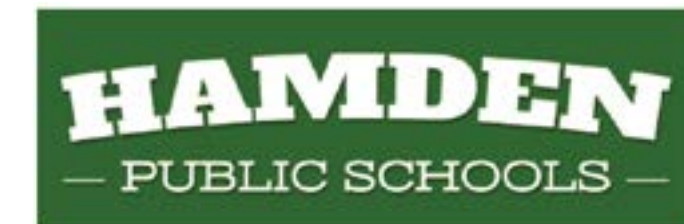
BOR
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OUR COMMUNITY

HC

PARTNERS IN KINDNESS

Supporting youth mental health globally takes a collective effort across sectors. We are grateful to the nonprofit organizations, schools, global companies, individuals, families, and more that help us connect young people with the resources they need.



The Jed Foundation



YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

Born This Way Foundation's Youth Advisory Board ensures our work is authentically youth-led. Comprising over 20 young leaders globally, the **Youth Advisory Board collaborates directly with staff to shape key programs, provide insights, and serve as ambassadors online and in their communities.** Their perspectives are central to our work, offering invaluable feedback and acting as a sounding board for new ideas. Over their two-year tenure, Youth Advisory Board members contribute to the Foundation's impact while amplifying their advocacy for mental health and community building.

During their term, the Youth Advisory Board members shaped programs and represented the Foundation on global stages. From high-profile events like the *Lancet Commission into Youth Mental Health* to authoring LinkedIn articles, their impact has engaged and inspired young people through our programs and research. Members also contributed to the upcoming Hopelab survey, co-hosted Storytellers Club workshops, and shared insights at roundtables with partners like Prospira Global and the Youth Action Summit.

Our Advisors are making a profound impact in their communities through advocacy, creativity, and leadership. **From founding organizations that meet the unique needs of their generation to using their platforms to promote mental health awareness, LGBTQ+ visibility, and accessibility, they are building a kinder, braver world.** Through their work, they are amplifying marginalized voices, reshaping industries, and driving meaningful change for disabled, LGBTQ+, and underrepresented communities.

We're so proud of the accomplishments of our 2023-2024 cohort, who's work in youth mental health advocacy underscore the transformative power of youth leadership.



BEYOND THE NUMBERS: ELEVATING YOUTH VOICES



At Born This Way Foundation, we know young people are uniquely equipped to create meaningful solutions to the challenges they face, which is why **centering youth voices has been core to our work since our inception**. From co-designing programs to shaping research and initiatives, we ensure young leaders are at the heart of every decision.

We curate conversations where decisions makers, community leaders, researchers, and young people can discuss solutions and build community. At youth-led town halls with Senator Laphonza Butler, young advocates proposed solutions to improve youth mental health. Similarly, alongside the United Nations General Assembly, we partnered with Prospira Global to highlight the work and impact of our Kindness in Community Fund grantees.

Young people bring invaluable lived experiences that highlight the connections between mental health and larger systemic issues. **Connie Murphy (they/she, LYRIC) explains, “Mental health is connected to so many broader topics—anti-trans bills, systemic inequality, and economic justice. Addressing any one of these is addressing youth mental health.”**

Their insights ensure that solutions reflect the diverse realities young people navigate and are inclusive and affirming. **As Elektra (he/they, Project Q) shares, “For many queer youth, accessing care means asking, ‘Is the care I want going to accept me?’ Care must not only be accessible but affirming.”**

By listening to and collaborating with young people, we empower them to lead and amplify their impact. **Emily Flores (she/her, Cripple Media) puts it simply: “Nonprofits that are youth-led and youth-centered are so severely underfunded. Supporting the work they’re doing is so beneficial, and we hope it empowers more nonprofits to continue helping young people.”**

Young voices have been central to our mission from the start, and they will continue to guide our work as we build a kinder, braver world that prioritizes the mental health and wellbeing of all.

OUR TEAM

Keemia Abbaszadeh

SENIOR ASSOCIATE, OPERATIONS

SHE/HER/HERS

Alex Aide

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMS + IMPACT

HE/HIM/HIS

Megan Bradley

SENIOR MANAGER, PARTNERSHIPS

THEY/SHE

Katy Butler

DIGITAL MEDIA PLANNER

SHE/HER/HERS

Shadille Estepan

SENIOR MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS

SHE/HER/HERS

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, CONTENT + BRAND

SHE/HER/HERS

OUR BOARD

Lady Gaga

SHE/HER/HERS

Charles B. Ortner

HE/HIM/HIS

Tamika L. Tremaglio

SHE/HER/HERS

Cynthia Germanotta

SHE/HER/HERS

Alexander Roque

HE/HIM/HIS

SNAPSHOTS OF KINDNESS



Youth-led town halls with Senator Laphonza Butler elevated actionable ideas from young people to improve youth mental health in California and beyond.



Our research team spotlighted LGBTQ+ youth online experiences at Active Minds' Mental Health Conference through our Hopelab collaboration workshop.



Youth Advisory Board member Desi spoke at NYC Youth Pride, highlighting the importance of inclusive spaces, community support, and mental health resources for LGBTQ+ youth.



Partnering with Prospira Global at the UN General Assembly, we showcased Youth Advisory Board members and Kindness in Community Fund grantees, highlighting their impact on mental health initiatives.



Cynthia delivered a keynote on amplifying youth voices in mental health solutions at the Bloomberg American Health Summit for the Adolescent Mental Health pillar.



Youth Advisory Board member Kemi was a panelist at the FOSI Annual Conference in DC, advocating for youth mental health and online safety with leaders and experts.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



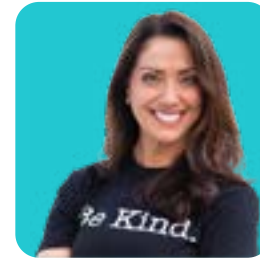
“I think it’s about prevention and intervention, and the earlier that we can provide young people the tools that they need, the better.”

- Cynthia Germanotta
(she/her/hers)
Born This Way Foundation
President + Co-Founder



“So many young people are moving the needle on this topic in unique ways. We need to include young people in the development of programs, as reflective of their lived experiences.”

- Shadille Estepan
(she/her/hers)
Born This Way Foundation
Senior Communications
Manager



“It’s the science of kindness. Giving and receiving kindness gives us oxytocin; these interactions where you feel supported or you feel kindness are incredibly important.”

- Dr. Claudia-Santi F. Fernandes
(she/her/hers)
Born This Way Foundation
Director of Research +
Evaluation



“So many of them [our Kindness in Community Fund grantees] focused on supporting marginalized communities such as LGBTQ+ young people, youth living in rural and remote communities, and Indigenous youth.”

- Nikoletta Apostolidis
(she/her/hers)
Born This Way Foundation
Youth Advisory Board Member



“Local youth were encouraged to nominate organizations that serve their needs, and a global Youth Advisory Board, composed of 24 young people across six continents, helped review nominations and determine the final grantees [of our Kindness in Community Fund].”

- Josh Meredith
(he/him/his)
Born This Way Foundation
Chief of Staff

Born This Way Foundation has always been driven by the passion, creativity, and leadership of young people. As we enter the new year, we look forward to continuing to amplify their voices, fostering inclusive communities, and building a kinder, more inclusive world.

**BORNTHIS WAY/
FOUNDATION**

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