

2023 IMPACT REPORT

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BORNTHIS WAY/
FOUNDATION

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Dear Friends,

As we embark on a journey into the next decade and beyond, I'm thrilled to share the programs, resources, and initiatives that are shaping our path forward at Born This Way Foundation. **Our Impact Report is more than a reflection on the past year – it's an invitation to join us in building a kinder, braver world with the inspiring young people who lead the way.**

Guided by research and the perspectives young people have shared with us, we understand that kindness is more than being nice—it's about taking action. Whether it's earning your Be There Certificate, pledging to #BeKind365, or sharing your story on Channel Kindness, every act of kindness, big or small, contributes to our collective mental wellbeing.

When my daughter and I began touring the world years ago, we had the immense privilege of meeting young people who were making a difference for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. These conversations were the genesis of Born This Way Foundation and from the start, we've known one thing to be true: **young people will always be at the heart of everything we do.**

From our Advisory Board of young leaders to the youth we connect with online, in person, and through our research, their ideas and experiences drive our programs. I'm constantly amazed at their activism, advocacy, and innovation, and I'm excited for you to be inspired by them too.

As you explore this report, you'll learn directly how young people have been impacted by and continue to shape our work. **May their brave stories, unique perspectives, and aspirational ideas inspire you to join our movement to build a kinder, braver world...together.**

With gratitude and kindness,



Cynthia Germanotta
President and Co-Founder
Born This Way Foundation



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

OUR APPROACH

Guided by the belief that a kinder, braver world **is** built by young people who are resourced and inspired to take action, we prioritize fostering youth-driven initiatives, leveraging research-informed strategies, and cultivating meaningful partnerships to ensure our efforts resonate authentically and effectively.

We **Engage** with Young People Directly

Online and offline, we reach young people through platforms that amplify their stories, elevate their perspectives, and celebrate the kinder, braver world they are already building.

We **Connect** Young People with Resources

We provide accessible mental health resources to meet the needs of young people and their communities, equipping them with the skills they need to support themselves and one another.

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OUR PROGRAMS

BE THERE CERTIFICATE

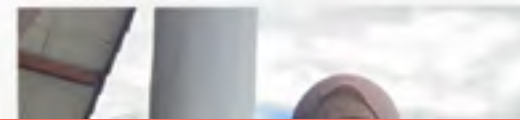
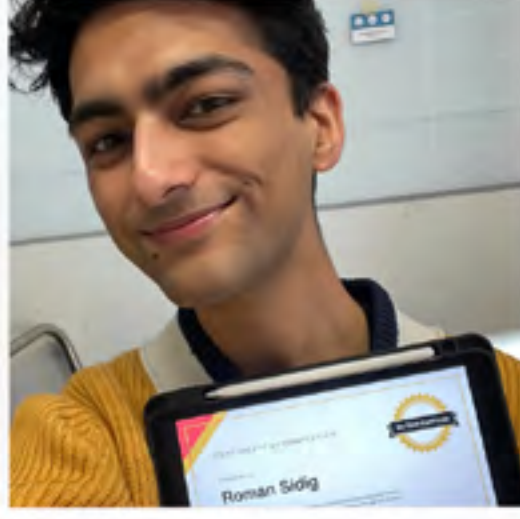
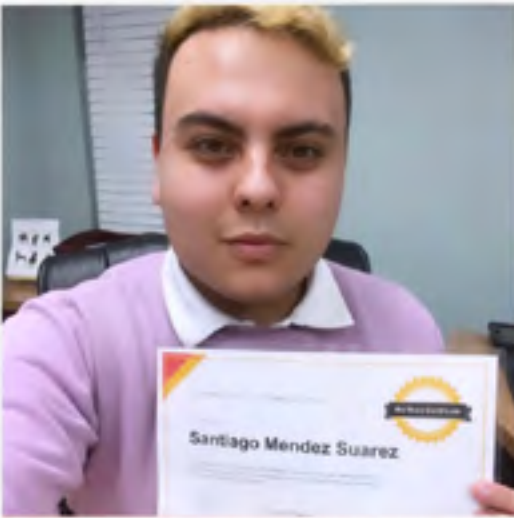
The Be There Certificate is a free, interactive course designed to enhance mental health literacy and equip young people with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to support someone struggling with their mental health. Developed by Jack.org in partnership with Born This Way Foundation, this selfpaced course is available in English, Spanish, and French, with tailored content for each language. The Be There Certificate offers an intuitive and actionable framework where participants learn how to recognize the signs someone is struggling, understand their role in providing support, and connect others to the help they need and deserve.

In 2023, we doubled down on connecting youth with the resource. To date, more than 40K individuals have earned their certificates, reflecting their commitment to deepening their understanding of mental health and supporting others. Evaluation data also revealed impressive outcomes from those who have earned their certificates, with 95% reporting improved ability to recognize signs of mental health struggles and 96% feeling more confident in providing support.

40K

BE THERE CERTIFICATES EARNED

Earn your Be There Certificate at BeThereCertificate.org.



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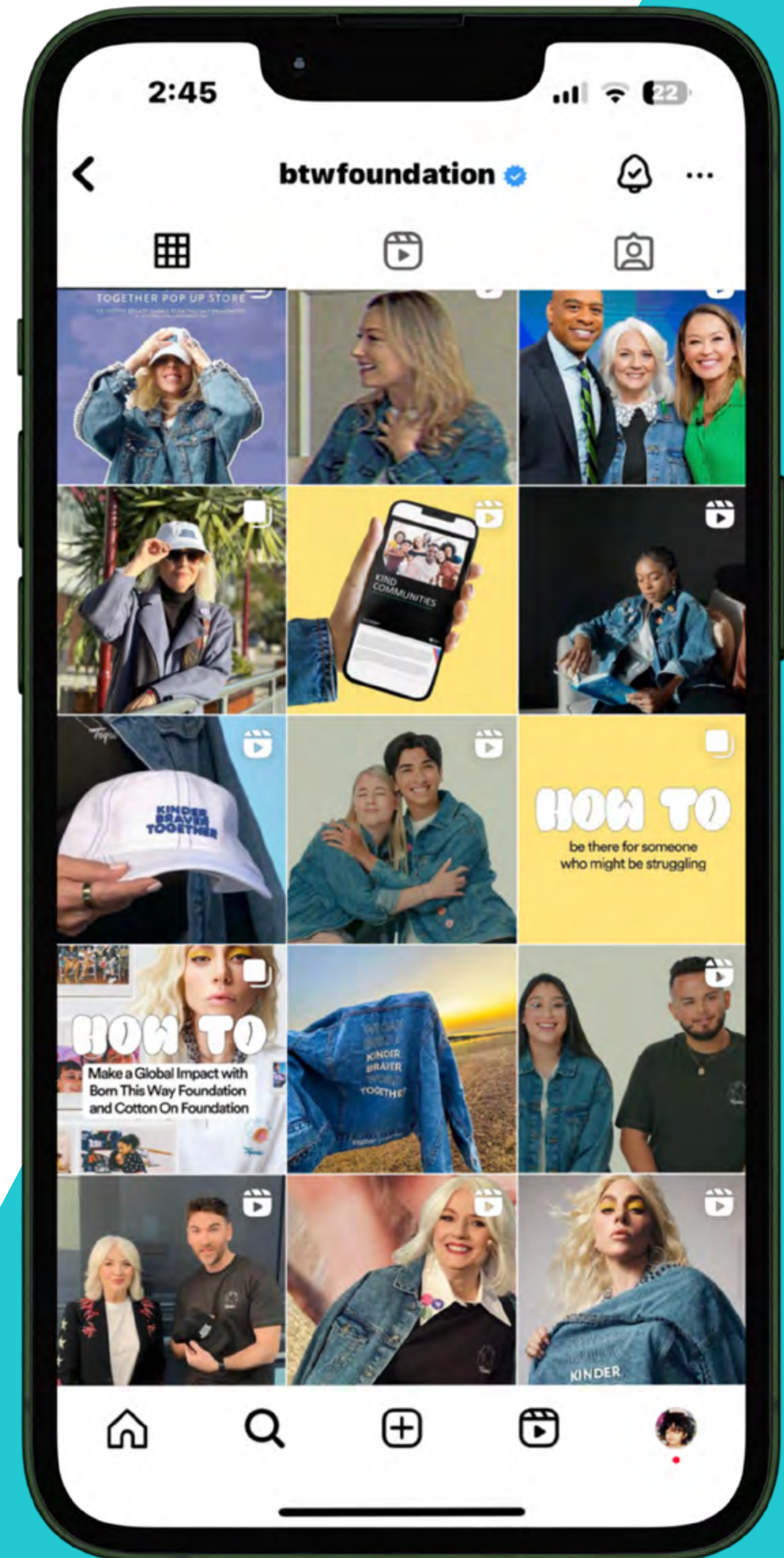
BE THERE CERTIFICATE: DIGITAL CAMPAIGN SNAPSHOT

Building an evidence-backed resource like the Be There Certificate is just the first step. It can only have impact if young people know it exists and are inspired to take action by earning their certificates. Through sourcing young people's feedback via surveys, focus groups, and A/B ad testing, our team leverages smart, innovative digital campaigns that bring mental health programs and resources directly to young people.

In 2023, we launched a #BeThereCertificate ad campaign, which generated 8M+ impressions and led to the creation of 5K+ Be There Certificate accounts. In partnership with Cotton On Foundation, the campaign featured videos from our co-founder Lady Gaga with youth advocates alongside static, informational images and gifs to raise awareness around the importance of learning how to be there and to encourage people to create a Be There Certificate account.

8M+

IMPRESSIONS



“

“Mental health is intricate, yet providing a safe, understanding, and supportive space isn’t as complicated. The Be There Certificate is transformative, enabling anyone to extend a helping hand in times of need. **It has opened my eyes and enhanced my ability to support others, significantly impacting my advocacy role in mental health.** My fervent hope is that everyone, regardless of age, gender, nationality, or beliefs, dedicates time to earn their Be There Certificate.”

– Mariana O. (she/her/hers), Founder of FundaMental, Mental Health Advocate, and Born This Way Foundation Advisory Board member

”



#BEKIND365

#BeKind365 is a digital platform inspiring everyone to practice intentional kindness every day, fostering transformational experiences and building a kinder, braver world. Through various digital activations, #BeKind365 engages participants at every level – corporate, nonprofit, school, and individual – inviting everyone to incorporate kindness into their daily lives from anywhere, anytime. Through #BeKind365, anyone can send uplifting messages via the Gratitude Postal Service, explore 365+ curated kind acts with the Kindness Generator, witness the ripple effect through the Kind Connector, and pledge to practice daily acts of kindness.

#BeKind365 launched in March 2023, more than 53K participants across 111 countries have pledged more than 19M acts of kindness, underscoring the profound connection between kindness and mental health, as individuals who practice, receive, and witness kindness often exhibit better mental health indicators.

#BeKind365 is powered by BRP's #RideOutIntimidation program.

53K

PARTICIPANTS GLOBALLY

Sign up for #BeKind365 at
BeKind365.World

“

Great job you guys! I love the implementation of the concept “building blocks” showing a global perspective. The 8-bit font is so rad 🤩 Thank you
@BTWFoundation
@channelkindness
#BeKind365

“

How exciting!!! I love this platform!

“

I just earned 365 building blocks for pledging to **#BeKind365!** 🥰 Join me and **@BTWFoundation** on the mission to build a kinder + braver world by taking the pledge today at **bekind365.world** ❤️🌍

“

Love this initiative! **#BeKind365** provides a practical way to make kindness a habit and build supportive communities for better mental health.

Let's spread kindness every day! ★💛👏

“

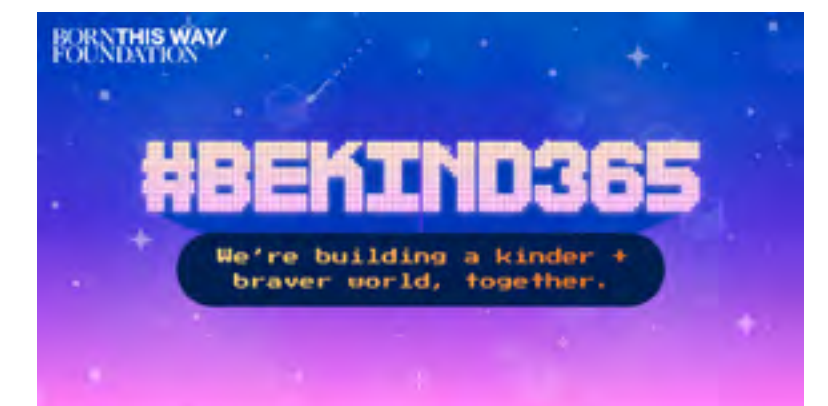
Loveeeee the Kindness Generator!! Y'all should check it out 🙌💛

“

On days when it's hard to be kind to yourself, remember that you can behave your way into loving yourself ❤️
☕ **#BeKind365**

“

I just sent a kind message through the **#BeKind365** Gratitude Postal Service! 📬🚀 Try sending your own through **@BTWFoundation** **bekind365.world/gps**.



“

The possibilities are endless for change and growth, kindness and bravery — what a wholesome and impactful way to make use of a social platform.

“

The expansion of the #BeKind21 program to a year-round initiative, where kindness is practiced daily through features like the Kindness Generator, filled me with immense joy. Pledging to #BeKind365 helped me cultivate gratitude towards myself, my community, and those around me. These daily acts of kindness not only empowered me but also contributed to a growing realization that kindness is tangible, love is tangible, and acceptance is transformative.

– Rahul R. (he/him/his), Doctor, Research Fellow at Cleveland Clinic, Mental Health and LGBTQIA+ Activist, and Born This Way Foundation Advisory Board member

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CHANNEL KINDNESS

Channel Kindness is our digital platform providing a safe space for young people to share stories of kindness, resilience, and community. The platform offers interactive features, including the Kindness Map, showcasing global acts of kindness to inspire youth involvement and foster connection, and to support authors and causes through engaging stories. We host Storytellers Club workshops, aimed at providing supportive, joyful spaces for young people to practice the power of writing their own stories. With each story shared, action taken, and kindness pledge made, we're collectively shaping a world that celebrates empathy and resilience.

Since the platform launched, Channel Kindness has published nearly 2,000 stories from 54 countries and readers have been inspired to pledge nearly 11,000 kind actions. Additionally, the platform hosted 15 Storytellers Club workshops engaging 390 participants. Overall, there was a 37% increase in site visits from 2022, reaching over 136K visitors.

180

STORIES PUBLISHED

Share your stories and take action on ChannelKindness.org



LEENA JOSHI
This 24-Year-Old Is Pushing for Climate Activism, Advocacy + Action



MIA SHAW
Breaking the Silence: On the Urgent Need for Mental Health Resources in Spanish



TARIQ LAWAL
Finding Sanctuary in Male Friendship With Ameer



“

Channel Kindness reminded me that my voice is my power, and sharing what I have been through has the possibility of being a beautiful thing. Eradicating the stigma associated with mental health starts with cultivating safe, open, and validating conversations around what we have been through and sharing what we are comfortable with. If someone is not in a place to share their own story, that's okay – it can be just as empowering to read about someone's experience that has been similar to your own.”

- Meera V. (she/her/hers), Mental Health Activist, TEDx Speaker, and Born This Way Foundation Advisory Board member

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CHANNEL KINDNESS: GLOBAL STORIES

“

MEERA VARMA

Your Presence is Your Power

“I never thought I would reach a point in my life where I would be able to talk about my mental health challenges...”



“

VEE KATIVHU

The Beauty in Difference

“I see beauty in my differences and in my story, no matter how unique it may be.”

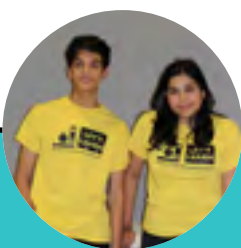


“

ROHAN SATIJA

Transforming Lives Through Literacy

“Empower through Education, and we do so by donating books and school supplies to underprivileged schools.”



“

MICHI SOSA

I Lost a Friend to Suicide. Here's What I Want You To Know.

“Learn the warning signs and how to talk about mental health.”



“

MIKEY TAYLOR

Turning Setbacks into Setups: How OCD Gave My Life Purpose

“Turn your setbacks into setups. It could very well change lives, yours included.”



“

BRITTANY KRYSTANTOS

In Conversation with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

“Shedding light on how his experiences fuel his commitment to making mental health more accessible”



“

CHANNEL KINDNESS

Life Skills 101: How To Support a Friend

“When a friend is struggling, it can be difficult to know the best way to support them.”



“

ROCHELLE PRASAD

A Journey from Classroom Inspiration to Global Advocacy

“Education is not merely a means to an end but a powerful catalyst for transformative change.”



KINDNESS IN COMMUNITY FUND

Young people recognize mental health as a priority, but they lack access to resources to support it. **The Kindness in Community Fund seeks to close this gap by funding community-based organizations that provide free and accessible services that support youth wellbeing.**

In 2023, we continued to disperse Kindness in Community Fund grants through our partners at CenterLink, the Community of LGBTQ Centers. Together, we **dispersed \$250K across more than 40 organizations** in states where the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth is particularly challenged. These **grants supported services that are used by more than 24K youth**, including mental health resources, pride pantries, safety measures, and more.

We also teamed up with our partners at Cotton On Foundation to make the Fund global - and keep youth perspectives at the forefront. Grantees are being selected based on **2K nominations received with over half coming from young people 15-24**, and input from our Advisory Board and the Cotton On community guiding the final selection process. More than 50 organizations across 10 countries will receive a grant of up to \$150K.

24K

YOUTH SUPPORTED

Join us by supporting youth-led initiatives in your community.



KINDNESS IN COMMUNITY FUND: NOMINATION SNAPSHOTS



“

14 YEAR OLD IN NEW ZEALAND

“[This org] provided me with hope – I’m thankful they exist, otherwise I might not be here today.”

“

24 YEAR OLD IN SOUTH AFRICA

“[This org] provided mental health coaching for young kids in areas that normally don’t have the opportunity to even know what mental health is.”

“

21 YEAR OLD IN UNITED STATES

“I was empowered by my own experiences and utilize my story as a tool to promote change.”

“

15 YEAR OLD IN AUSTRALIA

“[This org] made my life and so many others’ lives happier by learning how to love yourself and let go of the trauma and pain. They give a free course on how to help prevent suicide and help others...”

“

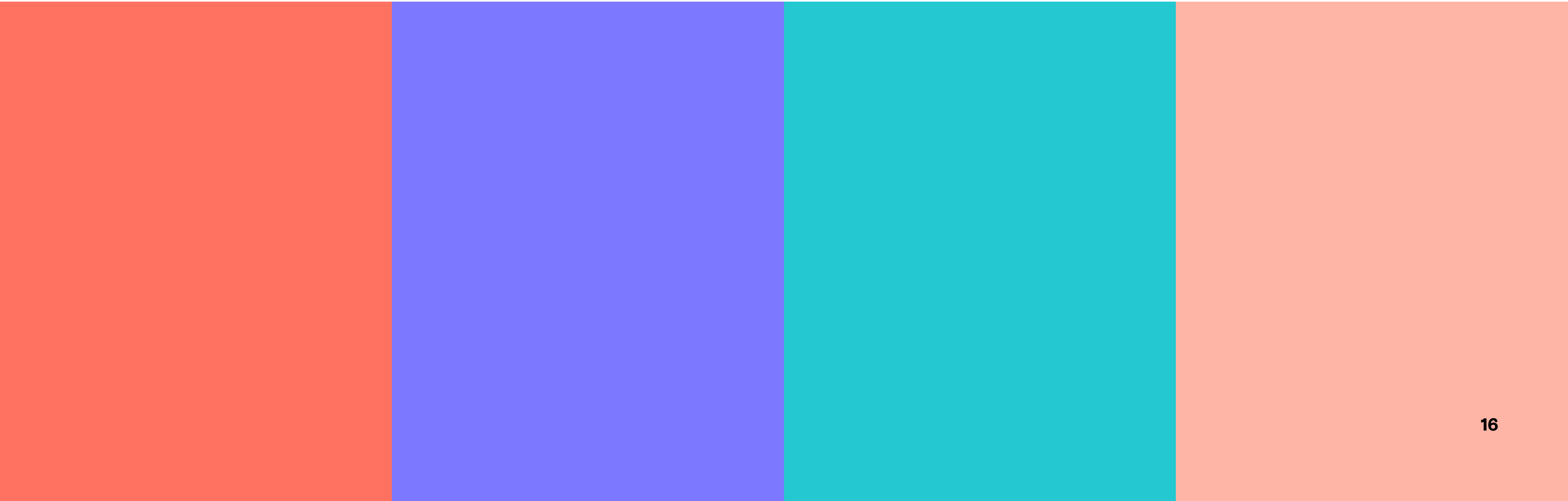
22 YEAR OLD IN MALAYSIA

“I feel heard and appreciated when I come to this place.”

“

24 YEAR OLD IN SOUTH AFRICA

“Because of [this org], I now understand what mental health is and how to handle challenges in a good way. I also talk to people in my community about mental health and how to cope with tough times.”



OUR RESEARCH

In 2023, as part of our **ongoing commitment to understanding youth mental health and wellbeing**, we conducted the **Kind Communities Survey**, a series of studies launched in partnership with Benenson Strategy Group. This five-year follow-up to our 2017 survey **explored young people's perspectives on mental health and the impact of kindness on their wellbeing**. With an oversampling of LGBTQ+ and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth, the 2023 Kind Communities Survey aimed to understand how communities perceive and experience kindness amidst the multifaceted challenges faced by today's young people.

Perspectives from LGBTQ+ Young People

June 2023

Mental health resources are not distributed equally. LGBTQ+ young people are less likely to rate their emotional health highly.

45% of all LGBTQ+ young people and **57%** of transgender or nonbinary young people lack access to essential mental health resources. **80%** of LGBTQ+ youth state that they want to learn more tools to navigate stress in order to support mental health.

Perspectives from Work and Returning to School Among Young People

September 2023

Many young people turn to their peers and online communities for mental health support. Transgender or nonbinary young people are more likely to find comfort in their communities online.

Over 50% of young people who are transgender and nonbinary (**55%**) or BIPOC (**54%**) indicated their online community was a source of comfort.

Kindness and Mental Health in Young People's Personal Lives and Relationships

December 2023

Young people know kindness is important for their mental health and turn to friends for comfort.

75% of young people engage in acts of kindness to support their mental health and well-being. Nearly three out of four (**68%**) young people say their close friends are often or always a source of comfort.

MEDIA SNAPSHOTS



Lady Gaga's Mom Talks Supporting Mental Health in Teens

"The most important thing is approaching [young people] with compassion and understanding, developing a level of trust when you're talking to them."

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



The Mental Health Crisis Is Disproportionately Impacting LGBTQ+ Youth

"The most jarring outcome of the research to me was the 18% drop in the last 6 years in feeling kindness and safety in their communities given everything happening in our world."

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



LGBTQ+ Youth Lack Kind Communities, Mental Health Support: Study

"We are deeply committed to ensuring that every young person feels safe — and not only validated, but celebrated — as they connect and engage with others around them. This research serves as a call to action for all communities, including researchers, policymakers, educators, employers, community advocates, caregivers, and allies alike to build a kinder, braver world, together."

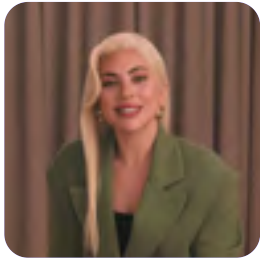
- Terez Hanhan (she/her/hers)
Born This Way Foundation
Senior Manager Programs



Seeking Cures for Loneliness

"Addressing mental health means addressing food and housing insecurity and building affirming spaces where young people can be themselves and find safety in each other. Let's all invest in one another so we can build a kinder, healthier and more connected world."

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



How Lady Gaga's Latest Fashion Collaboration Is Helping Bring Attention to Mental Health Issues

"We always try to stay true to our mission, which is inspiring and empowering youth. I like this idea that we can better ourselves for each other."

- Lady Gaga (she/her/hers)
Born This Way Foundation
Co-Founder

OUR COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS



Cynthia, Joseph, and Khloe engaged with 400 students across 7 U.S. schools in a virtual panel.



Alex accepted the Shorty Award for Fitness, Health, and Wellness on behalf of Born This Way Foundation and Jack.org for the Be There Certificate.



Mitu accepted the Social Innovation Summit Innovator of the Year Award on behalf of Born This Way Foundation and Jack.org for the Be There Certificate.



Our team, alongside Cotton On, shared our commitment to global youth mental health, partnerships, and actionable solutions at the Clinton Global Initiative.



Advisory Board member Livia joined a panel to share the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with international media organizations.



Cynthia spoke at Governor Hochul's inaugural youth mental health summit, delivering key insights and discussing actionable community support measures.



Cynthia joined a panel focused on mental health first aid at the 10th Annual Aspen Ideas: Health Conference.



“

@TOMESANDTEXTILES + CHANNEL KINDNESS

“It takes courage to be kind.”



“

JUAN ACOSTA + #BETHERECERTIFICATE

“support yourself and others”



“

@OWINPIERSON + #BEKIND365

“Baby, you were born this way!”



“

BTWF + CHANNEL KINDNESS

“What does self-care look like to you?”



“

YOURDAYBYMK + #BEKIND365

“kindness is good for your mental health”



“

@THEGIRLIQ + #BETHERECERTIFICATE

“ Kinder, Braver Together Pop-up”





PARTNERS IN KINDNESS

We're honored to work collaboratively through our partnerships – spanning local nonprofits, corporations, and schools nationwide – who helped us expand our collective action and impact in 2023. Together, we are actively modeling healthy conversations about mental health, connecting young people with resources and services, online and offline, and building communities that understand, prioritize, and foster mental health.





SPECIAL THANKS: COTTON ON FOUNDATION

We're proud to highlight our partnership with Cotton On and its philanthropic arm, Cotton On Foundation, which played a vital role in accelerating the delivery of essential resources, skills, and grassroots support to foster kinder, braver communities that prioritize and enhance mental health. Throughout our Kinder, Braver Together campaign, 100% of proceeds from Cotton On Foundation products, donations, and Born This Way Foundation-inspired range supported our mission to share mental health resources and inspire a global movement of kind action.

In 2023, more than a million people took part in the campaign, raising \$5M to support our work and the young people we serve. Thanks to Cotton On and this incredible community, we've been able to equip thousands of youth with the knowledge they need to support a friend through the Be There Certificate and will be resourcing youth-serving nonprofits across ten countries through our Kindness in Community Fund.



“

Free and accessible mental health resources, particularly online resources, helped me learn more about how I was feeling and feel less alone as I sought support. These resources made me realize that many other young people go through similar experiences as mine and helped me let go of my shame.

- Nikoletta A. (she/her/hers), Master of Psychology
(Clinical Psychology) Student and Born This Way
Foundation Advisory Board member

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COTTON:ON
FOUNDATION

SPECIAL THANKS: BRP

We're deeply grateful for our partners at BRP inc. which made **#BeKind365** possible as part of their **#RideOutIntimidation** program. Through our shared commitment to nurture kind communities and promote wellbeing, we created this platform to inspire today's brave, creative, and resilient young people to take action.

In 2023, thousands took part in the **#BeKind365** movement, generating 19M pledged acts of kindness. Because of BRP, we were able to build this brand new program that's inspiring young people and their communities to put kindness into action, 365 days a year.

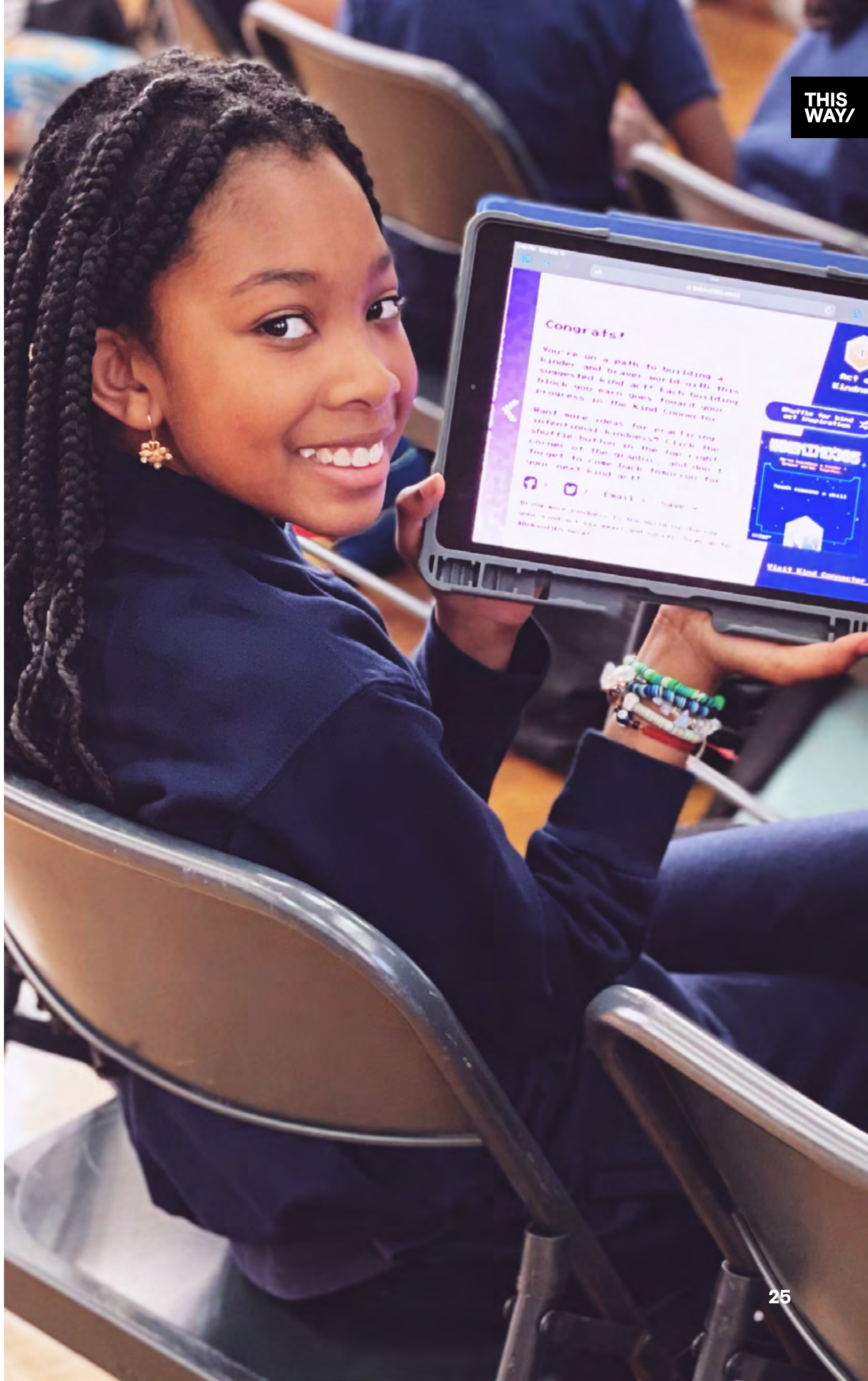


“

#BeKind365 is about embracing kindness as a way of life and using it to create a more inclusive and compassionate world for everyone. I think #BeKind365 has a big role to play in this – by bringing people together and encouraging us to lift each other up, it's helping to create a kinder, more accepting world where everyone feels valued and supported.”

- Desi N. (she/they/he), LGBTQ Activist and Born This Way Foundation Advisory Board member

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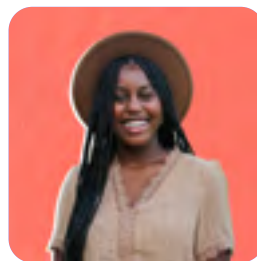


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SPECIAL THANKS: JACK.ORG

We couldn't be more grateful to have Jack.org as our partner. Together, we've collaborated closely to continually iterate the Be There Certificate, ensuring the site works and is easy to use, expanding course topics, and integrating diverse voices to enrich the program's content. Our collaboration began in 2020 with a campaign aimed at encouraging young people to take more active roles and better prepare themselves to support one another and themselves. The responses from young people were so strong, that we both knew we had to do more.

In 2023, we celebrated over 40K individuals earning their Be There Certificates since the launch of the program. These young people now have the essential skills to support their own and their peers' mental wellbeing.

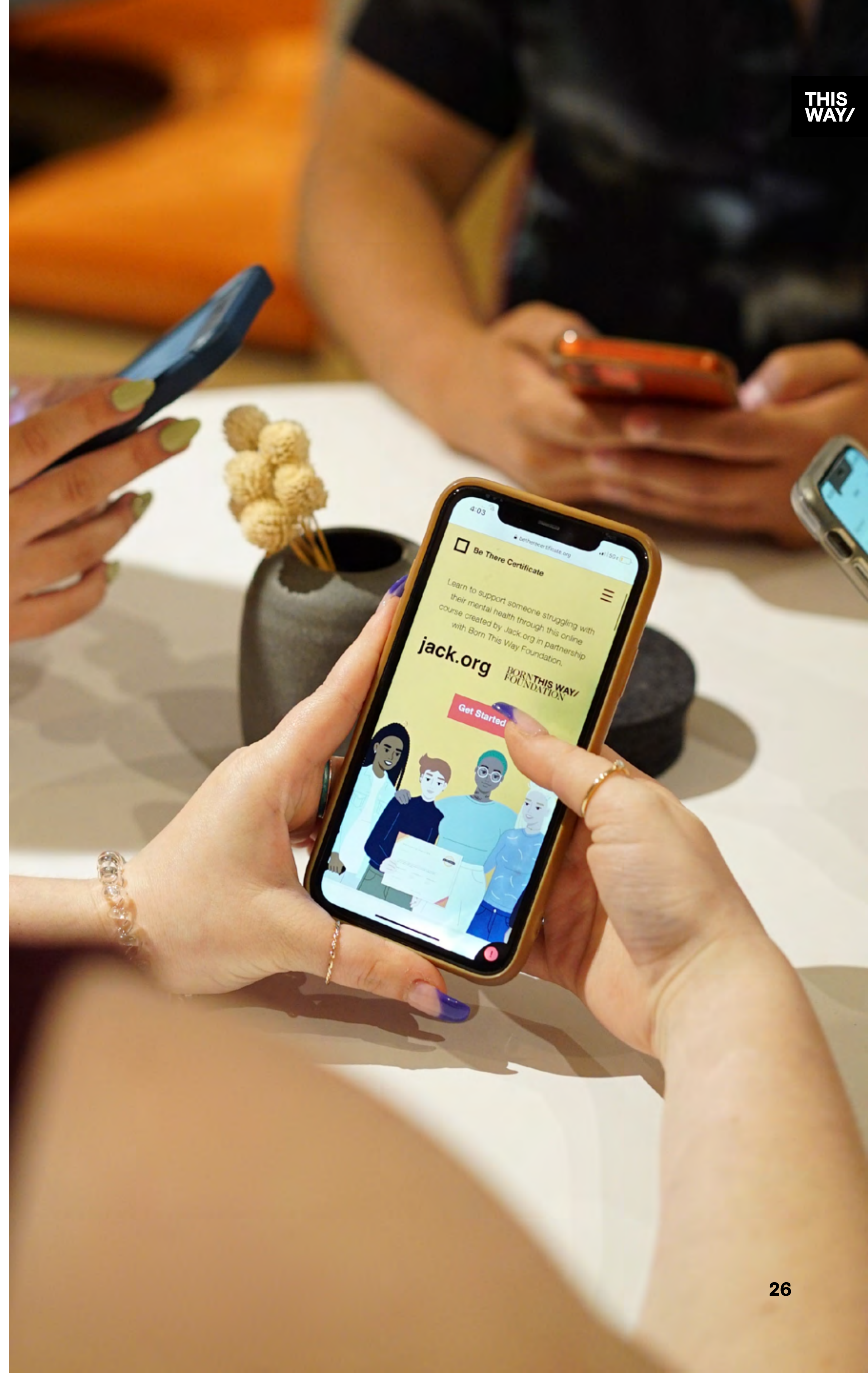


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It's really important to have the skills to care for your mental health because knowing how to identify signs of mental health challenges and having the confidence to support yourself and friends can be lifesaving.

- Khloe T. (she/her/hers), Founder of Khloe Kares, International Philanthropist, and Born This Way Foundation Advisory Board member

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OUR ADVISORY BOARD



Nikoletta A.
SHE/HER/HERS

Australia




Vinicius G.
HE/HIM/HIS

Brazil



River W.
HE/HIM/HIS

Canada



Sadia F.
SHE/HER/HERS

Canada



Vaishnavi R.
SHE/HER/HERS

India



Lela Precious D.
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Liberia



Mariana O.
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Mexico



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Nigeria



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SHE/HER/HERS

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Malavika R.
SHE/HER/HERS

United Arab Emirates




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Adia F.
SHE/HER/HERS

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Adrian S.
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Audrey W.
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Desi N.
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Emily F.
SHE/HER/HERS

United States



Faria T.
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Jazmine W.
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Jennifer L.
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Kemi O.
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Khloe T.
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Livia C.
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Shruti V.
SHE/HER/HERS

United States



Sneha D.
SHE/HER/HERS


United States



Sophia K.
SHE/HER/HERS

United States

OUR TEAM



Cynthia Germanotta
PRESIDENT + CO-FOUNDER

SHE/HER/HERS



Alex Aide
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS + IMPACT

HE/HIM/HIS



Claudia-Santi F. Fernandes
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH + EVALUATION

SHE/HER/HERS



Shadille Estepan
SENIOR MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS

SHE/HER/HERS



Megan Bradley
SENIOR MANAGER, PARTNERSHIPS

SHE/THEY



Mariah Karis
SENIOR ASSOCIATE, PROGRAMS

SHE/HER/HERS




Katy Butler
DIGITAL MEDIA PLANNER

SHE/HER/HERS



Rachel Martin
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER + DIRECTOR OF CAMPAIGNS

SHE/HER/HERS



Mitu Yilma
DIRECTOR OF CONTENT + BRAND

SHE/HER/HERS



Aysha Mahmood
SENIOR MANAGER, PROGRAMS

SHE/HER/HERS



Terez Hanhan
SENIOR MANAGER, PROGRAMS

SHE/HER/HERS



Josh Meredith
CHIEF OF STAFF

HE/HIM/HIS



Joshua Hollin
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HE/HIM/HIS



Francesca Giannattasio
RESEARCH CONSULTANT

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OUR BOARD



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SEAN F. CASSIDY
HE/HIM/HIS



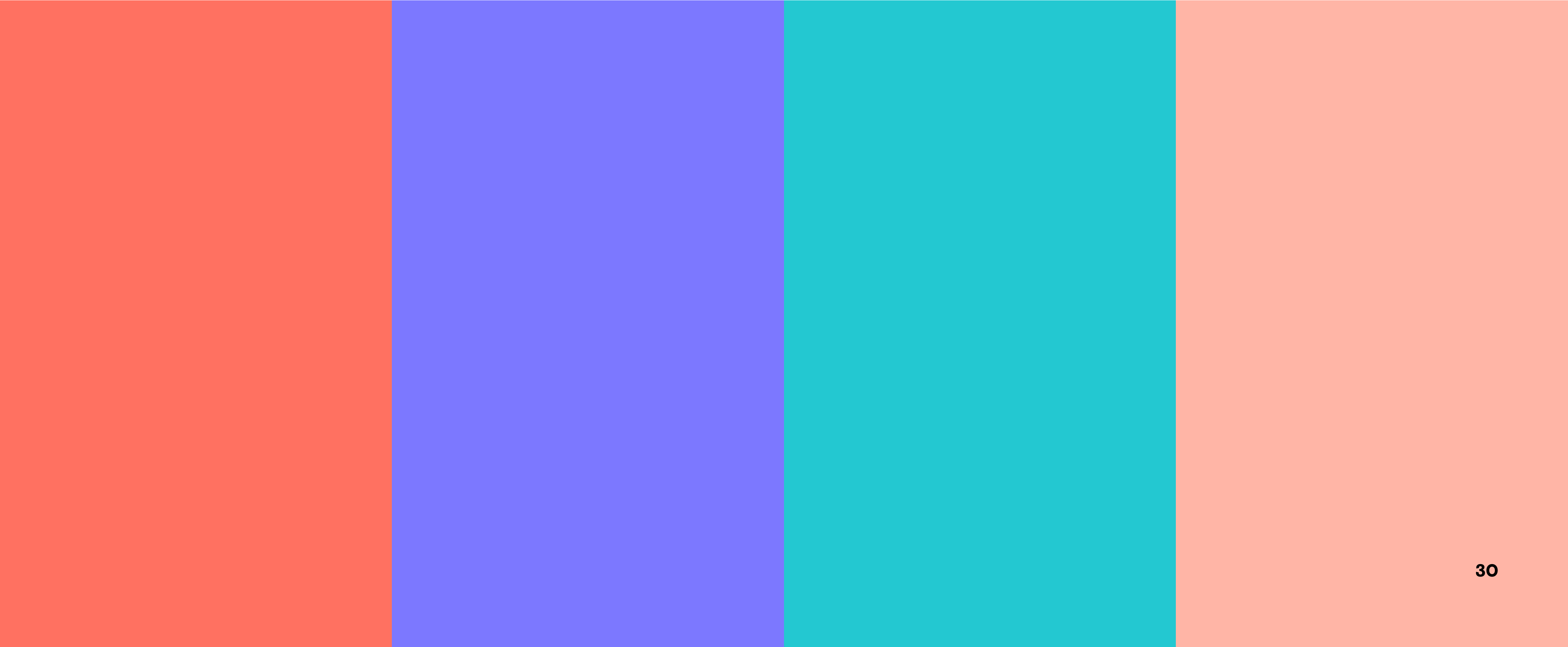
CHARLES B. ORTNER
HE/HIM/HIS



ALEXANDER ROQUE
HE/HIM/HIS



TAMIKA L. TREMAGLIO
SHE/HER/HERS



BORNTHIS WAY/ FOUNDATION

We sincerely thank each and every one of you for
building a kinder, braver world with us.

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