



**Feel
Out
Loud**

A Report on the Impact of Your Generosity



Gratefully presented to Sobey's

March 2026

@KidsHelpPhone

KidsHelpPhone.ca



“[Crisis Responder] was the first person to make me feel safe and comfortable enough to talk about my feelings in a very long time.”

— Black youth who reached out to KHP over text.

Our Gratitude

Dear Renee and Connor,

On behalf of all of us here at Kids Help Phone, **thank you** for your tremendous generosity to unlock the hope Black youth need to thrive in their world.

Through your steadfast support of RiseUp powered by Kids Help Phone, you are driving meaningful progress toward a future where every young person has access to the mental health support they need — no matter who they are, where they come from or the colour of their skin.

Black youth are among our most distressed service users. Facing systemic racism, discrimination in the health system and limited options for culturally responsive mental health support, they are significantly more likely than their peers to experience anxiety, depression and other challenges that put their very lives at risk.

With you by our side, KHP is working hard to close this gap. In the following pages, we are honoured to share the many ways your generosity fuelled mental health justice for Black youth in 2025, along with a look at what’s coming up in 2026. None of this work would be possible without you. Your partnership allows KHP to be there day and night for Black youth — for every feeling, in every moment. We are deeply grateful for your support, and we can’t wait to see what we’ll achieve together next.

With gratitude,

Janey Buzugbe

Janey Buzugbe
Director, Equity & Youth Programs

Your Impact in 2025: Unlocking Hope for Black Youth

7% of young people who reached out by text identified as Black versus 4% in the overall Canadian population.

35,081 Black youth learned more about KHP through outreach packages.

Black crisis responders represent **8%** of the dedicated team supporting youth through KHP's texting services.

Program Updates

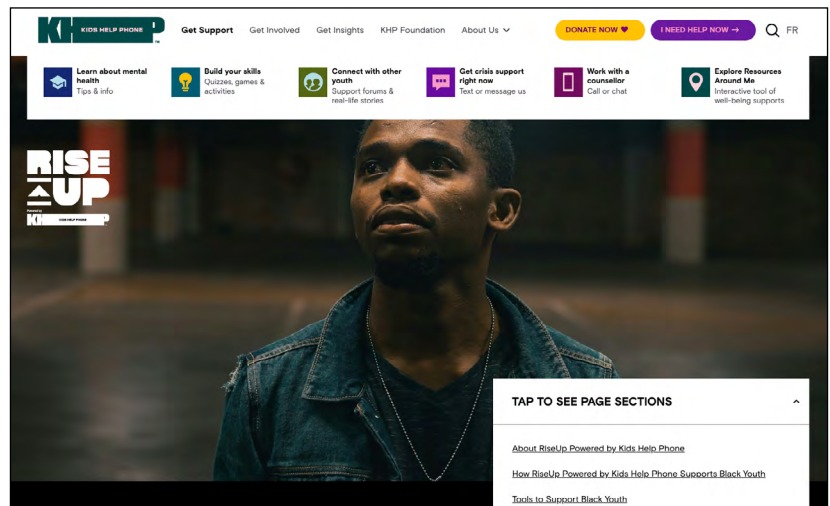
Throughout 2025, your generosity enabled the launch of two major initiatives: a fully refreshed RiseUp homepage — a crucial access point for Black youth seeking support — and an innovative new program to match Black texters with Black crisis responders.

Introducing the new RiseUp homepage

Throughout 2025, the RiseUp team worked on updating and reimagining the [RiseUp homepage](#), a key access point for Black youth seeking information and support, and for like-minded organizations looking to partner with us.

We are thrilled to share that the new [homepage](#) officially launched in January 2026. Informed by insights and feedback from Black youth and KHP's Black Advisory Council, the new page is easier to navigate. Support services and resources are now prioritized at the top for quick access to our services, while outreach materials and organizational information are available at the bottom.

Curated articles, videos and real-life stories are available throughout the site, offering even more ways for Black youth and community members alike to connect with RiseUp and build mental health skills and awareness.



Black texter matching program

We regularly hear from Black youth that they want the option to connect with a Black crisis responder when they reach out by text. To address this feedback, we have developed partnerships with two organizations to increase the number of Black crisis responders on our frontline team.

Point Ancrage Jeunesse and the City of Toronto's Community PEERs Program have committed to referring Black volunteers from their programs to KHP to complete crisis responder training. Since these partnerships launched in August 2025, 31 new Black crisis responders have joined the team, contributing a total of 3,193 hours to date.

When someone reaches out using the keywords RISE, RISEUP or SURMONTER, the crisis responder who receives the conversation is prompted to transfer it to a RiseUp crisis responder. Supervisors support this process, and a RiseUp crisis responder takes over the conversation, providing support from a culturally aware perspective. Texters are always informed when we are connecting them with a RiseUp crisis responder. If a RiseUp crisis responder is not available, we share this information and reassure texters that we are happy to continue the conversation if they are comfortable doing so.

Outreach, Education and Partnerships

Last year, with your support, we focused on deepening outreach efforts, fostering new and existing partnerships and leveraging the power of community engagement to encourage more Black youth to reach out to KHP.

Reaching Black youth through information sessions and outreach

Throughout 2025, we worked closely with many different organizations and community-based agencies to host information sessions, speaking engagements, community outreach events, learning opportunities, development workshops and more. All of these activities aimed to raise awareness of RiseUp and KHP's focus on breaking down barriers to mental health support for Black youth.

We were proud to collaborate with the YMCA, the 1834 Foundation, Grange Community Festival, Black Talent Initiative and many schools, settlement centres and libraries across Canada to deliver these critical outreach activities.

Partnering to raise awareness of mental health gaps for Black youth

Last year, we were thrilled to partner once again with the **1834 Foundation**, a non-profit dedicated to developing young Black Canadians as leaders in public policy and civic life.

In October 2025, KHP participated in the 1834 Foundation's flagship initiative, the 1834 Fellowship Convening in Ottawa. As part of our participation in this event, Janey Buzugbe, KHP's Director of Equity & Youth, spoke about RiseUp and KHP's leadership in mental health for Black youth.

In February 2026, we look forward to participating in the Foundation's 1834 Debates, which are designed to promote problem solving, oral communication and innovation in thinking among Black youth in Grades 7 to 12.

Both events provide a critical opportunity to raise awareness about youth mental health and contribute to mental health policy discourse on the urgent issue of mental health services for Black youth and communities.

We are also proud to continue our longstanding partnership with the BlackNorth Initiative, which has a mission to close gaps created by systemic anti-Black racism for Black Canadians. In September 2025, members of KHP's staff, Board of Directors and National Youth Council attended the BlackNorth Initiative gala, bringing awareness to our partnership and deepening our support of this vital organization.



Janey Buzugbe (centre), KHP's Director, Equity & Youth Programs at the 1834 Fellowship Convening with the most recent cohort.

Community engagement roadshow

In November 2025, the RiseUp team took our outreach efforts on the road with in-person community engagement activities in Quebec and Nova Scotia. Paula Ajala-Alexis, KHP's Engagement Coordinator of Black Youth Initiatives, connected with over 1,000 Black, Newcomer and bilingual youth served by 16 community organizations to raise awareness of available mental health resources. Paula also shared information about RiseUp and the many ways young people can access support through KHP.

Promoting RiseUp through digital outreach

To reach more Black youth where they are, we ran a special RiseUp promotional campaign on social media channels — including Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube and Reddit — from October to mid-November 2025.

The campaign achieved 17.5 million impressions and drove 34,700 clicks. We look forward to continuing to build on the success of this campaign through future digital-first initiatives that reach young people in online spaces.

Leveraging the guidance and insights of the Black Advisory Council

KHP's [Black Advisory Council](#) — a group of 12 Black leaders committed to supporting the mental health and wellness of African, Caribbean and Black youth across Canada — plays a crucial role in guiding, informing and influencing our work to support Black youth across KHP's services.

Over the past year, Council members have been actively involved in many different projects. They provided feedback on KHP's latest ad campaign, "Help Means Everything"; informed KHP's work and theme for Black History Month; and provided feedback on our equity strategy and new Generative AI initiative. They are also actively supporting our outreach efforts in Nova Scotia by making connections and introductions, empowering the team to deepen our impact in the province.



Paula Ajala-Alexis pictured with Lieutenant Governor Dr. Mayann Francis at a private viewing of the Viola Desmond documentary at the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute in Nova Scotia in November 2025.



Paula with one of our Paving Paths Volunteers Mirola, who served as her French translator in Quebec.

"I'm really excited about this opportunity! I've been waiting for something like this since joining Kids Help Phone. As a member of the Black community and a Crisis Responder, I love to help support texters through a more culturally sensitive and identity-affirming experience. Thank you for creating this space for Black youth and responders, it truly means a lot."

— Black Crisis Responder participating in the Black texter matching program.



What's Next

We've got big plans for 2026! With you by our side, we'll focus on revitalizing our RiseUp Action Plan, reaching more Black youth and engaging in innovative research.

Developing the next phase of RiseUp

With 2026 marking the final year of the current RiseUp Action Plan, we will soon commence development of the next phase of this vital strategy.

RiseUp 2.0 will place a greater emphasis on partnerships with community-based organizations and events focused on community engagement and outreach. We will also engage influencers and trusted community members to promote the program and KHP's services, and we will aim to recruit volunteer ambassadors to help raise awareness in their local communities, especially within post-secondary institutions. We look forward to sharing more details about the next phase of RiseUp as it takes shape.

Community healing workshops

This year, we look forward to hosting a new series of community healing workshops for Black youth. These sessions will focus on educating Black youth about mental health and what the help-seeking process looks like, including the benefits of accessing support through KHP. For youth from communities and backgrounds where mental health is highly stigmatized, creating dialogue around gaps, challenges and help-seeking is crucial to building trust and encouraging young people to reach out for support.

These workshops will be supported by collaborations with influencers and trusted community members.

Storytelling contest for Black youth

We are thrilled to partner with the 1834 Foundation and HipHop Healing to host a storytelling contest during Black History Month 2026! Throughout the month of February, submissions will be featured on KHP's social media platforms using the hashtag #RiseUpforBlackMentalHealth. Entries will also be published on KHP's Feel Out Loud Community Creator Space, which showcases creative content from young people across Canada, and during Black Mental Health Week as part of RiseUp's Virtual Healing Circle and Community Showcase.

Engaging in research on African immigrant youth and mental health

This year, we are excited to kick off a new project in partnership with a post-secondary research student from Dalhousie University. This project will focus on African immigrant youth populations and their experiences with mental health supports. It offers a special opportunity to leverage the unique expertise of multiple KHP teams, with the RiseUp team taking the lead and consulting with KHP's applied research team. We look forward to sharing more details about this groundbreaking research project as it progresses.



Every day, your generosity makes it possible for KHP to be there for Black youth across Canada.

Thanks to you, Black youth are increasingly empowered to seek safe, non-judgmental, culturally responsive care, no matter the time of day or night. And with you by our side, we will continue to grow and evolve alongside the ever-changing needs of generations of Black youth from coast to coast to coast.

From all of us at Kids Help Phone, thank you. We are so grateful.



“The responder, [Crisis Responder], was really kind. I’d like for most of the Responders to be like that. I’ve only used this twice, and it really helps.”

— Black youth who reached out to KHP over text.

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