National Walk for Youth Mental Health 2018

About

Hope in the Darkness is a national call to action for Indigenous and non-Indigenous police officers to walk with youth for youth mental health. The walk will provide police officers with an opportunity to meet youth and listen to their stories along the way, sending them the message that we are listening, we care and we can show love. Hope in the Darkness will bring the country together by having police, youth, frontline workers, families and community members walk from the west coast and the east coast to Winnipeg, the centre of Canada.

Purpose

- To bring attention and raise awareness of youth mental health in Canada.
- To provide a platform for Indigenous youth mental health success stories to be shared.
- To rally active and retired police officers across the country to get involved in empowering youth.
- To raise funds to support culture-based youth mental health services across Canada.

Background

Currently, there is a youth mental health crisis occurring in Canada. Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities are experiencing high rates of suicide and mental health struggles. Indigenous girls and women continue to go missing everyday. Children are still struggling within the child welfare system. With these emergencies occurring across the country, Hope in the Darkness will increase awareness about the issue of youth mental health, provide youth with a platform to share their experiences, build an understanding of trauma-informed culture-centred care and support youth cultural identity building and empowerment across Canada.

The walk is designed to create awareness about youth mental health while promoting a message of hope and empowerment. For police officers that have worked with youth in crisis, it is known how important it is just to listen. The Walk Founder Kevin Redsky has issued a challenge to police officers and services across the country to get involved and take a stand on youth mental health. With initial support from several organizations and police services from across the country, the national walk will work with communities, youth groups and mental health services to get youth involved in the walk.
CALLING ALL POLICE OFFICERS! CALLING ALL YOUTH!
CALLING ALL RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS!!! CALLING ALL MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS! CALLING ALL SUPPORTERS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES!

We are seeking police officers across Canada to join the Hope in the Darkness Walk for Youth Mental Health! The Hope in the Darkness Walk begins on April 1, 2018 from the east coast and in May from the west coast and we need your help!

The walk will journey along the TransCanada Highway on daily 40 kilometre intervals. We are looking for officers, youth and communities to assist in completing the walk in:

- Newfoundland (April)
- Nova Scotia (April-May)
- New Brunswick (May)
- Quebec (May)
- Manitoba (July-August)
- British Columbia (May)
- Alberta (June)
- Ontario (June-July)
- Saskatchewan (July)

Join us for one day, one week, one month or the whole walk! We are recruiting officers and walkers to lead certain areas of the walk, if you are interested please contact Kevin Redsky at 807.464.2226.

Follow us on Social Media:
Check out our website at www.hopeinthedarkness.ca
Follow us on Twitter at: @YouthMHWalk
Instagram at: @walkforyouthmentalhealth
Facebook at: facebook.com/walkforyouthmentalhealth

Donate to the campaign now:
Donate now at: gf.me/u/g3bwim
Frequently Asked Questions

How will the costs of the Walk be covered?
The Walk is a not-for-profit fundraising initiative that will utilize a crowdfunding platform to support the costs of the walk. Costs will include meals, RV transportation, gas. The challenge to police officers will include a fundraising challenge for donations.

Who started Hope in the Darkness?
Kevin Redsky is an Anishinaabe police sergeant from Shoal Lake #40 First Nation. With a career in community policing for over 15 years, Kevin has worked with at-risk youth and missing persons cases and has personally felt the effects of youth mental health issues. Kevin is working with Anishinabek Police Service to coordinate police service participation from across the country.

What is the Anishinabek Police Service?
Anishinabek Police Service is an Anishinaabek Nation service based in south, central and northern Ontario and serves 16 First Nation communities. Anishinabek Police Services covers a huge expanse of Anishinabek traditional territory.

Why is the walk called Hope in the Darkness?
Walk Founder Kevin Redsky became inspired by the Mumford and Sons song Ghosts that we knew, when he heard the band play the song live in Alabama. Shortly after, the song inspired him to do the walk for his family, community, nation and youth across the country struggling with mental health issues.

Where will the Walk happen?
The Walk will begin on April 1, 2018 in St. John’s, Newfoundland and will proceed along the TransCanada Highway to Winnipeg, Manitoba. This eastern portion of the walk is 4,663 kilometres between St. John’s and Winnipeg. Walking for 8-10 hours per day, with a target of 40 kilometres a day, it is estimated that it will take 117 days or 3.9 months.

The western portion of the Walk will begin at Masset in Haida Gwaii, BC and will proceed along the TransCanada Highway to Winnipeg, Manitoba. The western portion of the walk is 3,039 kilometres between Masset and Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is estimated that walking at 8-10 hours per day, with a target of 40 kilometres a day, it is estimated that it will take 76 days or 2.5 months to walk from Masset to Winnipeg.

Why will Hope in the Darkness end in Winnipeg?
Winnipeg, Manitoba is located adjacent to the centre of Canada, where Indigenous ancestors have travelled for thousands of years to meet, visit and trade. Whiteshell Provincial Park contains the Petroform Site, one of the oldest sacred sites on Turtle Island. When all of the walkers arrive in Winnipeg, the walk will culminate with a celebration in downtown Winnipeg. The celebration will feature the walkers, a sacred fire and will present speakers, musicians and youth.

What will happen after the Walk is finished?
A national organization for Indigenous youth mental health programs and services called Strength in Continuous Change will link with existing networks, programs and services across the country.
Hope in the Darkness Outcomes

- Hope in the Darkness will raise awareness of youth mental health issues in Canada. Issues will include the experiences of youth within the child welfare system and the effects of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women.

- Youth will engage in powerful dialogues with officers that is culturally-safe, supportive and empowering.

- Police officers both active and retired will participate in the walk as walkers and as safety escorts. They will have the chance to meet, talk with and listen to stories from youth along the way. Police will donate to youth mental health initiatives through the walk.

- Communities will have the opportunity to support youth, families and frontline workers by joining in the walk and supporting youth participation.

- Hope in the Darkness will support the work of mental health organizations and agencies in regions and territories across the country.

- Hope in the Darkness social media will continue after the walk is completed.

- The National Walk’s host organization Strength in Continuous Change is a culture-based resource designed for Indigenous youth, parents, families and communities to be active in the lives of youth struggling with mental health issues and/or live in high-risk situations. Offering youth mental health programming and support toward existing youth mental health networks, Strength in Continuous Change values culture and language as the vehicle to self-empowerment for youth, their families and communities.

Strength in Continuous Change

Strength in Continuous Change is an Indigenous organization driven to build community and empower Indigenous youth, families and communities across Canada from a culture-based, arts and racial justice perspective.

With a vision of supporting youth amidst many complex societal, community and family-based experiences, Strength in Continuous Change values culture and language as a vehicle for self-empowerment. This includes the development of culture-based resources designed for Indigenous youth, parents, families and communities to be active in the lives of youth struggling with mental health issues and/or living in high-risk situations.

Strength in Continuous Change offers workshops, training, program design, management, evaluation, research, analysis and strategy development in the areas of community safety measures, racial justice initiatives, Indigenous rights, mental health and youth empowerment.