

Great-West Life recognizes Kids Help Phone's leadership

Great-West Life congratulates Kids Help Phone on the launch of their innovative texting service pilot

Winnipeg, February 16, 2018 . . . Today, Kids Help Phone announced a five-month pilot of their new nationwide crisis texting service – *Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone* – is available in Manitoba.

Great-West Life was part of a group of leadership donors who helped underwrite the majority of the costs to implement this first-of-its-kind service in Canada. In addition, many Great-West Life employees from offices across Canada answered the call to volunteer as a Crisis Responder.

“The 24/7 Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone is breaking new ground in Canada,” says Stefan Kristjanson, President and Chief Operating Officer, Canada, Great-West Life. “We’re pleased to have been a catalyst donor to help make this project a reality. Congratulations to Kids Help Phone for taking an innovative approach to continue to support kids who need someone to reach out to.”

Of particular importance is the fact that the service requires no data plan, internet connection or app, making it available to young people living in remote or rural areas where such service can be limited. By simply texting **TALK to 686868**, a connection is made with a trained volunteer Crisis Responder. At any time, the texter can type **STOP** to end the conversation. Following the English-only service trial in Manitoba, it will be rolled out nationally in both English and French.

“This new service addresses an important need, especially in under-served areas like those in Manitoba where it’s needed most,” says Kristjanson. “We’re glad that many organizations have joined us in making this a reality for young people, and we applaud Kids Help Phone for taking a leadership role in ensuring youth can receive crisis resolution support through this free texting service.”

A study conducted by Kids Help Phone has shown that 71 per cent of young people prefer a non-verbal form of communication such as texting. By eliminating barriers to seeking help, Kids Help Phone is ensuring that youth can receive the help they need, when they need it most and in a manner that suits them best.

For more information about how to become a volunteer Crisis Responder or use *Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone*, visit www.kidshelpphone.ca.

About The Great-West Life Assurance Company

Great-West Life is a leading Canadian insurer, focused on improving the financial, physical and mental well-being of Canadians. For more than 125 years, our customers across Canada have trusted us to provide for their financial security needs and deliver on the promises we have made. Together with our subsidiaries London Life and Canada Life, we serve the financial security needs of 13 million people across Canada.

As an Imagine Caring Company supporting the principles of corporate citizenship and benchmarks for community investment established by Imagine Canada, we contribute at least one per cent of pre-tax profit in support of the communities where their employees and customers live and work. In 2017, our companies contributed \$13.5 million to communities. To learn more, visit www.greatwestlife.com.

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