

**PAST &
PRESENT:**
A REPORT
ON IMPACT
AND OUR
STRATEGIC
VISION FOR
THE FUTURE

The artwork for this report was designed by Iggy Proof, an amazing artist and long-time supporter of BTWF



A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDERS

BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Born This Way Foundation (BTWF) was launched in 2012 with an amazing event at Harvard University. The event brought together the Foundation's co-founders, experts, foundation leaders, research partners, influencers such as Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra, and young people from around the country.

Following the launch, BTWF dedicated its next two years to researching, learning and developing programs to support our original mission: ***supporting the wellness of young people and empowering them to create a kinder and braver world. We achieve this by shining a light on real people, quality research, and authentic partnerships.***

We immediately knew that our unique mission would not be without its challenges, but we also recognized that if this work were easy, it would already be done. For this reason, we wanted to take risks with our programs and try things that no one else had tried before.

As we enter 2015, we are able to look back on our first two years of operations and celebrate the successes of our programs, our partnerships, and the direct connections made to the youth that we serve. We have also taken the past several months to reflect on our work, and use the lessons learned to consistently make improvements in order to further the impact of the Foundation.

As we look back on our programs, we have seen one consistent through-line: an emphasis on empowering young people to develop and care for their mental and emotional health. Some refer to this work as emotional intelligence or Social Emotional Learning (SEL). In our work, we like to emphasize self-awareness, self-acceptance, compassion, and acceptance of others as the keys to building happier and healthier generations and ultimately a kinder, braver world.

The following report serves as a vehicle to share the work and the reach of BTWF to date, and to communicate our vision for the future. Most importantly, this report allows us to thank publicly our partners and contributors, and our incredible network of youth. Without them, none of this would be possible.

We are grateful for all of the support received and lessons learned these past two years and look forward to continuing our work to build a kinder, braver world.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Germanotta & Lady Gaga

Co-Founders, Born This Way Foundation



MISSION

Born This Way Foundation is committed to supporting the wellness of young people and empowering them to create a kinder and braver world. We achieve this by shining a light on real people, quality research, and authentic partnerships.



PHILOSOPHY OF COLLABORATION

Whether **online, on the road, or down the street**, the Foundation has served as a resource, collaborator, facilitator and convener on issues affecting youth mental health, social emotional learning (SEL) and Digital Media and Learning (DML).

We have collaborated with leading nonprofit service providers, foundations, universities and other experts to advance our mission. We call this practice an “open tent” approach; it allows BTWF and our partners to amplify and scale our respective missions to achieve sustainable change.

Since the launch of BTWF, we have worked with more than 50 nonprofit youth service providers around the country, and have provided direct support to nearly 150,000 youth.



LOGIC MODEL

BTWF believes that with the right resources, safe outlets for expression, and improved emotional health and skills, young people will become the key drivers in creating a kinder and braver world.

Our work has been based on the three pillars of **safety, skills** and **opportunity**. By incorporating these themes into every aspect of our work, we have sought to link our efforts to impact.

ACTIVITIES

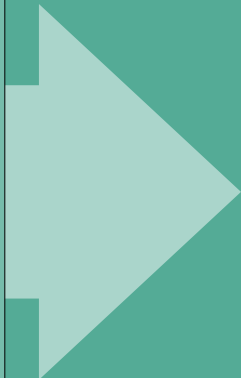
- Digital Newsletters & Social Media Messaging
- Bravest Map Ever
- PlayBrave Game
- The Born Brave Bus Tour
- Born This Way Retreat
- Westfield Mall Tour
- Research

OUTPUTS

- More than 100 million followers on social media for Lady Gaga and BTWF
- 2500 resource submissions to the Bravest Map Ever
- Better understanding on how to engage youth around digital media & learning
- Approximately 150,000 connections made between young people and service providers
- More than 300,000 online subscribers
- 30 young people attended The Born Brave Retreat and are empowering friends to be kinder & braver
- More than 50 nonprofit partners utilizing BTWF resources and serving BTWF youth
- New research data

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- Youth have a digital “home” where they can learn about BTWF activities, find local support, and connect and share with others
- SEL practices will reach a wider audience, and establish a culture of empathy among young people
- Youth are able to connect with local organizations and identify resources for their mental health and emotional wellness needs
- Young people will feel more comfortable seeking help and sharing concerns with friends
- The stigma associated with mental health will be reduced as awareness increases
- The world will be a kinder and braver place for all people





LAUNCH

BTWF was founded thanks to the support and guidance of the **John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation** and **The California Endowment**. Both partners were instrumental in helping to shape the strategy of BTWF, particularly as it pertains to SEL, DML and the health and well-being of youth, respectively. Our philosophy in developing the Safety, Skills, and Opportunities of the young people we serve was shaped at the counsel of both organizations, and each contributed greatly to our overall strategy.

After nearly a year of research and consultation, BTWF was formally launched at **Harvard University** in February of 2012. The launch event included a Symposium on Youth Meanness and Cruelty, as well as the dissemination of working papers called the *Kinder & Braver World Project Research Series*, to collect participant ideas and provide BTWF with research-based recommendations for programmatic action.

The Symposium and workshops were held thanks to the generous support of our founding partners the **MacArthur Foundation** and **The California Endowment**, and were hosted by the Harvard Berkman Center for Internet and Society in partnership with the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



LAUNCH

The launch also included a youth summit designed to build community among youth leaders and activists, bringing together community leaders and a diverse group of high school students through panel discussions, testimonials, and short performances to share experiences and explore ways to advance the **Foundation's three pillars:**

Youth need to feel **safe;**

Youth need the **skills** to effect change; and

Youth need the **opportunities** that make them feel empowered.

In order to extend the reach of the launch across the country, BTWF piloted a number of on-line and other activities including: **The Born Brave Bus Tour** and **Youth Centers, The Bravest Map Ever, The Youth Advisory Board,** and **The Born Brave Youth Retreat.**



ONLINE

Youth spend 7.5 hours every day consuming media, including surfing the internet and social networking. BTWF therefore leveraged its website, social media platforms, and the social media reach of Lady Gaga to engage young people around the world, sharing resources and inspirational stories.

One such resource, **The Bravest Map Ever**, was created to provide young people with a safe and accessible tool to identify local mental health services and other resources. **The Map has more than 2,500 submissions from youth and organizations.**

AND WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED!

WHAT SOME PARTNERS ARE SAYING:

“Youth need access to mental health options that are different than the ones typically provided.”

[The online resources] create an international space where humans (children, adolescents, youth and adults) can be express [themselves] safely, respecting individuality.”

“[The map] provides someone who is need of help, whether [they are] a victim of bullying or someone who is in need of a friend, with a safe haven...”



ONLINE

67,300,000+

Lady Gaga fans on
Facebook

42,600,000+

Lady Gaga followers on
Twitter

300,000+

registered at bornthiswayfoundation.org

200,000+

BTWF fans on Facebook

120,000+

BTWF followers on Twitter

50,000+

youth reached through BTWF newsletters

2,500

Bravest Map Ever submissions from youth and partner organizations



ON THE ROAD

The Born Brave Bus Tour (BBBT), a mobile “tailgate” experience, connected youth to the resources and opportunities they need to help themselves and others. The tour was made possible thanks to advice and support from The California Endowment. This tour also could not have happened without our partnership with Office Depot, who supported our initial activation through the sale of BTWF merchandise and a very generous gift of \$1,000,000.

THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE BUS EXPERIENCE ARE TO:

- Connect youth with local resources, where they can get help and seek volunteer opportunities in each city;
- Increase awareness about SEL, DML and the resources made available by BTWF and its partners; and
- Empower youth to take the values of kindness and bravery back to their homes, schools, and communities.

50 EVENTS IN 45 LOCATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

**NEARLY 150,000 YOUTH CONNECTED TO
LOCAL PARTNERS THROUGH BBBT**

MORE THAN 325,000,000 MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

**MORE THAN 500,000 YOUTH EXPOSED TO BTWF MESSAGING AND
PRINCIPLES THROUGH BORN THIS WAY BALL &
ARTRAVE: THE ARTPOP BALL TOURS**

9 NATIONAL FRONTLINE PARTNERS INCLUDING:
GLSEN, THE TREVOR PROJECT, YMCA,
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS, NATIONAL
COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**MORE THAN 50 REGIONAL AND LOCAL NONPROFIT SERVICE
PROVIDER PARTNERS INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION’S YOUMEDIA INITIATIVE.**



ON THE ROAD

RESULTS:

- 80% of participants reported that they were very likely to be involved with the Foundation
- Nonprofit service provider partners connected with each other around a single platform and have since collaborated on similar projects in their communities
- Partners were also able to leverage the Bus Tour to raise awareness in their own communities

WHAT OUR NONPROFIT SERVICE PROVIDER PARTNERS ARE SAYING:

“Our participation in the events provided an opportunity to share [our] petition supporting mental health advocacy in schools. [We had] more than 2,000 Lady Gaga fans signing our petition.”

“The location of our booth was perfect, and we were able to hit the crowd in such a way that we did not disrupt their concert experience; rather, we became a PART of it.”

“Because of [BTWF] providing us with a platform, we were able to sign up over 50 different youth, volunteers from the community, and parents for our group.”

“Our net of influence has been spread wider than it ever has, and because of the level of response we got from the crowd, we are planning on opening a Youth Group at an all new location!”



DOWN THE STREET

This strategy seeks to connect youth with the local resources they need to become healthy, happy and emotionally fulfilled. Our goal has always been to dive deeper into our connections with youth. We seek to accomplish this through our Youth Advisory Board, through this summer's Born Brave Retreat, and through future programs aimed at reaching youth face-to-face.

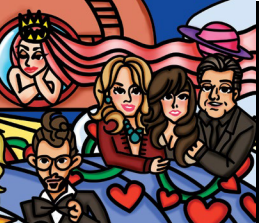
YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (YAB)

In 2012, with the help of the MacArthur Foundation and The California Endowment we established the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). With representatives from around the country - diverse in race, gender, and orientation - the YAB represents youth from a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. The YAB advises BTWF about the issues facing youth today, especially as they pertain to mental health and empathy, and serve as advocates, sharing information and empowering others in their schools and communities.

WHAT OUR YOUTH ARE SAYING:

"After seeing so many people here who have had and recovered from many [challenges], my belief in self-empowerment has been strengthened even more. So many people wallow in self-hatred and/or self-pity that I am confident that I can use these experiences to better help others."

"I will have more motivation to take action in my community, and I feel I have more tools to make the difference I always wanted to."



DOWN THE STREET

THE BORN BRAVE RETREAT

In August, BTWF partnered with YMCA Camp Hi-Rock to hold its inaugural retreat with the goal of convening youth leaders from around the country. The 30 participating youth met in the Berkshires, MA to create change on both personal and systemic levels. Through a series of workshops conducted by our partners from Yale University and Microsoft, and by Ross Szabo, CEO of the Human Power Project, the retreat focused on leadership, personal development, SEL, and online safety with the goal of catalyzing these young people to build kinder and braver communities in their hometowns.

PARTNERSHIP WITH WESTFIELD SHOPPING CENTRES

This fall, Westfield Shopping Centres partnered with BTWF to host Born Brave Youth Centers in three mall locations. Each center hosted a performance by pop group **After Romeo**, and invited youth to share their bravest moments in the BORN BRAVE scrapbook, participate in contests, and connect with local resources.

WHAT OUR YOUTH ARE SAYING:

"I will think more about someone's story before judging them. I also will try to be kinder to people who have wronged me before."

"I'm so much more inspired to be brave and be happier in my life."



RESEARCH

WHAT SETS BTWF APART IS OUR UNIQUE ACCESS TO DATA AND OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH.

Through our social media reach, our coalition of partners, and the BTWF Research Advisory Board we are able to collect and analyze information from young people around the country. The research helps us better understand how young people treat one another, how they identify a support network, and how they perceive and relate to the concepts of kindness and bravery.

IN 2012, BTWF PARTNERED WITH VIACOM MEDIA NETWORKS AND SHIRESON ASSOCIATES TO SURVEY YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF KINDNESS AND BRAVERY. KEY FINDINGS SHOWED:

- » **Digital access (social media, instant messaging, and texting) make it easier for teens to hurt one another 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and that the worst instances are happening online;**
- » **Teens admire peers who are “neutral.” These are peers who appear popular and confident, and can still be nice to accepting of others;**
- » **Most teens are afraid to “be nice.” They fear retribution if they stand up for others;**
- » **There is no consistent definition of kindness among surveyed teens, presenting an opportunity for BTWF and partner organizations to define the concept for teen audiences;**
- » **Bravery evokes themes of boldness, fearlessness, and following one’s beliefs regardless of stigma. Surveys found that students who felt brave, were more likely to stand up for others; and**
- » **Most participating young people believed that the Born Brave Bus Tour could attract both fans of Lady Gaga, but also young people who are not necessarily fans and may be more in need of BTWF messaging.**



RESEARCH

IN 2014, BTWF PARTNERED WITH DR. SUSAN SWEARER, WILLA CATHER PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - LINCOLN (UNL), CO-DIRECTOR OF THE BULLYING RESEARCH NETWORK, DIRECTOR OF THE EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE, AND CHAIR OF THE BTWF RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD, TO:

- » **Assess the Born Brave Bus experience**
 - » Understand the factors that young people need to promote kindness and bravery
- » **Develop a measure of kindness and bravery**
- » **Create a model of youth empowerment and engagement**

KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS STUDY INCLUDE:

- » **The Born Brave Bus was measurably effective at connecting youth with a network of mental health resources, at de-stigmatizing mental health treatment, and at increasing knowledge and awareness of local resources in each city.**
- » **Born Brave Bus participants (>20,000 youth ages 13-25) were significantly more likely to be kinder and braver in their homes, schools, and communities than people who did not attend a Bus event.**
- » **The majority of youth prefer text messaging, the internet and in-person means of communication when seeking help. These methods far outweighed the number of youth that rely on a telephone (i.e. help lines) for mental health support.**
 - » Individual characteristics such as hope, self-esteem, and a strong sense of values predicted kindness and bravery.
 - » Kindness and bravery can be effectively assessed and can be taught as core values to our nation's youth.



RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD

The BTWF Research Advisory Board advises the Foundation on the aggregated research, connects BTWF management with useful resources and organizations, and helps determine the outcome indicators that lead to the success and accountability of BTWF programs.

The Research Advisory Board consists of the nation's most distinguished experts and scholars on issues important to youth health and development:

BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION

RESEARCH ADVISORY
BOARD MEMBERS

DR. SUSAN M. SWEARER

RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-
LINCOLN

MARC BRACKETT, PH.D.

YALE CENTER FOR EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE

DR. DEWEY CORNELL

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

DR. MELISSA GILLIAM

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PROFESSOR JOHN PALFREY

PHILLIPS ACADEMY, ANDOVER

CJ PASCOE, PH.D

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON



DR. SUSAN M. SWEARER

Research
Advisory Board
Chair

Dr. Swearer
is a licensed
child and
adolescent

psychologist; the Willa Cather Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln; Director of the Empowerment Initiative (<http://empowerment.unl.edu>); and Co-Director of the Bullying Research Network (<http://brnet.unl.edu>). She was a featured presenter at the 2011 White House Conference on Bullying Prevention and has written and presented extensively on mental health issues in youth, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and data-based decision-making for school-based behavioral health initiatives.



MARC BRACKETT, PH.D.

Dr. Brackett is
Director of the
Yale Center
for Emotional
Intelligence

and the author or co-author of over 100 scholarly publications. He is the lead developer of RULER, a CASEL SElect approach to social and emotional learning that has been shown to boost academic performance, decrease school problems, and enrich both classroom climates and teacher effectiveness. He also consults with Facebook on projects related to both preventing and reducing online bullying.



DR. DEWEY CORNELL

Dr. Cornell
is a forensic
clinical
psychologist
and Professor
of Education

in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. He joined the faculty of the University of Virginia in 1986 and has studied youth violence for nearly 30 years.



AWARDS & RECOGNITION



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGISTS

2013 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS SPECIAL FRIEND OF CHILDREN AWARD

The NASP GPR “Special Friend of Children” Award is given to individuals or groups outside the profession who have nationally supported political action and advocacy on behalf of children to improve education and mental health services for children, youth and their families.



WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH

In 2013, BTWF became an official partner of President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden’s *Empowerment Initiative*, to help create and continue “a national conversation that increases understanding and awareness of mental health issues.”



Family
Online Safety
Institute

2012 FAMILY ONLINE SAFETY INSTITUTE AWARD OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

The Family Online Safety Institute Award for Outstanding Achievement is awarded to those individuals who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to advancing the goal of a safer Internet.

LOGO **NEW NOW NEXT** AWARDS 2013

LOGO’S NEWNOWNEXT AWARDS 2013, MOST INNOVATIVE CHARITY OF THE YEAR

Awarded to organizations that, with the help of their selfless staffs and volunteers, go above and beyond to help and give back to the LGBTQ community every single day of the year.



LOOKING AHEAD

While we will continue to dedicate ourselves to building a kinder and braver world, our focus and approach will change.

Through conversations with youth and our own original research, we now believe we have a clearer understanding of *why* some young people treat each other poorly, including a lack of education in emotional skills. In the future, we will focus on addressing the root of that “why” by helping youth develop their emotional intelligence – which research shows leads to greater self-awareness, compassion, and the acceptance of others. Developing a young person’s emotional intelligence has also been proven to increase overall performance in school, decrease problem behavior, enhance relationships, and reduce mental health problems.

We will help enhance these qualities in young people, globally, by identifying, supporting, and shining a light on the people and organizations that:

- » **Are revolutionary in their thinking about ways to improve youth mental and emotional health (such as meditation, Ayurvedic healing, and other less-traditional approaches);**
- » **Introduce and integrate effective emotional intelligence education programs into classrooms and communities; and**
- » **Advocate for better access to mental and emotional health resources for young people.**



LOOKING AHEAD

OUR NEXT STEPS

BTWF will seek to further develop its expertise as well as identify how it can best leverage its resources to advance emotional and mental health in young people. Our next steps will include:

- » Initiating our work with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to conduct a youth summit as well as a large-scale national survey of youth to identify how they feel in school and in their communities with the goal of stimulating policy makers, educators and parents to think critically about the need to integrate emotional intelligence programs in more schools and other learning environments; and
- » Identifying and consulting with the most effective organizations and experts in the field, globally, to learn how BTWF can best support their efforts to develop the skills in young people associated with self-awareness, self-acceptance, resilience, empathy and compassion, and the acceptance of others.



SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

We are only as good as the people, organizations and companies that we surround ourselves with, and we could not have made it this far without the help of all of our supporters, contributors and partners. Thank you to all that have made BTWF what it is today. We are grateful for the generous financial support and invaluable guidance provided by many.

WE OFFER A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

OUR YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD & RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Backplane
Barneys
BMF Media Group
Bravado
DKC Public Relations
Doritos
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher
Google
Huffington Post
Interscope Records
Jack Morton Worldwide
Live Nation
Macys
Microsoft
Mozilla Corporation
Office Depot
Viacom
Walch Consulting
Westfield Mall
WME

FOUNDATIONS

MacArthur Foundation
The California Endowment
WME Foundation

ORGANIZATIONS

American Psychological Association
The Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University
National Association of School Psychologists
National Council for Behavioral Health
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Yale University

AND A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE, WHO HAVE ADVISED AND SUPPORTED THE FOUNDATION SINCE ITS INCEPTION:

Dr. Robert K. Ross, President and CEO, The California Endowment
Dr. David Washington, Founder and CEO, Partnerships for Purpose
Constance M. Yowell, Director of Education, MacArthur Foundation

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QUESTIONS?

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