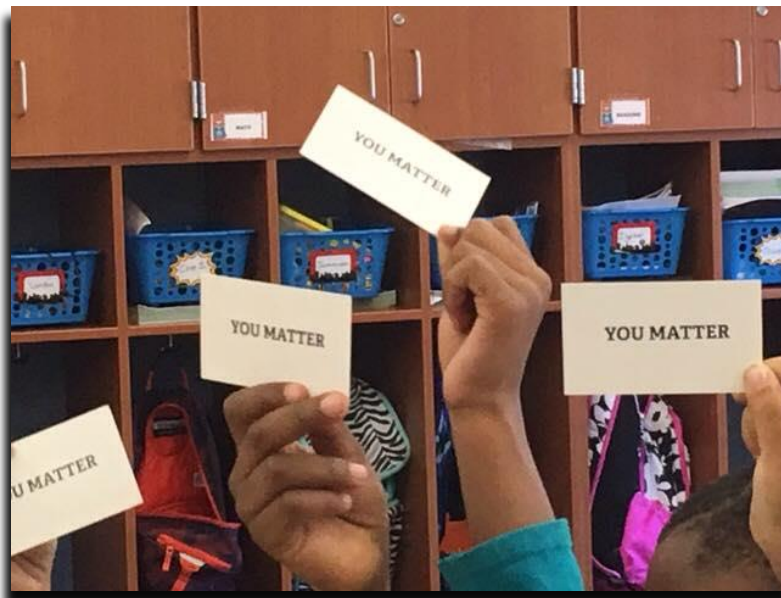




**No Running Required!**

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT & TEACHER'S GUIDE**



*"We are each other's harvest; we are each other's business; we are each other's magnitude and bond."*

Gwendolyn Brooks

**Founded by Cheryl Rice, MS, CAPP**

**<http://youmattermarathon.com/>**

## What is the You Matter Marathon?

The **You Matter Marathon** (YMM) is a program to create and enrich positive connections between people and within communities by sharing 10,000 **You Matter cards** during November, the month of Thanksgiving.



## Why the You Matter Marathon?

We're living in a world where people crave connection, yet feel more isolated than ever. Every one of us is here for a reason. We are all essential. We need, and are needed by, each other.

Always.

Especially now.

## Why School Districts and Teachers are Being Asked to Participate

Because you are uniquely committed to building citizenship, character, and compassion within your students and the greater community.



## **How the You Matter Marathon Can Work for Your School**

It's a matter of taking 5 simple steps.

**Step 1:** Determine the sponsoring organization within the system to run the YMM in your school community. Sample sponsors include:

- Parent Teacher Association
- Student Government
- Diversity and Inclusion Club

**Step 2:** Choose the groups or communities within your school district to participate in the YMM. Sample groups include:

- All students K-12, faculty, and staff
- All students K-12
- Middle school or high school students only
- Faculty and staff only

**Step 3:** Designate a **You Matter Marathon** Ambassador to serve as a conduit between your school and the **You Matter Marathon** organization. Have this person sign-up at [www.YouMatterMarathon.com](http://www.YouMatterMarathon.com).

**Step 4:** Determine the total number of You Matter cards you will need in November:

Suggested minimum # of cards per person is 4, and maximum # of cards per person is 30. Those numbers may vary if you involve your entire school district. For instance, you may choose to have K-5 students share 4 cards during the month and 9-12 students share 30.

**Step 5:** Order your You Matter Cards:

When the Ambassador signs up for the YMM they are immediately sent an email with instructions for either printing the cards themselves or ordering the cards through [Vistaprint.com](http://Vistaprint.com). (Approximate price for 1000 cards is \$40.00 but if you use the discount code TV500 you can receive up to a 50% discount.)

*For the integrity of the YMM, You Matter cards may not be customized.*



## **Suggested Curriculum Ideas**

The **You Matter Marathon** is an ideal program to reinforce the essence of gratitude, inclusion and connection as a way to honor the spirit of Thanksgiving.

### **Grades K – 4**

Give each student one card to share each day the week before Thanksgiving. Use the card to facilitate a discussion on what it means to “matter” to someone else and what it means to “matter” to yourself? “Who are the people and animals that matter to you?” On Day 1 they can give a card to a classmate who matters to them. On Day 2, they can give a card to someone they see in the school who matters to them. On Day 3, they can give a card to someone in their family that matters to them. Day 4, they can give themselves a card!

Also, TeachKind offers a free resource to elementary schools called [Share the World](#) that discusses the treatment of animals in our society along with reading and writing activities geared to fostering empathy for others. It helps children widen their circle of compassion to include all living beings.

### **Grades 5 – 8**

Give each student 10 cards to share during the month with family, friends and acquaintances. Perhaps this will yield a discussion about people who can be marginalized in the school, in the community, and in the world. This is also an opportunity to share cards with people we take for granted and want to express gratitude to.

As a writing exercise they can tell a story of what transpired in one of their card shares and the impact it had on them and the other person.

### **Grades 9 – 12**

Give each student 20-30 cards to share and use it to facilitate a similar discussion on issues of inclusion and gratitude.

- Week 1: They can give a card a day to family or friend
- Week 2: They can give a card a day to someone in their school or larger community they see regularly but who aren't a “friend.” Like a cafeteria worker or the barista at their favorite coffee shop.

- Week 3: They can leave a card a day for someone in a random place. Like in a library book you are returning.
- Week 4: They can give a card a day to a stranger



## **Teacher Testimonials**

“We tied it to our school-wide anti-bullying lesson plans. Elementary students learned that taking back mean words was like trying to force toothpaste back into its tube. It can't be done. Our middle and high school students focused on the differences between sympathy and empathy, and refusing to be bystanders to bullying. We brought everyone together using a colorful parachute to demonstrate that even a small person can have a big impact in the world. When we gave each student a pack of 30 cards, they were eager to make a difference in their community by spreading kindness. Each week, we shared our stories of how a tiny card was changing our attitudes towards others. By the end of November, we had covered a huge bulletin board with inspiring stories from parents, students, teachers, congregational members, and community leaders. We're a tiny school with fewer than 50 students and yet, we've already purchased over 15,000 cards for this year's You Matter Marathon because it's the type of teaching students respond to best: joyful, engaging and meaningful.”

**-Ronnet Rice, principal of Temple Israel Religious School, Columbus, GA**

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“We used YM as part of our Secret Kindness Agents project. The students handed out cards, or placed them anonymously in spots for students and teachers and staff to find. We had several emotional responses, especially at the end of the year when we revealed the project to the entire school. Since the project was secret until the end of the year, it was fun to listen to people talk about it, and wonder who was doing it and why. I will be introducing this idea to my students again in August!”

**- Deb Geissert, English III teacher (Junior Level) at Herington High School in Herington, KS**

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“Within my psychology classes, I do a gratitude unit in November. The YMM fits well with gratitude. Initially I give each student three cards. One for themselves, one to give to someone they know, and one to give to someone they don't really know. One student in particular loved it. He kept coming back for more. He was in band and wanted to give them out to others in his band section. Then he was going on a trip with his Grandparents to New York City, and he wanted more to distribute. It was fun to see how much he gained from sharing the cards with others.”

- Tina Raspanti, YMM Ambassador for Mt. Lebanon School District



## **Benefits of Participating in the You Matter Marathon**

The key benefits of the **You Matter Marathon** are:

- It will broaden and build micro moments of positive connection between people in your school community.
- It will broaden and build positive emotions in and between students, faculty, staff and the greater school community.
- It will build agency in those who participate.
- It will form a virtual superorganism of goodness in your community. A smattering of mattering!
- It will foster strengths of kindness, compassion, gratitude and inclusion.
- It will contribute to the You Matter Marathon goal of letting as many people as possible know that they matter in this world. Additionally,
- Every Ambassador will be invited to join the private **You Matter Marathon** Facebook page where they can share their experiences and also connect with hundreds if not thousands of other YMM participants.
- If interested, there may be an opportunity to have your school featured on the local television news.

### **For More Information**

Contact Cheryl Rice at 484-557-8846, [CherylRice@comcast.net](mailto:CherylRice@comcast.net)

*It is not what you gather, but what you scatter, that tells what kind of life you have lived. - Anonymous*