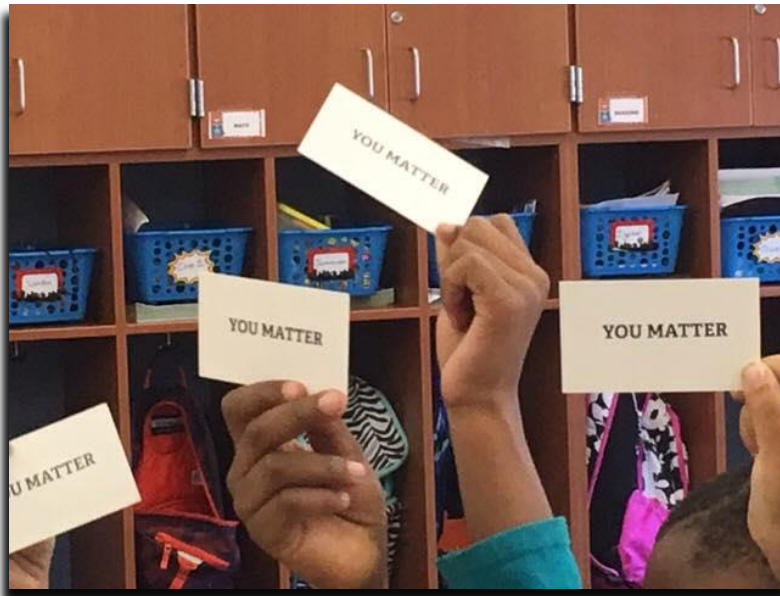




**No Running Required!**

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



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

- Anonymous

## **Welcome!**

We're thrilled that you have decided to share the **You Matter** message within your school community.

This Guide is offered as a resource to support your efforts in running a successful and rewarding **You Matter Marathon** (YMM). Feel free to send any comments, questions, and feedback to our Cheryl at [cherylrice210@gmail.com](mailto:cherylrice210@gmail.com).

## **History**

The **You Matter Marathon** – No running required - was founded in 2016 by Cheryl Rice. Cheryl was so touched when she received a business-sized card with only the words, You Matter, on it that she ordered her own set of cards and began giving them to others.

One particularly moving experience giving a card to a stranger in a grocery store inspired Cheryl to take the card sharing to the next level and invite others to share **You Matter** cards.

Since 2016 millions of **You Matter** cards have been given out by more than 180,000 people in 83 countries.

## **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 inviting people to share **You Matter** cards.



## **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
- Kindness/Service Club
- 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 our printing partner.

*For the integrity of the YMM, we ask that You Matter cards not be customized.*

## **Suggested Curriculum Ideas**

The **You Matter Marathon** is an ideal program to reinforce the essence of gratitude, inclusion and connection. It fits especially well during November when many people celebrate Thanksgiving.

### **Grades K – 4**

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

## **FAQ's**

**Can cards be given anonymously? For instance, left on someone's desk when they aren't there?**

Ideally, we encourage people to share the cards person-to-person but there can also be great joy in leaving a card for someone to find on their own. Our best advice is to mix it up.

**Can we print our company logo on the back of the card?**

Technically yes. Our preference is no and here's why. Most people's first reaction when given a **You Matter** card is to turn it over. They're primed to look for the catch. Only when they realize there is no catch do they lower their shoulders and breathe in the message. Putting anything on the back turns the card into a promotional product and dilutes the impact. That said, some people do find value in writing a personal handwritten note on the back of the card.

**How Does the YMM Relate to the Black Lives Matter movement?**

The You Matter Marathon exists to foster positive connections within and between individuals by encouraging people to see and value the significance of every person they encounter. We believe that the world would be a more peaceful and joyful place if everyone knew that they mattered.

*Consistent with the You Matter Marathon mission, we stand with the Black community, and all people of color, and support the Black Lives Matter movement as a way to shine a light on racial inequities and injustices.*



## **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.

## **Additional Resources**

- A member of our YMM team is happy to do a brief virtual presentation on mattering with your class. Contact [Cheryl](#) to schedule.
- Logo – feel free to cut and paste from our [website](#)
- Cheryl’s YMM TEDx, [You Matter: Changing The World with Two Words](#)
- 3-minute [video](#) of the YMM in action
- 1-minute YMM highlight [video](#)
- Books to accompany your learning:
  - [You Matter](#) by Christian Robinson
  - [The Rabbit Listened](#) by Cori Doerrfeld
  - [Be Kind](#) by Pat Zietlow Miller with illustrations by Jen Hill

## **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**

“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**

“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**

**For more information contact Cheryl: [cherylrice210@gmail.com](mailto:cherylrice210@gmail.com)**