

WE Organization Launches National Canada 150 Campaign Inspiring a Generation to Shape the Future of Canada

*- Penny Oleksiak, Jully Black, Craig Kielburger and more come together alongside hundreds of students to kickoff Canada 150 programs for schools and youth across the country at WE are Canada rally in Toronto-
- Canadians of all ages can show their commitment to building a more caring and compassionate Canada by taking the WE are Canada Pledge at WE.ca –*

Toronto, ON (January 23, 2017) – On February 1, 2017, the WE organization is launching [WE are Canada](http://WE), a major national campaign marking Canada 150 that will bring millions of Canadians together with the collective goal of inspiring them to take action towards building a more caring and compassionate future nation. WE, an organization that brings people together and gives them the tools to change the world, will engage a generation of Canadians to make local, national and international impacts through the multi-faceted program. WE are Canada will engage people coast to coast, challenging Canadians of all ages to raise \$1 million for Canadian organizations and commit to 1 million hours of local volunteer service.

To kick off the program, WE is celebrating today with a major youth rally alongside more than 500 students from over ten local area schools, hosted at Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton Catholic Secondary School in Toronto (1515 Bloor St W, Toronto, ON M6P 1A3). Running from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the rally will feature special guests, including Olympic swimming sensation and WE are Canada ambassador, **Penny Oleksiak**, Juno award-winning singer-songwriter and speaker, **Jully Black**, award-winning rap artist, music producer and WE ambassador, **Kardinal Offishall**, ME to WE motivational speaker and WE ambassador, **Spencer West**, WE co-founder, **Craig Kielburger** and more. The rally will include special musical performances, an on-stage Q&A between Craig and Penny, a special surprise video message from WE are Canada ambassador **Jacob Hoggard** and more, all to inspire students and teachers in attendance to pledge their commitment to build a stronger and more compassionate Canada.

“I’m excited to join WE as we celebrate and look forward to the next 150 years,” said Canadian high school student, swimmer, four-time Olympic medalist, Lou Marsh Award Canadian Athlete of the Year and WE are Canada ambassador, **Penny Oleksiak**. “I hope to see a future where youth continue to take action on causes they are passionate about, recognizing the value of working hard to achieve their dreams, and building a bright future for Canada.”

The national program will empower Canadians to gain a deeper understanding of Canadian issues, and inspire them to make a difference in their communities and across the country, helping to build the nation’s next 150 years. WE are Canada program, resources and activities include:

- **WE are Canada Pledge**, the first step every Canadian can take to commit to create a more caring and compassionate country. By taking the pledge, people across the country are joining a collective movement of active change-makers who are committed to building a strong future Canada. For every pledge taken, \$10 will be donated to support WE’s local and global programs.
- Funded by the Government of Canada as a Canada 150 Signature Project, a bilingual, WE Schools service-learning program, the **WE are Canada Kit** offers curriculum to schools, teachers and youth from coast to coast, providing resources and activities to build a deeper understanding of Canada and discover how to make a difference in the future of the country. The WE are Canada curriculum will come to life in classrooms, community centres and living rooms across the country through Canada 150 key themes: youth empowerment, the environment, diversity and inclusion, and reconciliation. WE, the largest youth organization in Canada, currently engages and empowers over 1.8 million youth and approximately 17,000 educators in 7,000 schools across Canada through the service-learning program, WE Schools.

ARE CANADA

- The **WE are Canada Guide for Families**, made possible by KPMG in Canada provides Canadians with 150 ways to celebrate Canada 150 as a family. With fun, simple and thoughtful ideas for service tied to Canada 150 and its key themes, the guide helps families discover new ways to make a difference in the lives of others through small, everyday actions and join the millions of Canadians already coming together to the future of Canada.
- To shine a spotlight on extraordinary young Canadians who are helping to shape the future of the country, WE launched the **WE are Canada video** that features eight inspiring change-makers amongst a mosaic of iconic Canadian imagery. To complement the WE are Canada video, individual video vignettes showcasing each exceptional youth will be released across the country, appearing on national broadcast outlets and through public digital promotions until Canada Day, 2017. [Watch the WE are Canada video here.](#)
- From February 1 to July 1, 2017, WE will be honouring 50 remarkable Canadians and the contributions they are making to the future of our nation through a national portrait series entitled **WE are Canada: Future 50**. Portrait honourees will range from notable Canadian celebrities, community change makers and outstanding young people, who are all contributing to a stronger Canada over the next 150 years through their individual passions and causes. Taken by notable Canadian photographers, portraits will be showcased across the country in public spaces and hosted on WE's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) channels.
- Providing Canadians with more opportunities to create impacts across the country, WE's social enterprise and partner in changing the world, [ME to WE](#), has launched a series of products and apparel, available [online](#) and at the WE Store in Cadillac Fairview Eaton Centre in Toronto. Every purchase of a WE are Canada product helps support national WE Schools programs—empowering youth with the tools to change the world.
- Throughout the year, schools across the country will be coming together to celebrate Canada 150 with **WE DayX** events, bringing WE are Canada to life in auditoriums, gymnasiums and community centres from coast to coast. With thousands of schools already committed in regions across the country, the school or community-run events are encouraged to incorporate Canada 150 themes and bring people together to celebrate the actions they've already taken, and inspire them to continue making a difference for their country.
- In honour of Canada 150, WE created [WE.ca](#), the online hub for WE are Canada. The website offers resources, tips, tools, unique stories, inspiring videos and more, helping to support Canadians take action and make an impact in communities across the country. Hosted on WE.ca, the **WE are Canada Blog** will offer Canadians a destination to access a wealth of exclusive and extended content, including advice from Canadian change-makers, behind-the-scenes from special events, interviews with inspiring Canadians and moving videos.
- Over the coming months, WE will be announcing more exciting activities and programs, including a special event in partnership with the Government of Canada, taking place Canada Day weekend on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Throughout the year, WE will also be working in partnership with national organizations to bring WE are Canada to millions of Canadians, including **Facebook Canada**, who is teaming up with WE in support of the WE are Canada Pledge, helping to encourage millions of Canadians from coast to coast take the pledge through Facebook and Instagram.

Keep up to date on WE are Canada announcements at [WE.ca](#) and through WE's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) channels.

“The 150th anniversary of Confederation offers an opportunity to reflect on our past and our achievements, and to provide a legacy for future generations,” said The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. “WE are Canada will help engage young people and give them the means to contribute to our society, because they are the ones who will shape the Canada of tomorrow.”



“As one of Canada 150’s largest youth and educational partners, we are honoured to partner with the Government of Canada for this momentous campaign and inspire Canadians from across the country to come together and build a stronger future,” said **Craig Kielburger**, co-founder of WE. “Through WE are Canada we will work towards building our country’s future by empowering Canadians with the tools they need to take action and help shape the next 150 years to come.”

Join the WE movement and commit to building Canada’s future today by taking the WE are Canada Pledge at WE.ca.

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About WE

WE is an organization that brings people together and gives them the tools to change the world. A unique family of organizations, WE is made up of WE Charity, empowering change with resources that create sustainable impact, and ME to WE, a social enterprise that creates socially conscious products and experiences that allow people to do good through their everyday choices. The celebration of that change happens at WE Day – inspiring stadium-sized life-changing events that take place around the world. A global movement of 2.4 million young people strong, youth involved with WE have raised \$62 million for more than 2,400 local and global organizations, volunteered 19.9 million hours for local and global causes and collected over 7.6 million pounds of food through service learning programs and campaigns. WE was founded more than 20 years ago by humanitarians, activists and social entrepreneurs, brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger. Join the WE movement today at www.we.org.

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