

WarriorUp! Activism 101 Tool Kit

Hello, Warrior! By downloading this toolkit, you've taken an important first step toward making a difference in your community and the world we share. Together, we'll explore what it means to be an activist and a warrior, looking at the real-life examples of the warriors we met filming Warrior Up! on APTN and APTN lumi.



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What is Activism?

There are many definitions for activism, but simply put:

Activism means getting involved and taking action to achieve a goal, usually political or social.

The warriors we met for *Warrior Up!* Season One all had different goals and different actions they took to achieve them.

On the next few pages, we'll introduce you to a few of them.





Talon Pascal

Talon Pascal of the Lil'wat Nation in British Columbia studies traditional tool-making, bow-making, and hide-tanning methods. Only 17 years old when we filmed with him, Talon had been called upon to teach bow-making and flint-knapping at a Men's Wellness Gathering in Lillooet, where many of the students were grown men. Talon is helping to keep Indigenous culture alive and pass down knowledge that others in his family didn't get to learn. (*Episode 1: Talon Pascal: Time Traveler*)



Nevaeh Pine

Nevaeh Pine of the Garden River First Nation East of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, has been writing speeches and speaking publicly about Indigenous heritage and issues since grade school. At age 13, she spoke about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) at the Universities Canada 5th Annual Building Reconciliation Forum. When we met Nevaeh, she was planning a Truth & Reconciliation assembly at her school, creating a red dress art piece for the school's main hallway, and signs to be placed along the highway outside her school in remembrance. (*Episode 2: Nevaeh Pine: The Voice of Disruption*)



Isaac Garcia

Isaac Garcia of St. Paul, Minnesota, started distributing clothes, toiletries, and other personal items to unhoused neighbours in his East Side neighbourhood when he was only 11 years old. When we filmed with him, 16-year-old Isaac was an intern in the café at Indigenous Roots Cultural Center, an arts-plus organization providing space and opportunities for Black, Brown, and Indigenous folks in the Twin Cities. Isaac and his friends used the Roots space as a home base to assemble, store, and distribute Isaac's Blessing Bags to community members who need some help. (*Episode 5: Isaac Garcia: It's All Relative*)

So being an activist can mean many different things. It's really about making a difference, whether in your school, your local community, or the whole world.

Ready to learn more so you can Warrior Up?



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“I was a key organizer in the Wet’suwet’en crisis back in 2019 and 2020. And that really gave me an in-depth understanding of the challenges we face as Indigenous peoples with the injustices in the justice system, how we’re treated, the racism, and how that intersects with our environment.

It’s a very big contrast of emotions. Like, one time I’ll be extremely frustrated, I’ll feel completely hopeless, like this is never going to change, and then, the next minute I’ll see the youth getting involved.

I’ll see how it’s actually changed the course of history, whether that’s the Oka crisis, whether that is the Wet’suwet’en crisis. And that power that we have to make our voice heard in a grassroots way ... it does make a difference.”

—Sophia Sidarous
(Episode 9–Sophia Sidarous: Protect and Defend)



Getting Started

**I want to make a difference.
But where do I start?**

Great question! Here are some ways you can get involved and help make a difference in your community. You don't have to be a community leader right from the beginning —we all have to start somewhere!



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Learn everything you can about the issue or subject you want to get involved in. You may find resources in your community, your local library, or organizations that provide courses, workshops, or coaching. You may find resources online to help you—organizations, news and media, schools, and individuals with expertise to share.

When you're learning online, make sure that the people you're listening to are honest and reliable—while there's a lot of good information to be found online, there's a lot of misinformation, too. Talk about what you're learning with people in your community. If you're not sure about something, **ask!**

Apply for a job, internship, or volunteer position within an existing group—this will expose you to people who can listen to your ideas and help you learn more about your cause.

Join a club or try out for a team—having a network of friends with common interests is a great way to learn more about your community and help others learn the things you have to offer.

Find a mentor—often the mentor will find you. They might be a parent, aunt or uncle, a teacher, or an elder in your community. Someone who can help you navigate what you're learning and what you're trying to accomplish.

Share your knowledge! When you're ready to share what you know, get it out there. Write a speech, make some art, music, or poetry — there are many ways to get your message in front of your peers and your community.

Organize an event — It could be a small group meeting or lunch to talk through a problem and look for solutions. Or a larger public event like a school assembly, a powwow, or a community fun run. Whatever you choose, getting others involved can help spread the word and draw attention to your cause.



The Warrior's Journey

There are four common phases or elements in the Warrior's Journey:

1. Being Curious

An interest in or curiosity about the subject, sometimes (but not always) linked to their Indigenous culture.

2. Actively Learning

The Warrior's interest leads them to seek knowledge, which can lead them to new mentors, new skills, and a new understanding of the world around them, locally, regionally, nationally, or globally.

3. Identifying Problems

The Warrior sees a problem or a gap in the way something in their world works. It may be personal, as in “I should know more about my culture,” or it may be a larger issue outside them, like “More people need to understand this”, or “There must be a way I can help.”

4. Making Plans and Taking Action

Simply put, the Warrior makes an action plan and executes it. The plan could take hours, days, weeks, months, or years to complete. The plan may involve writing, public speaking, teaching, or community organizing. But the Warrior sees what needs to be done and takes steps to do it.

To see the Warrior’s Journey in action, check out the examples on the next few pages!

Warrior's Journey: Talon

Being Curious: Talon was interested in mummies as a kid, then learned about Ötzi the Iceman, a 5,000 year old natural mummy discovered in the Italian Alps. Objects found nearby included clothing, shoes, tools, and equipment: an axe, a knife, and a quiver of arrows.

Actively Learning: Talon started learning about European medieval weapons, and from there began to study North American Indigenous weapons, and from there learned flintknapping and bowmaking.

Identifying Problems: Talon recognized that there was a lot to learn about the old ways of Indigenous people, and felt that it was important to pass on that knowledge.

Taking Action: Talon continued to learn and develop his skills, and to pass the knowledge and skills on to others. At the Men's Gathering in Lillooet, he shared his knowledge with men older than him.

Warrior's Journey: Tréchelle

Being Curious: In May 2021, when over 200 potential unmarked graves of Indigenous children were found at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, University of Manitoba student Tréchelle Bunn was moved to action. She knew her great-grandparents were residential school survivors and that her grandparents were day school survivors. She remembered her unkan* Donald saying that as a child he had wanted to run away from Birtle Residential School, and this was her inspiration for the first walk from Birtle to Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation.

**Unkan is the Dakota word for grandfather.*

Actively Learning: Tréchelle wanted to promote healing for her grandparents and other survivors. Her first step was to reach out to her elders and see how they felt about the idea. When they gave their approval, she started to learn about what she would need to organize a walk: finding out about town permits, social media promotion, finding speakers and rallying community support.

Identifying Problems: Tréchelle completed the 26 km Healing Walk walking with her grandparents, family members and dozens in the larger community on a very hot July 1. For the next event, she settled on September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This shifted the focus from Healing to Reconciliation, opened it up to the non-Indigenous community, and would avoid the July heat. She also decided to make it a half-marathon, a 21.1 km run/walk event.

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Taking Action: Tréchelle made her idea a reality, gathering an organizing committee, community support, volunteers, and sponsorship, sourcing help from expert organizations, obtaining permits, and ultimately running a successful event. The Reconciliation Run gets bigger every year!



Honouring the Past

“There’s so many things you can do. You can learn the language to honour your ancestors, you can learn more about the culture, you can learn about plants. But this is something that I wanted to do for a long time and I just wanted to mentally and spiritually push myself. And I feel like I’ve done that with the help of my teammates.”

—Jeanetta Leach

(Episodes 12 & 13–Cherokee Riders: We Remember)

“I think every single one of us are warriors. When I think of a warrior, I think of somebody who is fighting for something that they believe in. And without a doubt I know that’s what we’re doing when we go on this bike ride. We are fighting for our ancestors, for them to be remembered because they went through things that are unimaginable and it should never be forgotten.”

—Desiree Matthews

(Episodes 12 & 13–Cherokee Riders: We Remember)

“I’m not just reciting things or just know one or two little words, like now I know phrases and can sometimes hold a conversation. And that’s really important and another way to honour our ancestors because Cherokee is a language that is really in danger. And so being able to just have a few sentences, I feel like our ancestors smile at us for even just knowing those few little things.”

—Madison Whitekiller

(Episodes 12 & 13–Cherokee Riders: We Remember)

“I think it’s important to know how our people survived and to pass that on because, nowadays, you know, you got modern hunting and modern housing. And I think it’s important to teach people how our people used to gather food. How our people used to build housing and shelter.”

—Talon Pascal

(Episode 1: Talon Pascal: Time Traveler)



Support and Mentorship

Our Warriors are incredible young people, but they didn't accomplish the things they did alone. Many of them were supported in their activism by family, teachers, coaches, and employers. Having support, encouragement, and guidance is important for young people who want to make a difference in their communities. Mentors can help you see the bigger picture, provide context for what has come before, and help open doors within the community.



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Physics Professor Joel Trudeau agreed to mentor **Kayla** and **Rotshennón:ni** (*Episode 7–Rotshennón:ni Two–Axe and Kayla Spencer–Young: IndigeSTEM*), first in helping them set up peer tutoring for fellow Indigenous students, and later helping them by tracking down resources and offering advise as they launched their IndigeSTEM science club at Dawson College.



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Nevaeh's teacher Scott MacDonald encouraged her to join her school's student senate and convinced her to run for Vice-Chair of the Northern Indigenous Youth Council, and Barbara Day has helped her with organizing and fundraising in the school community.



Trechelle's (*Episode 3-Tréchelle Bunn: Movement is Medicine*) university hockey coach initially suggested she speak to her team about the Day for Truth and Reconciliation, to share her culture and the importance of the day with her teammates.

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Cole's (*Episode 4-Cole Clark and Dylan Hope: Northern Stars*) employer at Home Base encouraged him to be creative in finding ways to reach the local youth in ways that they would appreciate..



Talon (*Episode 1-Talon Pascal: Time Traveler*) has many adults supporting and encouraging him, including experienced tanning experts, archeologists, both his parents, his uncle, and even friends who helped cut and transport logs to the pithouse!

Kyrstin (*Episode 8–Kyrstin Dumont: Gorgeous Diversity*) has known Inuk fashion designer Martha Kyak since 2015. She has modeled in Martha’s shows and worn Martha’s clothing in her own shows.



The **Cherokee Remember The Removal Riders** (Desiree, Madison, Emily, Jeanetta and Kayce, *Episodes 12 & 13–Cherokee Riders: We Remember*) had a whole team of support! The Cherokee Nation provided a cycling coach and a Cherokee language/history coach to help train and prepare them emotionally for their ride, and then set up a security escort to support them throughout the 950-mile journey.

Isaac's (*Episode 5-Isaac Garcia: It's All Relative*) parents and brother have helped him source donations and set up space in their house to store them. They also provide the transportation to give out the donations, and help him distribute Blessing Bags several times a year.

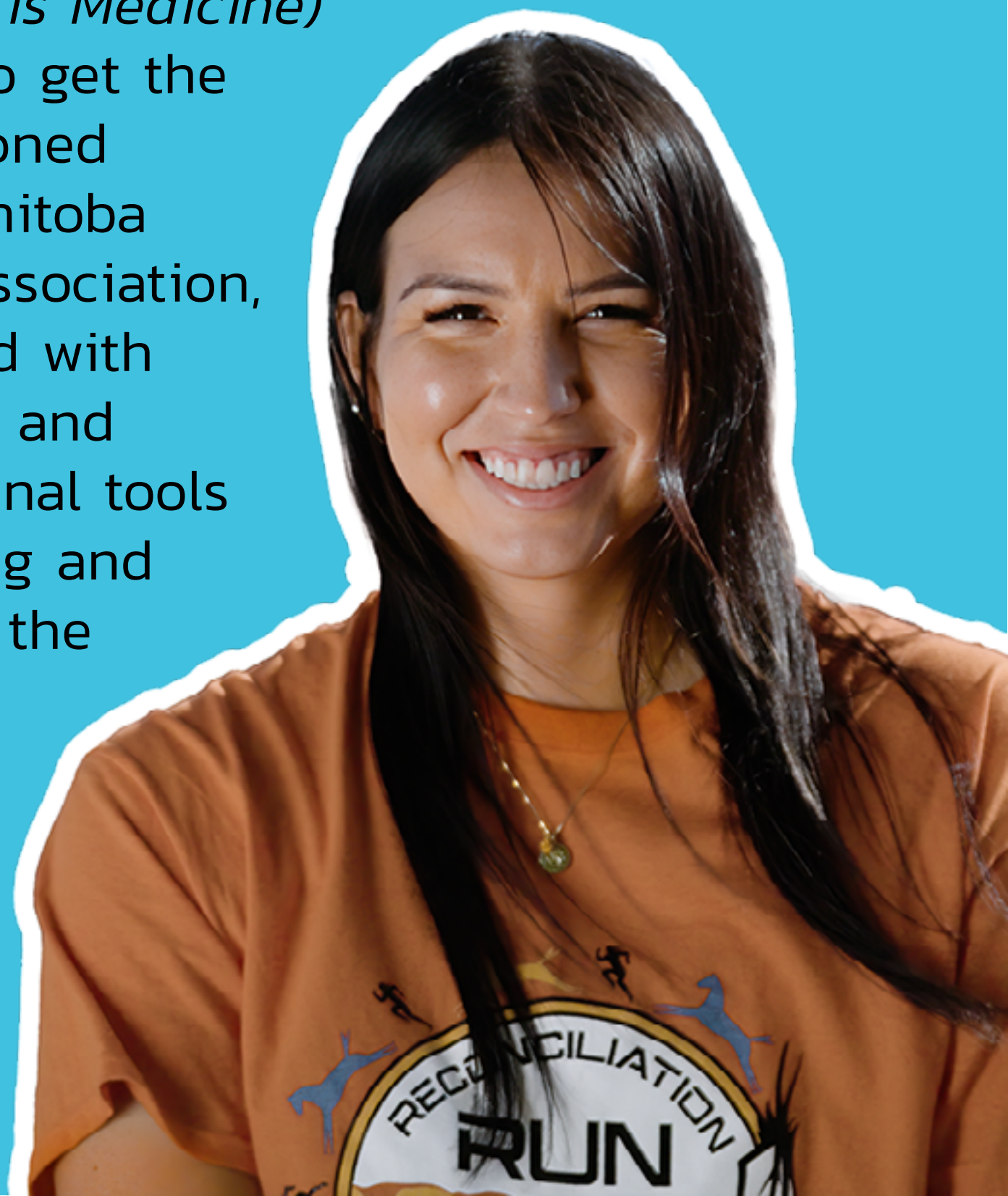


Dealing with Red Tape

For public-facing events, you may need additional support and buy-in from community leaders, school administration and school boards, or local government:

For the Reconciliation Run Half-Marathon, **Tréchelle** (*Episode 3-Tréchelle Bunn: Movement is Medicine*)

was able to get the run sanctioned by the Manitoba Runners Association, who helped with equipment and organizational tools for planning and organizing the event.



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To get Indigenous history more fully explored at her high school, **Kya** (*Episode 10-Kya Steinbach Parker: Bridging the Gap*) had to show her principal that there was enough interest among her fellow students for an Indigenous History Class. She rallied friends and acquaintances on social media to sign up for the potential class and brought the results to her principal.



Fundraising & Sponsorship

You may need to raise money and find sponsorship to help pay for venues, equipment, staffing, merchandise, and supplies—event planning can be an expensive business and just raising the money can be a big project!

Some organizations may be able to provide goods or services in exchange for being identified as a sponsor. Others may be able to provide funding in the form of grants—and applying for a grant is another big project!



Here's how fundraising and sponsorship helped out some of our Warriors:

Isaac was able to add brand new items to his Blessing Bags thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the State of Minnesota.

Tréchelle invested her time, sharing her story with people to get donations and sponsors for the Reconciliation Run so that they could have T-shirts and finishers' medals for the participants.

Kyrstin found people who wanted to support the Community Unity Fashion Show, volunteering their time and services, donating products, or contributing money to sponsor the event.

Event Planning

Planning an event can be a really big task and you'll want all the help you can get. Recruit friends, family, mentors, and volunteers to advise and support you, wherever you can find them.

There's a lot to consider when you're planning a big event, but don't panic! Work with your partners and volunteers to make a list of what you'll need, who's responsible for it, and how you'll pay for it. Here are a few things to consider before diving in headfirst:



Permits: Do I need a permit for this event? Who do I contact? What will it cost?

Venue: Where am I holding the event? What will it cost?

Equipment: What do I need to have at the venue to make this event happen? E.g., booths, tables, chairs, PA system and microphones, stage lights, curtains

Volunteers: How many people do I need? For what jobs? What do they need to know? What equipment will they need to do the jobs effectively?

Transportation: How will we get volunteers and equipment to and from the event?

Health and Safety: For moving and athletic events like marches, road races, and bike rallies, do I need medics and an ambulance on site? Do I need a van to follow behind and pick up anyone who can't finish or needs assistance to get to the end (commonly called a sweeper truck or a sag wagon)?

Staff and Volunteer Visibility: How will people attending the event recognize people working at the event? Think about ID badges on lanyards, or T-shirts designating staff and volunteers.

All these things need to be coordinated and paid for somehow, so funding, donations, and sponsorship are important for taking care of all the details that make your event a smooth, safe success story!

What's Next?

What's next is up to you! It all depends on where you're starting from.

The best thing you can do is be curious, take an interest in your community, and figure out what you would like to see changed. Once you have an idea, start talking it over with friends, family, and mentors and decide on your next step, whether it's something you want to learn, something you want to create, something you want to teach, or something big you want to do like a powwow, a demonstration, or a run/walking event.

Remember, nothing is impossible!

“I used to think that things were impossible...that certain situations, certain supports, anything that I couldn’t achieve was impossible. But I sit here, as a 21-year-old who has overcome so many hardships, so many addictions, and so many situations of failure ... I sit here today to tell you all that the impossible is possible. In fact, I want you to throw the word ‘impossible’ out of your vocabulary. I never want to hear it within the Canadian dictionary again, because there’s nothing that’s impossible.”

***- Kyrstin Dumont
(Episode 8-Kyrstin
Dumont: Gorgeous
Diversity)***

