

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sobeys Inc. partners with Kids Help Phone to support
Black and Indigenous-focused child and youth mental health programs**
Five-year partnership will support RiseUp and Finding Hope programs

Stellarton, NS (May 5, 2022) – Sobeys Inc. is proud to announce Kids Help Phone as a new partner in its [Family of Support: Child and Youth Mental Health Initiative \(“Family of Support”\)](#). This new partnership will support two community-based mental health programs from Kids Help Phone, [RiseUp](#) and [Finding Hope](#), to connect Black and Indigenous youth to real-time virtual counselling and crisis help. Each program provides 24/7 support for vulnerable youth, with the support of volunteer champions, counsellors and community advisors from Black and Indigenous communities. With Sobeys Inc.’s support, the RiseUp and Finding Hope programs have significant growth plans to help even more youth in Canada.

“Truly national, instantaneous mental health support is vital to address and support child and youth mental health challenges in critically underserved communities across the country,” said Katherine Hay, President & CEO, Kids Help Phone. “Thank you to Sobeys Inc. for this tremendous partnership, which will strengthen our programs in areas such as crisis response, community outreach, skill development, response times and more. These improvements will drive meaningful change for Black and Indigenous youth and help shift the child and youth mental health landscape in Canada.”

RiseUp, powered by Kids Help Phone in partnership with the BlackNorth initiative, is Canada’s only 24/7, bilingual e-mental health support for Black youth, which addresses their unique struggles and experiences compounded by anti-Black systemic racism. The RiseUp program, in collaboration with community partners, focuses on supporting the Black community and Afro-diaspora. RiseUp facilitated 24,000 phone and text conversations with Black youth in 2021, with a goal to grow to 60,000 conversations by 2025.

Finding Hope is a national action plan focused on creating capacity for Kids Help Phone to better connect with Indigenous youth – who face some of the most difficult mental health challenges in Canada, and significant barriers to accessing services and connection. Finding Hope is led, co-created and governed by an Indigenous Advisory Council, connecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities with Indigenous volunteers and counsellors. Finding Hope’s goal is to connect Indigenous youth to virtual counselling and crisis response programs one million times by 2025.

“We’ve partnered with Kids Help Phone for so many years and the way they stood up to support youth across Canada during the pandemic has been nothing short of amazing,” said Michael Medline, President and CEO, Empire. “We have so much confidence in the integrated program that has been



created in partnership with both Black and Indigenous community leaders and are proud to see this programming evolve to provide a focus on supporting early intervention for Black and Indigenous youth.”

Through its Family of Support, Sobeys Inc. continues to support early intervention initiatives to support child and youth mental health at 13 children’s hospitals across Canada. Sobeys Inc.’s partnership with the Sobeys Foundation and Canada’s Children’s Hospital Foundations was the inaugural investment for Family of Support, resulting in more than \$9 million raised to date for 13 children’s hospital foundations across Canada. Like Kids Help Phone, Sobeys Inc. is also a proud partner of the BlackNorth initiative.

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ABOUT EMPIRE

Empire Company Limited (TSX: EMP.A) is a Canadian company headquartered in Stellarton, Nova Scotia. Empire’s key businesses are food retailing, through wholly-owned subsidiary Sobeys Inc., and related real estate. With approximately \$28.5 billion in annual sales and \$15.9 billion in assets, Empire and its subsidiaries, franchisees and affiliates employ approximately 134,000 people.

ABOUT KIDS HELP PHONE

Kids Help Phone is Canada’s only 24/7 e-mental health service offering free, confidential support in English and French to young people. As the country’s virtual care expert, we give millions of youth a safe, trusted space to talk over phone or through text or in self-directed supports in any moment of crisis or need. Through our digital transformation, we envision a future where every person in Canada is able to get the support they need, when they need it most, however they need it. Kids Help Phone gratefully relies on the generosity of donors, volunteers, stakeholder partners, corporate partners and governments to fuel and fund our programs. Learn more at [KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca).

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