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TOGETHER: CHANGEMAKER

She couldn't find bandages to match her skin tone. So she launched Heal in Colour

Tianna McFarlane hopes to see her inclusive line of bandages on Shoppers Drug Mart shelves in the future.

By **Urbi Khan** Staff Reporter

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When Tianna McFarlane was preparing to go on vacation in 2019, she tried to find bandages to make a gash on her leg look inconspicuous.

She quickly came to the realization that there was no bandage available that would match her brown skin in Walmart or in Shoppers Drug Mart.

“So, it was kind of in that moment when I was like, ‘Hey, I have an opportunity here to create that product,’ maybe I can be one of the first ones to actually do it, and maybe there’s other people that have been looking for (this),” said McFarlane, 30, who works as an administrative assistant at York University.

McFarlane took her idea and made it happen. She founded [Heal in Colour](#), a line of bandages for people of colour.

“I think it’s something that a lot of people would like the opportunity to buy,” said McFarlane.



Bandages are receiving a lot of camera time right now, said McFarlane, as people flood [social media with selfies](#) after they receive their [COVID-19](#) vaccine. McFarlane can see how a bandage that matches a person's skin tone could further boost their mood.

Heal in Colour customers to date have included health-care professionals who have purchased the product to give to those they vaccinate, said McFarlane.

McFarlane says since the idea came to her, it has been her "mission" to make inclusive bandages the norm.

Take children for example. Minor scrapes and cuts are a regular thing for them. McFarlane hopes that having the option of bandages that better match a child's skin tone will make them "feel valued and included."

"They're going to realize, 'Wow, there's something made for me,'" said McFarlane. "I've never seen something like this before, and it'll show them that the world around them is trying so hard to make sure that all products are inclusive."

It was only in June 2020 that Johnson & Johnson, after 100 years of offering Band-Aids, announced [on Instagram](#) the launch of a range of bandages to match black and brown skin tones.

It came at a time of global reckoning on anti-Black racism — a reckoning that put increased focus on supports for Black entrepreneurs as well.

"There's a boom of Black businesses right now, there's a boom of Black support right now," said McFarlane. "This is the perfect time to create a product for my people, from myself ... I also just wanted to become someone that can inspire other people too. I've always wanted to just inspire the younger generation."

McFarlane says that being the founder of Heal in Colour has given her opportunities to talk to students as young as Grade 8.

Being a business owner is important to McFarlane's identity.

"Being a black woman, we experience a lot of injustices," said McFarlane. "So, what this means for me is (that) it shows other Black women, that if we see injustices, we can actually be the change, and we can actually make change and people are going to be supportive."

After almost two years from inception to creation, during which McFarlane got in touch with manufacturers in China and partnered with a graphic designer, Heal in Colour launched in April. Since then, McFarlane says that she has had \$3,500 in sales and has sold 350 boxes.

The bandage line is available to buy online and at the York University book store for now, but McFarlane envisions it finding a place on Shoppers Drug Mart shelves in the future.





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