CELEBRATING colorful years
Our mission is to bring happiness to children who are facing the stress of hospitalization by giving them the freedom that comes with creative play.

“Having a sister who was constantly in the children’s hospital between birth and 18 for cerebral palsy, it was always nice to see those kids actually smile. You’re achieving greatness one crayon at a time.”

—Caitlyn Marie Esposito, sister

“Our daughter was in many hospitals for many years battling cancer. We were so happy when treasures such as yours were shared with her as it offered a bright light in the days filled with doctors and meds. Thank you from a parent who knows what a blessing fresh crayons can be.”

—Rachelle Cashion, mom

“The triangular shape of our crayons reflects the three sides of our work:

- Giving kids the means for self-expression through art
- Helping to protect and preserve the environment
- Building community through teamwork and volunteerism

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“Being a parent of a cancer survivor (leukemia) at 4 years old (now 14 at 5’9”), it was so heartwarming to see her color and pass the time. To forget for a couple of hours that she was fighting for her life.”

—Hugo A. Lopez, dad
When I was young, I learned quickly that I was different. My brain didn’t work like others’ did, and I couldn’t—and didn’t want to—make myself fit the mold.

**Then I discovered art.**

I could solve problems creatively, through doing and making. I’d draw, paint, and build things. Art gave me a way to survive, even to thrive.

At a birthday dinner in 2011, my wife, a teacher, told me that California had cut art from the school budget statewide. It was disturbing news. While we talked about our disappointment, my sons colored on the kids’ menus. *Where, I began to wonder, do those crayons go when we leave the table?*

**Turns out, they’re all trashed. But they still had so much joy to give.**

I began to see how I could share art with the younger generations—all while keeping tons of waxy sludge out of landfills.

After much deliberation on what to do with the unwanted crayons, I talked to Child Life Services (CLS) departments in multiple hospitals. CLS specialists make the hospital experience as normal (and even fun!) for pediatric patients as possible. The focus on kids’ emotional and mental well-being. And it’s proven that making art can help reduce anxiety and depression. But they have hardly any funding to get art supplies. They needed someone to provide the tools for therapeutic art.

**And with that, the Crayon Initiative was born.**

What’s astounded me since 2013 is how this mission resonates with people. It all comes back to the power of the crayon. It’s impossible to overstate how critical a pack of crayons can be to a kid in the hospital—and to their families, too.

**The magic is in the crayon itself.**

Therapeutic art is a force for creativity, for distraction, for self-expression, for escape. And children in the hospital badly need that. You open a pack of crayons and you’re right back to happy memories. And why shouldn’t that be the case even for kids spending those critical childhood years in hospitals?

I’m honored to have spent the last decade working with corporate sponsors, generous individual donors, and incredible volunteers across the country to bring this dream to life. Because of the community supporting The Crayon Initiative, hundreds of thousands of kids have found happiness in some of the most unhappy situations.

Happy coloring,

Bryan Ware
Founder
The Crayon Initiative
**IMPACT RESULTS**

In 2013, The Crayon Initiative started in Bryan and Marissa Ware’s kitchen. In the 10 years since then, we are proud of what’s been accomplished.

- **Rescued** 52.8 million crayons from landfills
- **Created** 5.5 million recycled crayons
- **Given** 700,000+ crayon packs to children in hospitals
- **Provided** 418 hospitals with free crayons

And those numbers go up daily!
THE HISTORY OF THE CRAYON INITIATIVE

AUGUST 29, 2011
The idea is born

MAY 8, 2017
Launched the 1st Annual Crayon Classic Golf Tournament

FEBRUARY 17, 2016
1 million crayons saved from landfills

FEBRUARY 14, 2016
1 million crayons saved from landfills

AUGUST 29, 2014
First crayon pack shipped to a hospital

MAY 30, 2013
First crayon donated

MAY 22, 2013
Incorporated as a nonprofit

MAY 24, 2017
Moved out of Bryan and Marissa's kitchen into our own facility

MAY 21, 2020
Completed the reuse cycle by donating used crayon wrappers for artificial logs

NOVEMBER 24, 2020
500,000 packs shipped to hospitals

MAY 21, 2020
Completed the reuse cycle by donating used crayon wrappers for artificial logs

MAY 16, 2021
Held 1st Annual Sumner Lovin' Memorial Bike Ride

AUGUST 20, 2021
Celebrated 1st Annual Melt With You Summer BBQ and Concert

DECEMBER 21, 2022
 Introduced The Crayon Crew characters

FEBRUARY 14, 2023
Became Chick-fil-A's first nonprofit Kid's Meal partner
THE CRAYON JOURNEY

Step 1
COLLECT DONATED CRAYONS

All our crayons are remanufactured from unwanted ones that would otherwise end up in landfills. Anyone can send in crayons, collect with one of our boxes, or host a full crayon drive!

**IT TAKES ABOUT A POUND OF DONATED CRAYONS TO CREATE FIVE PACKS OF THE CRAYON INITIATIVE'S SPECIALLY MOLDED CRAYONS!**

Step 2
SORT, MELT & MOLD

Our volunteers sort the donated crayons into like colors. Then they’re placed into our unique oven drawer systems to melt down. The hot wax is then poured into our special molds, designed with the help of an occupational therapist.

**OUR CRAYONS ARE LARGER, EASIER FOR A CHILD TO HOLD, MORE DURABLE, AND THREE-SIDED SO THEY WON'T ROLL OFF HOSPITAL TRAYS.**

Step 3
PACKING AND SHIPPING

Volunteers hand-sort all of our brand-new crayons, ensuring that one of each color goes into our packs of eight: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, and pink.

**EVERY HOSPITAL SHIPMENT INCLUDES 1,600 CRAYONS—200 PACKS TO BE GIVEN TO 200 CHILDREN. BUT AT SOME OF OUR HOSPITALS, A SHIPMENT OF THE CRAYON INITIATIVE CRAYONS LASTS ONLY A DAY!**

Step 4
INTO THE HANDS OF KIDS

Once our crayons arrive at one of our partner hospitals, it’s their time to shine! As the kids color, they engage in therapeutic art. Making art can decrease depression and anxiety. It provides an outlet for releasing stress and a way to process fear and negative emotions.

**IT COSTS THE CRAYON INITIATIVE ABOUT $300 TO GET CRAYONS TO 200 KIDS.**
Child Life Services Specialist

Kristen King knows what it’s like for children and families to spend their days in the hospital. As the Manager of Child Life at Memorial Health Dwaine & Cynthia Willett Children’s Hospital of Savannah, she spends time developing recreational and educational programming to balance children’s healthcare routines with valuable moments that matter to their families.

In 2016, we needed to seek out recreational resources for our patients. Due to infection control protocols, we can’t reuse any items that can’t be washed. And given the volume of patients we see, it’s incredibly challenging to provide every family with single-use creative arts items.

I learned about The Crayon Initiative and immediately fell in love with the product, the mission, and the commitment to recycling! The Crayon Initiative has provided us with a consistent source of crayons, which we use daily to inspire children to get creative and express themselves. Plus, they have no wrappers, which means we can easily sanitize any that are shared among patients!

PLAY IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS. THERAPEUTIC ART IS A VITAL PART OF ENGAGING OUR PEDIATRIC PATIENTS, ASSISTING IN THEIR RECOVERY, AND HELPING THEM COPE WITH THEIR HOSPITALIZATION. THE CRAYON INITIATIVE’S CRAYONS ARE INVALUABLE FOR OUR KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

I believe providing crayons to the kids—and encouraging them to take their pack home!—helps smooth both admission and discharge transitions. They get to bring a part of their experience home, helping the entire event become more about all the activities that they did and less about any fear or anxiety they had.

Our staff is thrilled every time a new shipment from The Crayon Initiative comes in!
Pediatric Patient

STORY OF IMPACT

By age 8, Evan had already received two kidney transplants. He and his family spent long stints in the hospital, working to get Evan healthy.

No child wants to spend hours stuck in a hospital room. Kids in hospitals are just like any others—they need to play, be creative, and have fun!

Thankfully, Evan had great Child Life Services specialists by his side—and they had free crayons from The Crayon Initiative! Evan could find enjoyment and distraction in a pack of our recycled crayons!

“[COLORING] IS KIND OF MY FAVORITE THING TO DO. I LIKE DRAWING STUFF AND BEING CREATIVE. IT HELPS ME THINK ABOUT FUN THINGS.”

—Evan, age 8

We were honored to have Evan visit our facility and share his bright smile with all of us!
CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

For corporations and companies, the opportunity to partner with The Crayon Initiative for charitable activities always does so much more than check off a to-do. The impact of the work employees are doing—whether collecting crayons, sorting them, or raising funds—hits home for everyone, every time.

No matter the size of the company, at least one person volunteering knows a kid who has spent time in the hospital; is friends with a parent who has lost a child to illness; or had their own childhood experience with medical challenges. It’s an honor to hear their stories and provide an avenue to give back.

Prior to the pandemic, 70% of our revenue came from corporations via sponsorships and team-building events. The loss was a hard hit, but we are proud to have begun offering companies fun and impactful charitable activities again!

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Teambuilding with a Mission

“"The Crayon Initiative is rewarding, meaningful, and fun. We are taking unwanted crayons out of landfills and helping the environment. More importantly, we are recycling the old crayons, and creating new crayons that go to kids in Children's Hospitals.”

—Roger Hancock, Manager, Community Affairs CSAA Insurance Group—a AAA Insurer

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT CORPORATEEVENTS@THECRAYONINITIATIVE.ORG.
A LOOK TO THE NEXT 10 YEARS

Our partner hospitals are in need, as are the pediatric patients and families they serve. We need to support underfunded Child Life Services departments far beyond what we can do currently.

WE’RE PUSHING TO SHIP 1 MILLION PACKS OF CRAYONS PER YEAR WITHIN THE NEXT 5 YEARS—WHICH WILL REQUIRE US TO RAISE $1.46 MILLION ANNUALLY.

We have to grow our reliable funding in order to:

1. COVER INCREASED SHIPPING COSTS THAT WILL COME WITH HIGHER VOLUME
2. OPTIMIZE EQUIPMENT TO SHORTEN MELTING TIMES AND IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY
3. STAFF TO INCREASE CRAYON PRODUCTION EXPONENTIALLY
4. INVESTIGATE EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT HIGHER PRODUCTION AND MORE EFFICIENT SHIPPING OPTIONS
5. DEVELOP LASTING AND IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS

Ultimately, The Crayon Initiative is striving to go far beyond the reach of a crayon pack. Within the next 10 years, we will become the go-to therapeutic art resource for all children’s hospitals within the United States, providing:

- AN INTERACTIVE ONLINE PLATFORM
- EXPANSIVE ACTIVITY KITS FOR USE WITHIN CHILD LIFE SERVICES DEPARTMENTS
- UNIQUE ACTIVITY BOOKS DESIGNED TO ADDRESS THE EXPERIENCE OF A HOSPITALIZED CHILD AND THEIR FAMILIES

In order to get to that level of impact, we need your help!
WAYS TO GIVE

DONATE FUNDS
It costs The Crayon Initiative $1.46 to create one pack of specially designed recycled crayons. We then give them to Child Life Services departments for free. Without the support of generous donors, we could not continue this work.

To bring happiness to children in hospitals across the United States, you can make a donation!

JOIN THE CRAYON BOX
Jump into The Crayon Box by giving monthly! A monthly donation is the best way you can support The Crayon Initiative. Members of The Crayon Box are passionate about helping sick children and sharing the power of art. The dependability of your ongoing gift ensures The Crayon Initiative can plan ahead to meet the needs of our hospitals and their patients.

Do the most good by giving monthly!

DONATE CRAYONS
Without crayon donations, The Crayon Initiative couldn't exist! All of our crayons are remanufactured from used, broken, and unwanted ones. We've made it easy to collect crayons nationwide!

Check out our free crayon collection guides.
OUR THANKS

The last 10 years wouldn’t have been possible without the support of our:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CORPORATE SPONSORS
DONORS
MEMBERS OF THE CRAYON BOX
PARTNERS
VOLUNTEERS
HOSPITAL PARTNERS AND THEIR CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS

WE ARE MOVED BY YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS, TO THE CHILDREN, AND TO THE PLANET.

“For those coming into my unit, the emergency department, there are so many unknowns; for many children, this is their first real experience with hospitalization... [Your crayons] truly serve as my pathway into building rapport and trust with children and families in times of stress and uncertainty.”

—Mary Dunleavy, CCLS, Pediatric Emergency Department, UF Health Shands Children’s Hospital

“Partnering through a monthly financial contribution allows us to be part of the mission we hold so dear. How amazing this allows caring people from all across the country to join together to be a very important part of recycling and providing new crayons to children in hospitals!”

—Leah Palladino, member of The Crayon Box

“I lend my support, eagerly knowing that The Crayon Initiative’s work accomplishes several important missions all at once! Hospitalized children brought a moment of relief in hard times, and crayons kept from landfills. An all-around happier earth with happier people in it!”

—Hannah Rodriquez, donor