

# Normalizing life for hospitalized teens through art and community-building

STREAM Education Foundation x UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital

Here's the status quo:

Being hospitalized is never fun, but it's particularly difficult to be hospitalized in an isolation unit. With fewer visits and no opportunities to leave the room to interact with others, patients get bored of books and TV.

In the chaos of hospitalized care, **mental health** often becomes an afterthought. The combination of **boredom and social isolation** is dangerous to the emotional wellbeing of patients, particularly **teens**.

We looked into it.

We interviewed **10 pediatricians and 3 former patients** about their experiences and confirmed that boredom and social isolation are big problems. We surveyed **440+ teens** around the world to see how they connect with friends, but many existing social networks and solutions are unideal or don't translate well to the hospital setting due to **HIPAA concerns and lack of space**.

And found our solution in a meme.



In 2019, a Facebook page launched a "Draw a Duck and Share Your Art" meme with a basic prompt. People immediately got on board and started sharing their work. We wanted to capture the essence of that movement, since art can have such healing capacity and sharing what you've made can boost self-esteem. Patients can share their appreciation through emoji and sticker based reactions, and feel connected to a broader community.

Spreading smiles, one doodle at a time

Aside from providing a creative, confidence-boosting outlet that works within the HIPAA constraints of the hospital, there are additional benefits of our system, including:

- ability to work on physical paper in addition to virtual painting
- connecting with new and old friends
- healthy competition to for prizes and hospital show recognition
- no room for hurtful put-downs

