

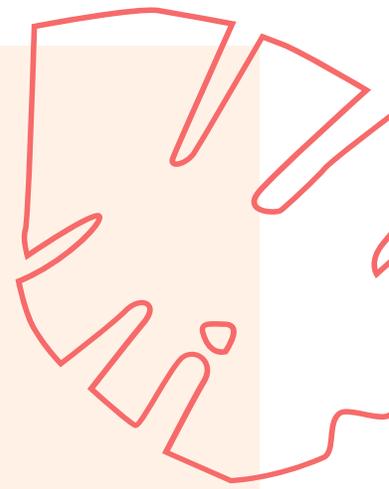
CARDS FOR COURAGE

CHAPTER STARTER GUIDE

DESIGNED BY ELLIE K.



A Note From Our Founders



Dear Cards for Courage Supporters,

We wanted to start off by thanking you for your compassion towards the patients and greater healthcare community around you. Always, but especially in the wake of the global COVID-19 crisis, the strength and tenacity of our communities is exemplified in the generous, giving spirits of our volunteers. As a youth-run organization that strives to provide emotional support to hospital patients, we firmly believe that changing the world starts with forging relationships with people around us who need these connections most—patients receiving diagnosis and treatment, undergoing some of the most physically and emotionally taxing experiences of their lives.

At Cards for Courage, the thread that connects our volunteers to patients from so many different walks of life is the power of harnessing art and written words to build genuine relationships. As you embark on the journey of starting a Cards for Courage chapter at your university or high school, we trust that your commitment to serving the most vulnerable patients in the community will amplify and propagate the mission that our organization lives by. This handbook is meant to help answer some of the pressing questions you might encounter as you begin the first step towards making an impact in your local neighborhood. We are here to support you along the way, so please do not hesitate to reach out to cardsforcourage20@gmail.com if you have any further inquiries.

Thank you once again for your demonstration of proactivity, enthusiasm, and initiative. We are so excited to welcome you into the Cards for Courage family and have you join our network of passionate student leaders across the world. Together, we can mobilize communities and resources to brighten up people's days. Together, we can make a difference.

Warm Regards,

Anna Chen, Elaine Chiao, and Archita Goyal

Anna Chen

Elaine

Archita G.

ABOUT US

Our Organization

We were founded in 2020 by three college friends at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Each of them volunteering in a different department of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, they observed the toll that illness takes on patients and their loved ones. They even saw patients who came in for treatment alone, without family or friends by their sides. Aching to do more, the three friends came up with an idea. Intertwining their love for art, letter-writing, and human connection, Cards for Courage was born.

With only a handful of volunteers, our beginnings were humble. But our first pilot delivery runs of hand-made cards for cancer patients at the Johns Hopkins Hospital generated overwhelming positive feedback from patients, families, and even nurses. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched a project to create appreciation cards for healthcare workers and support staff on the frontlines. The initiative gained traction, and soon, hundreds of our volunteers were spearheading it in their local communities around the world. Cards for Courage has quickly expanded into an international, 501(c)(3)-certified nonprofit organization, all thanks to the dedication and compassion of our members.

Our Vision

At Cards for Courage, our goal is to support patients and health workers with artistic expressions and uplifting words from their communities. By encouraging genuine human connections, we hope to show patients that they are important and cherished, while transforming healthcare into a more compassionate environment for everyone. We believe in the power of emotional support to touch and better lives and take immense pride in the work of our volunteers, who are sowing seeds of empathy around the world.



STARTING A CHAPTER

Starting a chapter can seem overwhelming, so we have broken it down into several steps to give you some tips on how you can make it thrive!



Chapter Registration

First and foremost, please complete this **Google Form**. This will let us know that you are interested in starting a chapter and will allow us to connect you with others from your high school or university who have expressed the same interest.



Organizational Structure and Leadership

The first step towards success is establishing a strong organizational foundation. There are many responsibilities and tasks that come with starting a chapter, so we recommend each Cards for Courage chapter to have the following leadership positions:

- **President**
 - Oversees all aspects of club activities, including but not limited to: on-campus events, volunteer management, project implementation, and communications with the national chapter and community partners.
- **Treasurer**
 - Organizes fundraisers, manages all club funds and reimbursements, applies for grants, and maintains a detailed budget for the chapter.
- **Volunteer Coordinator**
 - Recruits and trains volunteers and ensures engagement and attendance at club events.
- **Outreach Coordinator**
 - Establishes lasting connections with local hospitals, healthcare institutions, and other community partners.
- **Publicity Coordinator**
 - Creates and runs all social media platforms for the club, particularly Facebook and Instagram.



Registering as a Student Organization

This varies between schools. It usually requires a school-specific registration or application process in which you submit a variety of paperwork. This could include a club constitution, by-laws, annual budget, etc. Explore how the process works at your own school, with the help of your officer team. We encourage you to reach out to relevant school staff for help. Remember that you are starting a chapter of an international organization, which is different from starting a standalone club unassociated with an existing nonprofit.

Chapter Activities

Once you have established an executive board and successfully registered as an official student organization with your school, it is important to start planning activities for your chapter! We have listed a few suggestions below. Feel free to get creative and suggest new ideas for approval by emailing cardsforcourage20@gmail.com!

1. Creating Cards for Patients

This is our organization's founding mission. This requires (i) establishing contact with a hospital located near you and (ii) connecting with the appropriate personnel to discuss the best way to proceed (policies vary hospital to hospital). Some specific departments that our previous volunteers have started with include oncology and palliative care.

2. Creating Meaningful Patient-Patient Connections

After you have established contact with a hospital and delivered cards to patients, you can work to establish a program that provides patient-patient interaction and support. Patients can create and write cards to each other as a form of mutual support amongst those who understand each others' hardships the most.

3. Fundraising Efforts

Consider engaging volunteers in both on- and off-campus fundraisers in order to raise chapter funds for artwork and related expenses.

4. Card-Making Nights

To build a closer-knit team, consider hosting informal card-making nights where members can create cards and get to know others!

Chapter Updates



We want to know what you are up to and celebrate your hard work! We ask that you fill out this mandatory form bi-annually: <https://forms.gle/1WeWTbMVd7Nn4pS76> This information is also essential for our book-keeping purposes.

We are always available to support you and answer your questions. We want to ensure that your chapter can be as successful as possible so that together, we can make more positive impacts on our communities! Feel free to email us at: cardsforcourage20@gmail.com with any inquiries.