

Make an Impact: Comic Books for Children In Hospitals



ComicBooks for Kids is a new initiative whose mission is to provide child friendly comic books to children in hospitals, cancer centers and medical facilities across the United States. In almost every case, these come as new comics from the many publishers who support the program. So far, several publishers have assisted founder and president Mark Weiss in his mission. Now he's casting the net to retailers! Retailers may contribute directly, host events in which the proceeds are donated to ComicBooks for Kids, or donate directly to hospitals near them (with Mark's help).

Check out the Q&A with Mark below for more details on how to get involved!

1. What is ComicBooks For Kids! ?

[ComicBooks For Kids!](#) is a charitable organization that provides comic books to kids (from 6 to 21+) in hospitals, cancer centers and medical facilities all across the U.S.

2. Is ComicBooks For Kids an IRS approved charity?

Absolutely! All donations to ComicBooks For Kids are tax deductible. Our document certifying our charitable 501(C) 3 status is also posted on our website.

3. Why comic books for hospitals (instead of toys, etc.)?

If you look on our web site, we have a [COMMUNITY](#) tab where we provide feedback from hospitals and individuals. One of the items on that page shows a "giving tree" or a special closet which is often the place in a Children's Hospital where they keep the toys to give to the "kids." But if you look at that closet, and while you see wonderful toys, you do not see comic books. And as we spoke to the Child Life departments in the many hospitals we have contacted, every single one of them have asked us for comics and many have contacted us for more.

But perhaps the best answer, again on our COMMUNITY tab is a letter we received from Cincinnati Children's. It states, *"Your donation of 50 comic books allows our patients to forget, if only for a moment, where they are, and focus on just being a kid. Your gift works with our care providers, lifting spirits as medical treatments take effect."*

And that is what it is all about. We are giving smiles, escapism and the ability for a child, at least for a period of time to lose themselves in the magic of the creative artistry that is a comic book.

4. What specifically does your organization do?

We work with the Child Life and volunteer departments in hospitals across the United States to understand each hospital's requirements. Most hospitals have infectious disease policies so we adhere to those in every case. We then work closely with the wonderful people in this industry including the publishing and distribution sides of the business to provide the "kids" in these hospitals with child friendly comic books.

5. You mentioned "Child Friendly" comic books. Are there other requirements that hospitals have?

Due to infectious disease policies, comics that have been "used" or handled can cause concerns. Again, we work with the hospitals to specifically understand their requirements. For example, warehouse overstock, even something that is many years old can still be considered a "new" comic book if it has been in storage. Still other facilities are thrilled to receive gently used comics. Think of the many times you have been in a doctor's office and you see community magazines and books. We help sort through that.

6. How do these comic books make their way to the hospitals?

Once we have contacted the hospital and have documented their requirements, we collate the comics specific to the hospital's needs. Some hospitals ask for very young comics, still others for tween and others for the older reader. Thanks to the very generous donations of the many publishers who are supporting us, we match the requirements of the hospital to the comics that have been donated and we then ship them to the address the hospital provides us. We also maintain this information so that follow on shipments are easily matched to the requirements of the hospital. Since May and as reflected on our web site, we have delivered over 1500 comic books to over 40 hospitals and some hospitals have already received second shipments!

7. How can comic book store owners help or contribute to Comic Books for Kids?

Since the beginning of the direct market, comic book retailers have been the front lines and life blood of this industry. And there is so much that a store can do to help us.

Understand that as a charity, we rely on the generosity and kindness to support this mission. And we really want and need the retailer community to be a part of this industry give back. A retailer in San Antonio, [Heroes & Fantasies](#) has been supporting us in multiple ways.

This includes:

- A ComicBooks For Kids! weekend where a percentage of the store's sales goes to ComicBooks For Kids!
- A table at a convention where FCBD and other books can be taken with just a small donation to ComicBooks For Kids!.
- Promoting a store signing where a percentage of the proceeds go to ComicBooks For Kids!.
- Providing a case of common comics to us from the many 1:1000, 1:2000 variants that are offered.
- Selling a variant where the proceeds go to ComicBooks For Kids!
- Putting a box of 25c or 50c comics aside that go to ComicBooks For Kids!
- For those who are attending SDCC, please help us here! Find some books where the proceeds can go to ComicBooks For Kids! Every little bit makes a difference

Regardless of what a retailer wants to do, we would warmly appreciate anyone that wanted to work with us. We will gladly put the retailer's logo on our web site with an active link to their home page. In all cases, I will work directly with the store to answer any and all questions and address specific requirements, issues or concerns. But we do need and want the help of this great community! And of course, all donations receive a tax-deductible receipt be it currency or comics.

8. What if there is a hospital near a retailer that a customer or comic store would like to work with directly?

The mission of ComicBooks For Kids is to provide kids in hospitals and cancer centers with comic books. There is no one way to do this. If a customer or comic store wants to give to a hospital near them, all they need to do is contact us via our web site. We will facilitate the introductions, step out of the way and the customer or store can work directly with the hospital. Again, see our web site for an example of that. We have already done that in both Atlanta and New York.

And please take pictures! We will highlight that on our website reflecting the generosity of those involved

9. How can customers at comic shops potentially get involved?

Customers, collectors and individuals make a difference. They can friend us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

Donations mean a lot to us. We have a wall of heroes that reflects those who make a contribution of a certain amount. But even the smallest of contributions supports our shipping materials and costs. For example, even a \$25 donation pays for the materials and shipping costs to three hospitals! There is no limit to what can be done which is why my phone number and email are on the web site. [I am completely available for any and all questions, comments and recommendations.](#)

10. Any closing thoughts?

Just a thank you to the many people who have allowed us to get here with their kind support. The Publishers have been amazing including IDW, Dark Horse, BOOM, Archie, Lion Forge, Oni Press, Image and Marvel. DC even gave us a onetime contribution. The team at Diamond have been superb. Finally, Heroes & Fantasies in San Antonio, TX has been the role model for how a comic store can work with us.

For those who want to contact me, I can be reached at mark@comicbooksforkids.org or at 630 659-6087.



Founder and President Mark Weiss