

## **BEFORE WE BEGIN....**

### **LANGUAGE**

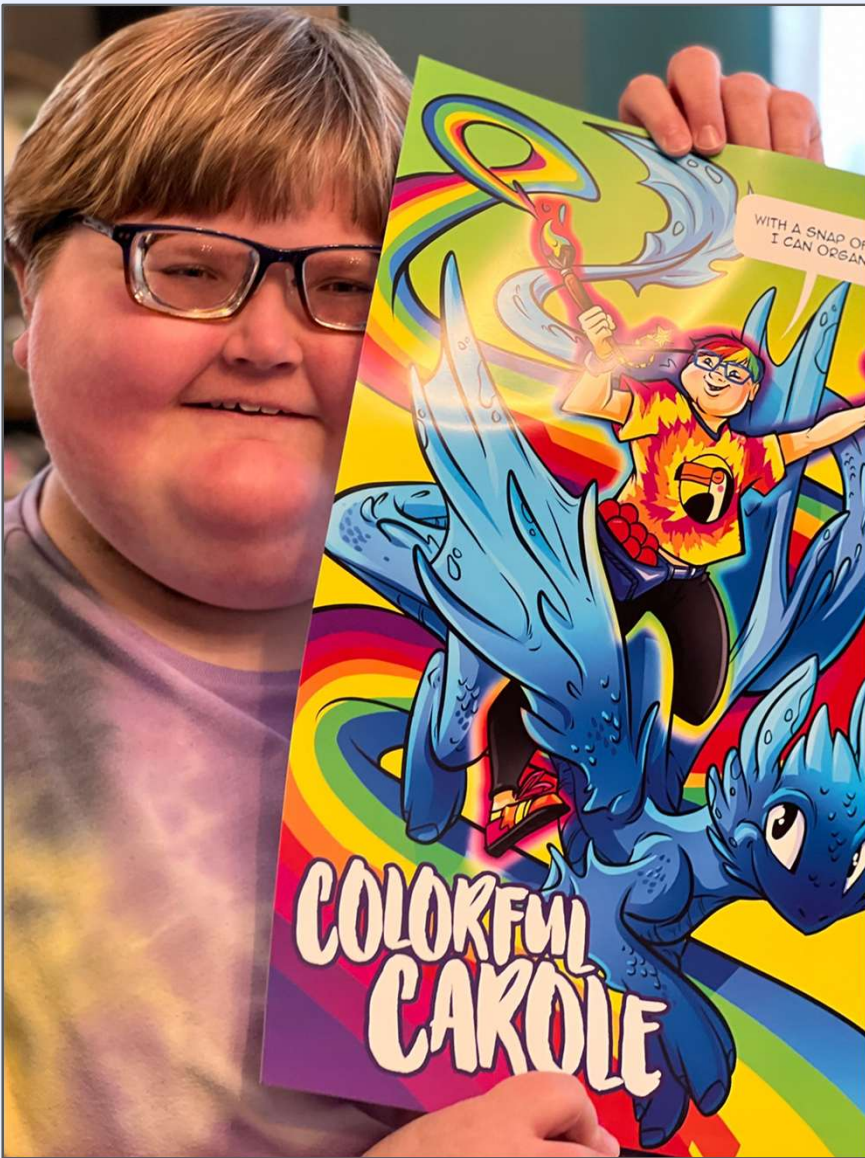
In alignment with the National Center on Disability and Journalism's Disability Language Style Guide, The Superhero Project uses a style guide that includes person-first language to describe people with disabilities and respects the language individuals with disabilities choose to describe themselves.

### **IMAGES**

All photographs and videos of children used in our presentation are being shared with permission from their parents.

### **PLEASE FEEL FREE!**

We encourage you to take care of yourself and be attentive to your needs. Thank you for being here today!



At The Superhero Project,  
we envision  
a global community  
of families and artists  
who collaboratively  
create joy as we  
welcome and celebrate  
the contributions of  
every child to the world.



# IMAGINATION INCLUSION REPRESENTATION JOY



THE SUPERHERO PROJECT





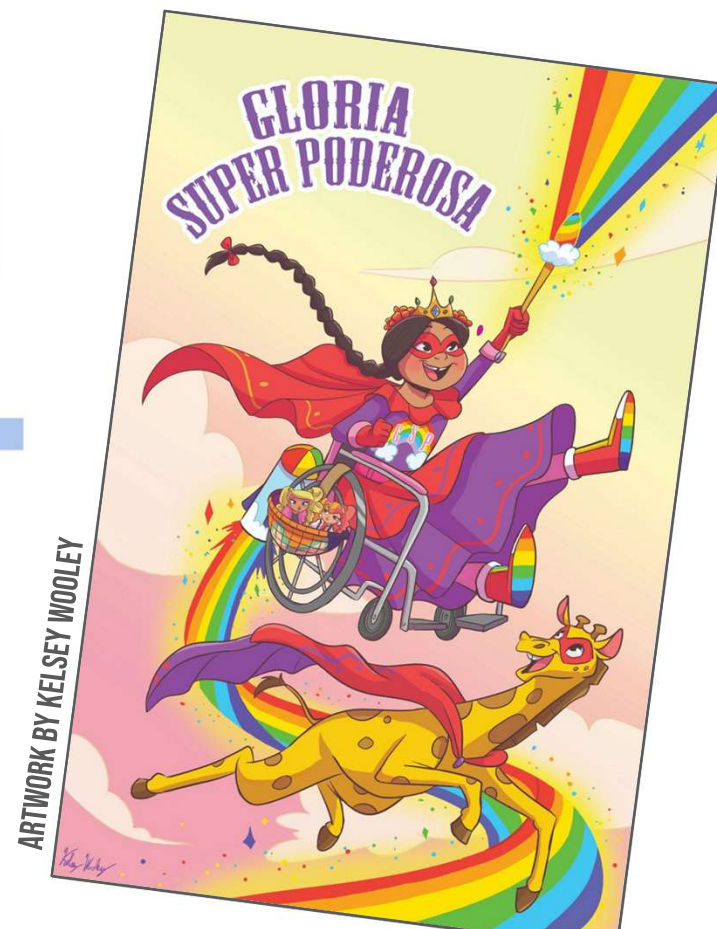




① INTERVIEW

② DESIGN

③ IMPACT





ART BY STEVE PALENICA





## LOCAL



East  
Cleveland

## NATIONAL



Indiana

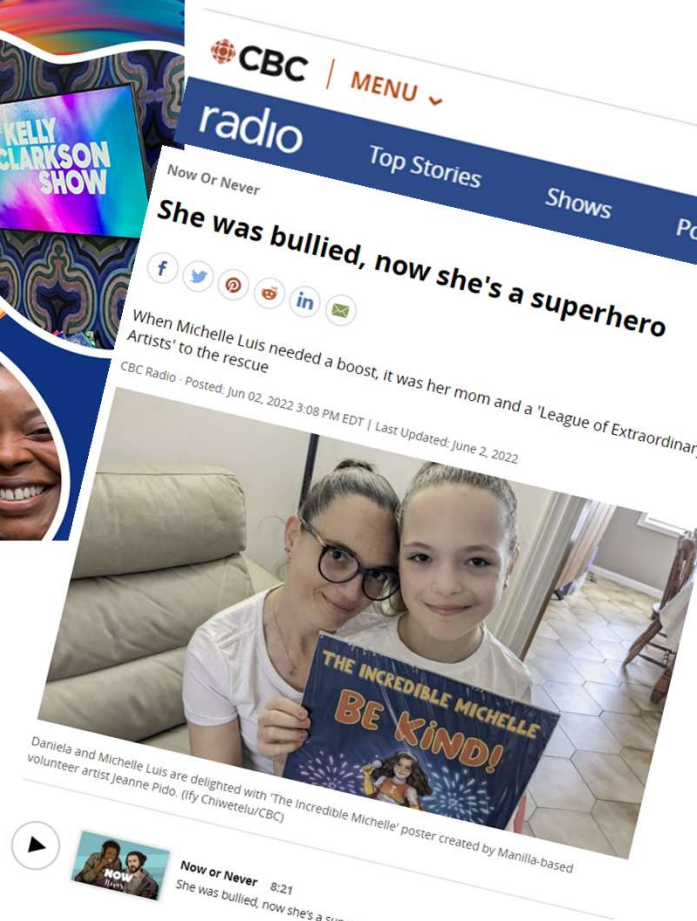
## GLOBAL



Nigeria

ARTWORK BY JOSH THOMPSON, JOÃO CARDOLETTO & ALEX VAN CALOEN

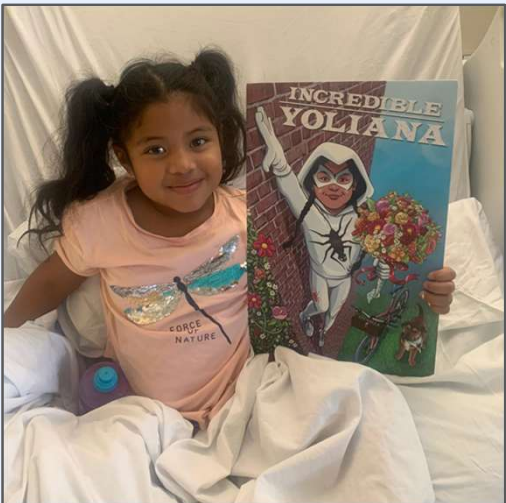






1700+ YOUTH  
49 STATES  
PUERTO RICO & GUAM  
25 COUNTRIES

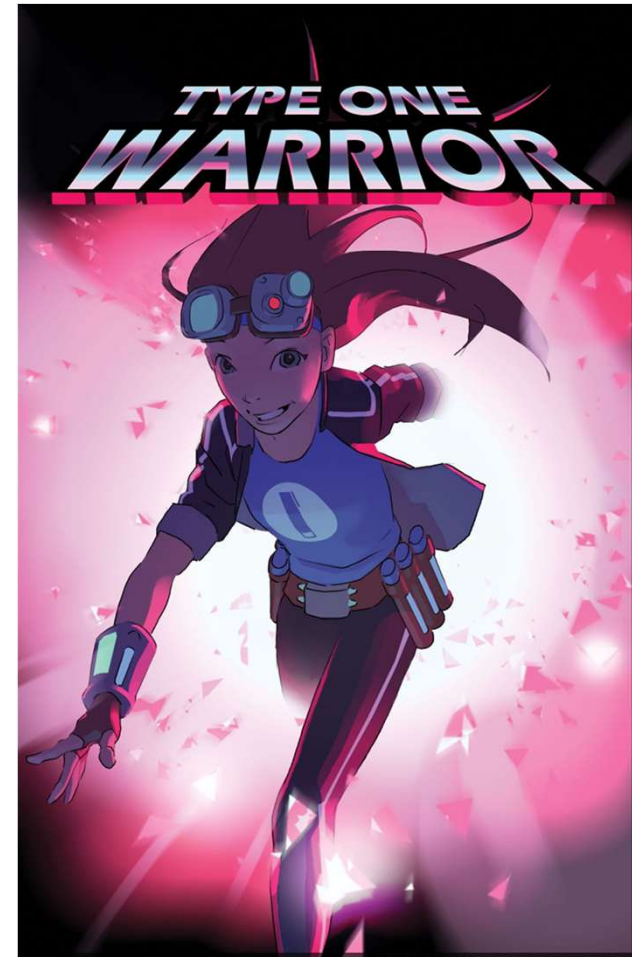






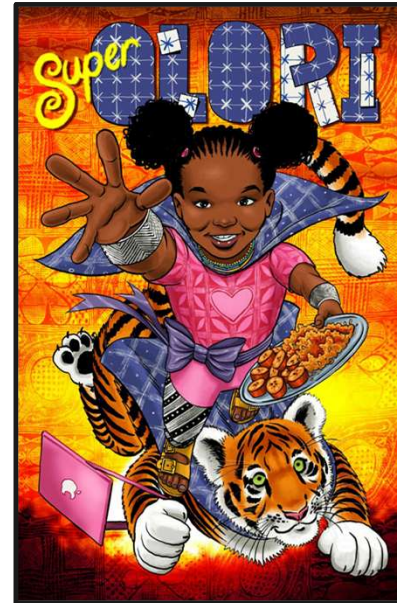


WHAT  
DO YOU  
STAND  
FOR?



ARTWORK BY ANTHONY WU





ARTWORK BY TARYN COZZY, SADIE BROWN, MIKE THOMAS, TIM SWITALSKI, JESSICA DOLL & JOSIAH CAMERON



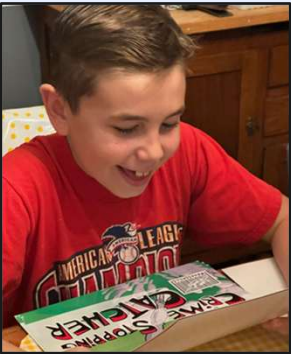
SELF-CONFIDENCE  
RESILIENCE  
CONNECTION  
HOPE —  —





# A MESSAGE FROM AVIV





# POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE



# University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital

METRO

## Superhero Project helps kids find inner strength

Published: Mar. 01, 2020, 5:00 a.m.



Turning kids with disabilities and illnesses into Superheroes



1,012 shares

By Michael K. McIntyre, The Plain Dealer

CLEVELAND, Ohio — The superhero of East 330th Street is motoring around her lair, spinning this way and that, zipping forward, abruptly changing directions. Her sidekick, Fonzie the



PHOTO CREDIT: GUS CHAN

# University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital





# Cuyahoga County Division of Child and Family Services



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, *Ohio*

Social

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## Artists Help Youth in Foster Care Find Their Superhero

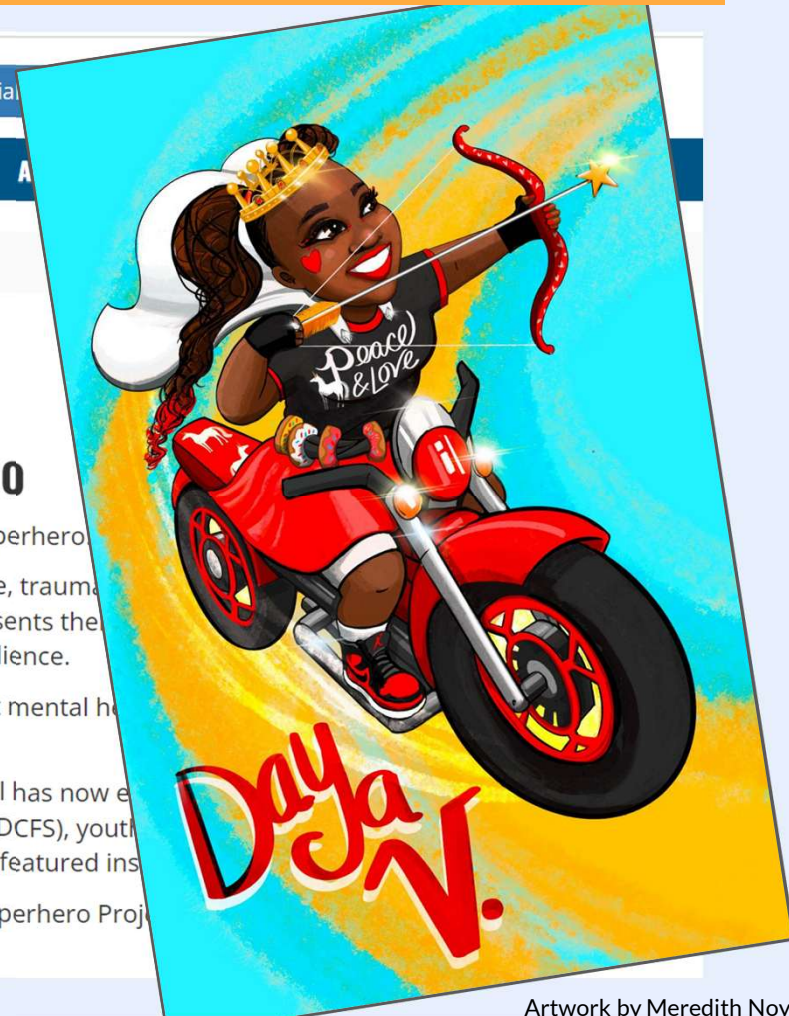
A group of community artists are helping Cuyahoga County youth in foster care find their inner superhero.

The Superhero Project, pairs artists with youth who are experiencing critical illness, a major change, trauma, or other needs. Each child is virtually interviewed by an artist to determine what type of superhero best represents them. Then the artists design the superhero caricature, creating a visual representation of their strength and resilience.

"The Superhero Project is a positive social-emotional intervention for youth dealing with significant mental health challenges, disabilities and illnesses," said Lisa Kollins, the founder of Superhero Project.

The project, which began in 2017 with interviews of patients at Rainbow Babies & Childrens Hospital has now expanded to include youth in the foster care system. As part of the collaboration with the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), youth superhero posters were showcased in the childcare room of the Jane Edna Hunter building. Currently, there are eight posters featured inside the room.

While many children feel alone and scared as they traverse through foster care, Kollins said the Superhero Project helps them find their inner superhero and the strength they have within as they go through the next phase of their lives.



Artwork by Meredith Noyes

# Positive Education Program Prentiss Autism Center



ARTWORK BY LESLEY VAMOS





# University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital



# The Friendly Inn



SISTERS of CHARITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF CLEVELAND

  
friendly inn  
cultivating, planting, nurturing

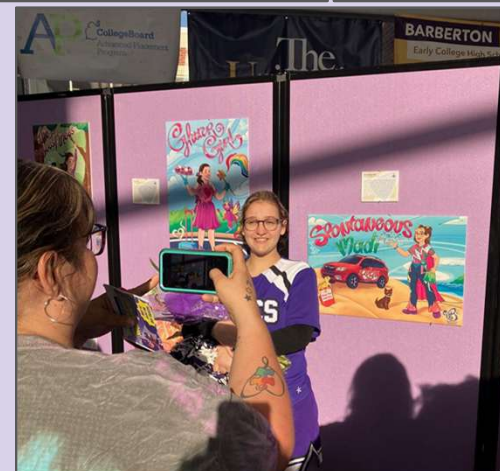


# The Miracle League of Lake County





# The Barberton Sparkles - Inclusive Cheer Squad







ARTWORK BY ZHARIA RAHN

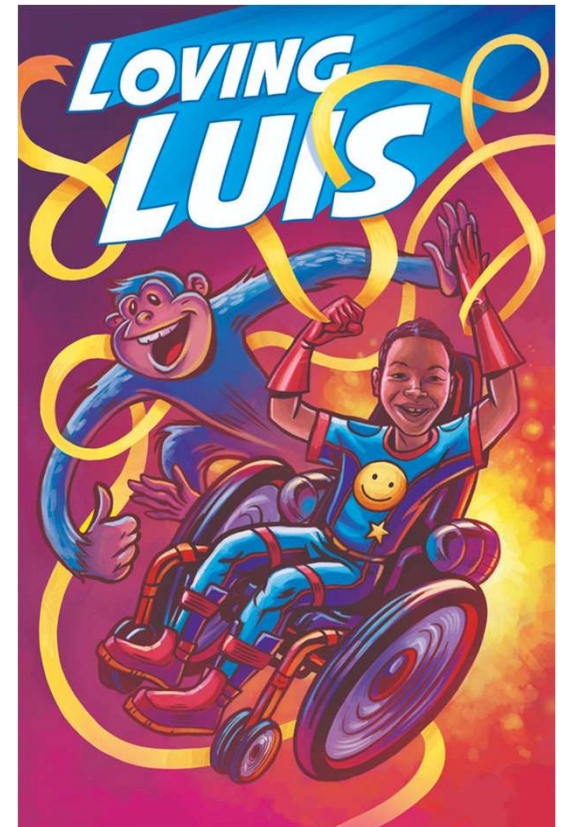


## Touring Exhibit: *Look at Me!*



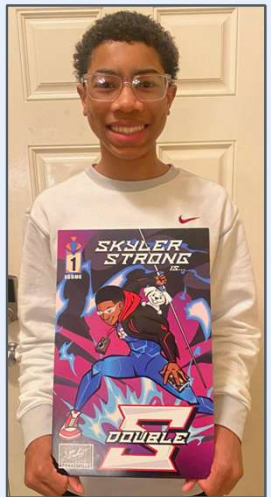
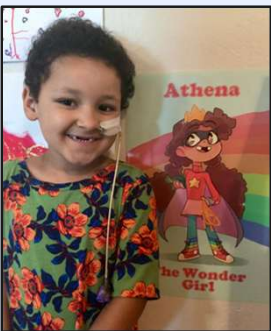
**"It gives students a chance to look beyond someone's illness or disability and see the actual them and not to discriminate."**

**10th grade scholar  
Boys Hope, Girls Hope**



ARTWORK BY TIM SWITALSKI







## North Canton YMCA



## Plymouth Library





- 1 Teachers' Guide
- 2 Discussion Questions
- 3 Scavenger Hunt
- 4 Creative Writing
- 5 Letters to Heroes
- 6 Zoom Visits
- 7 WHO AM I?

### A TEACHER'S NOTE...

With Lisa's creative assistance, I have been able to bring The Superhero Project to life for my fifth grade students and fellow staff members for the past three years!

This is a rare experience where we have displayed the *Look at Me* traveling exhibit in our own special school spaces. It has allowed students and visitors the chance to not only view and appreciate the Superhero Project posters and read all about their superpowers, but to participate in inquiry-based activities as well. In addition, we have expanded the experience by hosting virtual enrichment activities with Lisa, Taryn, and artists, and hosted guest speakers (including two featured superheroes) in person!

Students have written letters to their favorite superheroes, and a few were beyond surprised to receive a letter in return. The best part of our experience is when students create their very own superhero alter ego posters and accompanying adventure stories. We proudly display their creations in our very own Superhero Gallery. Every child comes to realize that we ALL have the power to make the world a better place!

The children become so engaged in this experience - **I have literally never seen a connection like this in my 26 years of teaching.** Through this unique opportunity, students grow socially and emotionally, show empathy and compassion for differences, are empowered and inspired to draw out and celebrate their own inner strengths, practice gallery etiquette, and gain a deeper appreciation for art.

When I see my former students, they always say, "Remember the superheroes? That was my favorite part about 5th Grade!" I know it will always be my favorite, too.

Carrie Polenske  
Grade 5 Teacher  
Pine Intermediate, North Olmsted, Ohio



**HEROES**

**WITHIN**

**AN INITIATIVE OF  
THE SUPERHERO PROJECT**



ARTWORK BY LARRY YANG



**THE JANET SILVERSTEIN**  
CHARITABLE FUND



**STONEWALL**  
Community Foundation



**COMMUNITY  
CENTER**  
GREATER CLEVELAND



ARTWORK BY ANH BUI

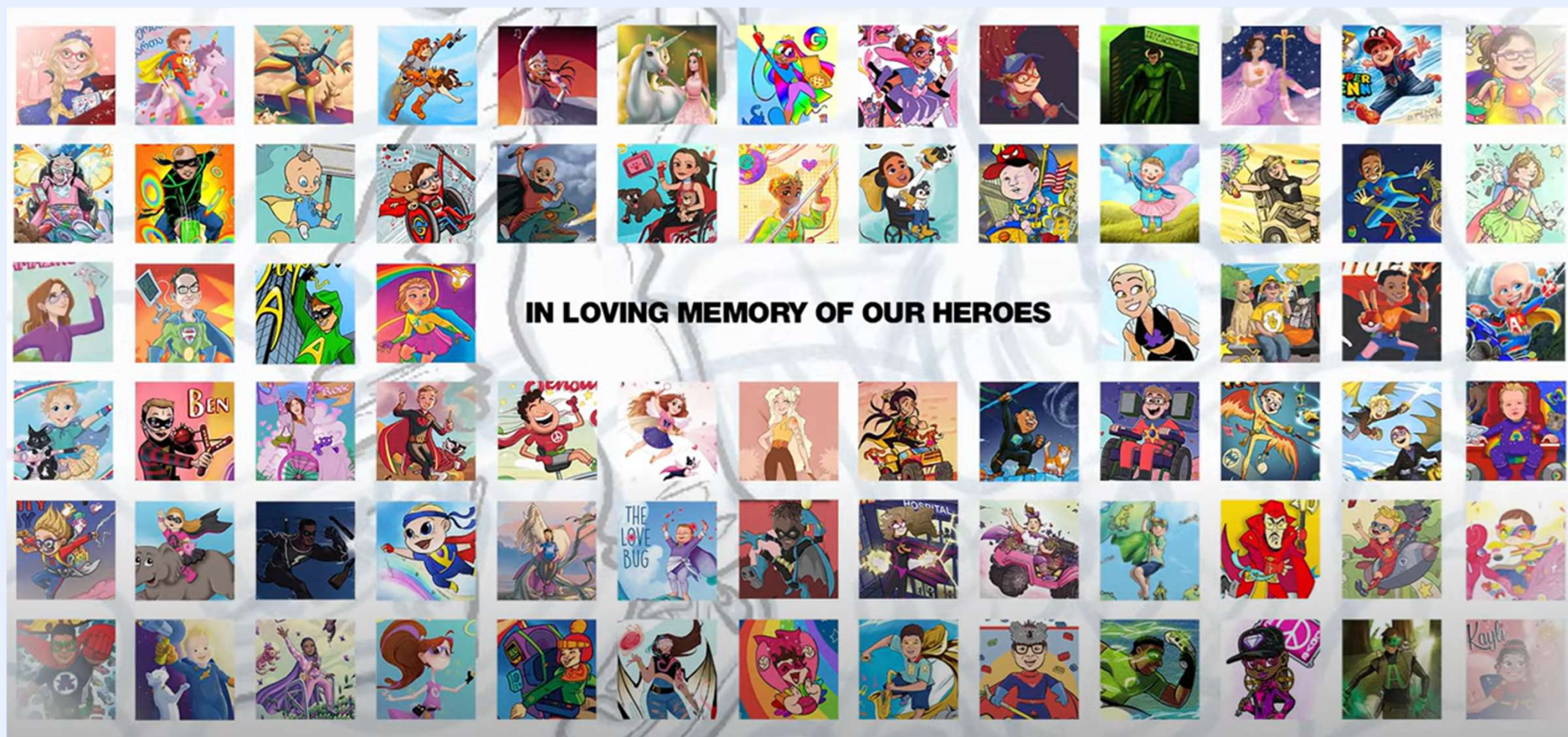


# FAMILY VOICES<sup>®</sup>

- 1 National family-led organization
- 2 Transform systems of care
- 3 Peer mentors for families
- 4 Assistance navigating systems

Ohio Family 2 Family - [ohiof2f.org](http://ohiof2f.org)







# SHPkids.org

## @TheSuperheroKid



2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025



