



press kit  
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## About PeaceLove

Founded in 2009 by Jeffrey Sparr and Matt Kaplan, *PeaceLove* is an organization dedicated to changing the face of mental illness by creating a positive rallying point in the fight to eradicate stigma associated with mental health disorders.

Mental illnesses directly affect one in four people on the planet. Sufferers—along with their friends and families—too often struggle in secrecy and silence. Through creative programming and a nationally recognizable symbol for advocacy, *PeaceLove* provides mental health stakeholders a powerful voice that promotes awareness, acceptance, and hope. The *PeaceLove* symbol embodies peace in your mind and love in your heart—basic, but often elusive, feelings for those impacted by mental illness.

*PeaceLove's* mission includes several simple things to make the world a better place:

- Build the first positive symbol for mental illness
- Create expressive arts programming to help people with mental illness find peace of mind
- Build inclusive spaces where communities come together to experience arts and products that inspire a positive lifestyle.
- Develop and foster an active and empowered online and personal community of mental illness stakeholders

To support these initiatives, *PeaceLove* has developed high-profile partnerships and lifestyle products bearing the *PeaceLove* symbol—all with the common goal of replacing negative perceptions with positive conversations about, and acceptance for, mental illness. Brand licensing partners include: PHILIP STEIN Watches, CVS/CAREMARK, Angela Moore jewelry, Hallmark/William Arthur Greeting Cards, and ImageSource International.



**Jeffrey Sparr**  
*co-founder*

When first diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder as a college student, *PeaceLove* co-founder Jeffrey Sparr found himself in a persistent battle against symptoms. Decades later, a successful businessman and father of three, the symptoms remained with him and, on a whim, Jeffrey decided to start painting to clear his mind. He soon discovered the therapeutic value of art and, with co-founder Matt Kaplan, established *PeaceLove*.

Before founding *PeaceLove*, Jeffrey founded and directed the thriving textile firm Textiles<sup>2</sup>, at which he remains president.

Today, Jeffrey continues to raise awareness for mental illness, and, as the spokesperson for *PeaceLove*, engages audiences at schools, corporations, universities and hospitals regularly. As the face of *PeaceLove*, Jeffrey shares his personal story and message of *PeaceLove*.



Jeffrey also serves on the Butler Hospital Foundation Board and spearheads the annual Butler Hospital with Dana Quigley Golf Challenge, which he co-founded. He is also an active board member of the National Alliance for Mental Illness Rhode Island chapter. Jeffrey, his wife Jennifer, and their three children reside in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.



**Matthew Kaplan**  
*co-founder*

*PeaceLove* co-founder and CEO Matt Kaplan joined Jeffrey Sparr in 2009 to make Sparr's vision for *PeaceLove* a reality. As CEO, Matt oversees overall operations of the company and is charged with spreading its mission and social impact. Matt focuses on growing *PeaceLove's* community and its ability to give back by generating revenues through various initiatives—including sales of *PeaceLove* branded merchandise, corporate workshops and sponsors, licensing of property and establishing expressive arts programs and community spaces.

Previously, Matt held the position of Managing Director at the global manufacturing firm Unitex Group, where he was instrumental in shaping the U.S. division into a multi-million dollar sales channel by diversifying its product line. Here, Matt developed a corporate skill set that has helped launch *PeaceLove* as a powerful national organization. Matt connects local and national brands with *PeaceLove*, making *PeaceLove's* programming possible.



Matt is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he earned a B.S in Sports Management from the Isenberg School of Management. In his spare time, Matt enjoys the great outdoors, and is an avid bicyclist and aspiring farmer, with plans of planting and harvesting his first garden in the coming months.



## Programming

### Paint4Peace™

Paint4Peace™ is the original *PeaceLove* program that teaches painting as a way to inspire, motivate, build self-confidence and deliver a message of hope through creativity and artistic expression. The Paint4Peace™ immersive arts experience is ideal for classrooms, recovery programs, hospitals, corporations, veterans' organizations, senior centers, boys & girls clubs, and communities affected by mental illness.



### Creativi-TEE™ Parties

At Creativi-TEE™ parties, guests are encouraged to share experiences with art or mental health advocacy, whether it is their own struggles, or those of a loved. Each party participant is then invited to customize their own white *PeaceLove* tee-shirt to express their personal connection to mental health. For a support group, business group, or community event, Creativi-TEE™ parties are a fun and unique opportunity to Wear, Share, Experience *PeaceLove*.

### PeaceLove Corporate Workshops

*PeaceLove* Corporate Workshops invite employees from all levels of any organization to cultivate confidence, creativity and collaboration; and build skills that will help them better approach their work and personal goals. They learn to: examine issues from alternative perspectives; combine thoughts and ideas in new ways; build trust within teams, work collaboratively and effectively; and adapt confidently to change.

### PeaceLove Studios

*PeaceLove Studios* are inclusive spaces where the community comes together to experience expressive arts programming and products that inspire a positive lifestyle. A wide variety of expressive arts courses and opportunities for personal growth and mental wellness are available. Classes and workshops are open to everyone of any age or ability. The inaugural *PeaceLove Studios* space opened in Providence, R.I., in 2009, with a goal of creating similar spaces in communities across the country.



## PeaceLove: the Rallying Point

The *PeaceLove* symbol was painted by co-founder and artist Jeffrey Sparr to serve as the first universal and positive symbol of hope and acceptance for mental health. Today, the *PeaceLove* symbol is featured on a range of products by national lifestyle brands. All share the common goal of promoting this positive rallying point and showing support for the one in four people on the planet who struggle every day with mental illness.



*“Every cause has its “ribbon,” but tens of millions of people like me, along with their friends and families, had no symbol to rally and celebrate behind. I knew that symbol had to be, for lack of a better word, cool, as people would need to wear it, share it, and experience it. It had to have no stigma attached. Years ago, I created an image that had deep personal meaning—the simple combination of the peace symbol and a heart, signifying peace in your mind and love in your heart. I call it ‘PeaceLove.’”*

- Jeffrey Sparr