



## Tech Startup Makes Grandpa Cry with Virtual Group Hugs

HugBoard.com provides group pinboards to cheer up and cheer on friends.

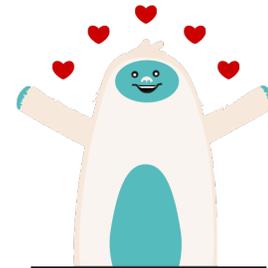
CHICAGO, April 8, 2013 – Know someone who could use a group hug? A tech startup from the Windy City has the answer: send them a HugBoard. What's a HugBoard? Imagine an online collection of cards from friends and family filled with messages so touching, it could make your tough-as-nails grandpa weep like a baby.

Daniel Stanford, a Chicago-based graphic designer, came up with the idea after searching for an easy way to provide family members with messages of love and encouragement. "My mom was struggling to stay motivated while training for her first 5k, and my cousin had just joined the military. I wanted to create something that would make them feel loved and supported, but nothing I found felt right."

Faced with options that seemed too impersonal, too hokey, or too focused on one-on-one communication, Stanford set out to build "the most amazing group e-card ever." After bribing neighbors to test many versions of the concept, the result was a virtual corkboard that friends and family could cover with photos and loving messages. Each contributor can create a custom card with a unique cover, add a personal message, and invite others to contribute and help the HugBoard grow.

During the testing stage, users created HugBoards for a wide variety of situations. A husband invited friends to show their love for his wife as she recovered from cancer treatment. Children posted thoughtful messages for their father while he completed a deployment to Afghanistan. One HugBoard saw a flood of messages—over 150 in total—as members of the computer-programming community thanked a group of volunteers for their hard work. "The response has been amazing. People are using it to cheer up friends and provide encouragement, but they're also using it in ways we hadn't anticipated," Stanford says.

With the testing and public site launch now behind them, the HugBoard team has plans to address requests for new features and expand the site's card library. Images in the library allow contributors to customize their card cover if they'd rather not use a photo of their own. Currently, the library contains over 50 images of everything from monkeys hugging to inspirational quotes from famous authors.



Whatever aspect of the site they're working on, the HugBoard team tries to keep one question in mind: will it help melt grandpa's heart? "I tear up if I see a lonely dog on TV and a Sarah McLachlan song starts playing. But I know if I can make my grandpa cry, I'm doing something right," Stanford says. To date, grandpa will neither confirm nor deny if a HugBoard has ever made him cry, but insiders say they've observed at least one claim of "something in my eye."

Hugboard.com launched in April, 2013 and new visitors currently receive a package of free tokens for signing up. Tokens are used to create HugBoards, and additional token packs start at 99 cents. Adorable animal photos and updates from the HugBoard team can be found at [facebook.com/HugBoard](https://facebook.com/HugBoard) or by following [@HugBoard](https://twitter.com/HugBoard) on Twitter.

HugBoard, LLC is a tech startup company based in Chicago, Illinois.

###

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Daniel Stanford, Founder and Chief Hug Officer, at +1 312 307 1447 or by emailing [daniel@hugboard.com](mailto:daniel@hugboard.com).