

# 'Faces of Courage' inspires young hospital patients

Natalie Swaby reports.

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(Photo: KING)

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TACOMA, Wash. - The sixth floor of Mary Bridge Children's Hospital is bursting with bright colors. It is where young patients are at work, trying to picture what courage looks like.

Christy Branton already has her answer. She says courage is a feisty 6 year old who has proven to be a fighter. Branton is referring to her daughter, Haley, who has been rolling with chemo treatments and taking on cancer like a champ since November.

"She's been very brave," said Branton.

Mackenzie Wright's mom would say the same if it weren't so tough to talk about.

"Anytime there is something wrong with your kid, it is, you know, hard," said Staci Wright, as she wiped away tears.

Sick for weeks, Mackenzie was recently diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. As the 10 year old trades home for the hospital, her family and dog Max give her courage.

"If they are not there and I get scared, I look at my picture. They make me feel like they are there with me," said Mackenzie.

What does courage look like? It's not just a question, it's a contest. And the judges can be found in the Hilltop Artists studio, located a few miles away from the hospital.

[Hilltop Artists](#) is a program that started as a gang diversion tactic 20 years ago. Today one of the many things they do is turn patients' pictures into fused glass art. Each month they choose one piece from a handful of drawings.

Carla Bruno, a Hilltop Artists mentor, feels a connection. She battled cancer.

"As a survivor I remember horrible, horrible days and I was an adult. I knew what was going on. Can you imagine being a little kid?" asked Bruno.

"It just makes me realize kids my age are going through this," said 13-year-old Emma Impala.

Impala and other artists work together on the glass projects that usually take several hours. Bruno says it brings joy to the hospital patients.

"That somebody else actually took the time and did this especially for them, it makes them feel really good," said Bruno.

For the month of March, Mackenzie Wright's picture was chosen. Hilltop Artists made two glass pieces, one for Mackenzie and one for the [Mary Bridge Children's Hospital's](#) Faces of Courage wall.

*Read more at: <http://www.king5.com/story/news/local/tacoma/2015/03/26/mary-bridge-childrens-hospital-tacoma-faces-of-courage/70469008/>*