

# What boys do when you draw them out.

In 2025 and 2026, our small team of creators (formerly of Pixar, Warner Bros., Blizzard, and Google), alongside clinicians and youth advisors, launched a bold new franchise for boys focused on anger and how we deal with big emotions. This included the animated short film *Release the Beast*, the Roblox game *Rage Fighters*, and the live event *Un-Tilted*, which ties the whole thing together using a bag full of Sharpies.

**This is a snapshot of what happened,  
what we learned,  
and where we are heading next.**

## THE CHALLENGE

Boys are struggling —  
and the world isn't making it easy for them to  
talk about it.

Nearly half of boys (46%) say that to avoid  
being teased, they can't cry, show sadness, or  
show fear.

And the algorithm makes it worse: the more  
online "masculinity" content boys see, the  
more likely they are to believe that sharing  
worries makes them look weak: nearly **four**  
**times** as likely at high exposure.

(Common Sense Media, Boys in the Digital  
Wild, 2025.)

## OUR RESPONSE

We built an entertaining story world designed for boys that challenges these beliefs from inside.

In this world, boys SEE their emotional lives reflected on screen.

They PLAY a game that builds real skills that help with everyday emotional struggles.

And in a live event that brings both formats together with a hands-on art experience, they MAKE something that bridges the world on the screen and the room they're standing in.



## THE DELIVERY MECHANISM

We wanted to create on the platforms where boys already spend their time, YouTube and Roblox. With this story, boys could enter through any door, and each one made the others land harder — a flywheel, not a funnel.

All of it centered around one goal: draw boys into a freer emotional space that they actually want to be a part of.

# A story boys could see themselves in.



## HOW WE APPROACHED IT

We built this proof-of-concept franchise around Aaron, a 14-year-old aspiring game designer whose interior voices spring to life in the real world whenever his emotions overwhelm him.

The hook for boys?

All of these wild manifestations are aspects of the game he's trying to create. Aaron's journey, working through his emotions in a self-made gaming world, infuses every part of the franchise.

What follows is a breakdown of how this world came to life across platforms—and the core engagement stats behind it.



## Release the Beast

*Release the Beast* follows Aaron, a kid facing a trifecta of trouble: school bullies, a looming game design deadline, and anger he doesn't know what to do with. When his biggest rival humiliates him over his unfinished video game character, Stan, Aaron's anger explodes into the real world—bringing Stan to life alongside a chaotic swarm of his rage-fueled alter egos: a sketch, a sticky note, and the desk toy that inspired him. Each with a very dubious opinion about what Aaron should do.

In the background, a looming meter keeps track of how his energy is spent, raging, creating, or flaming out. It's up to Aaron to move through all the wild voices and overwhelming energy of his rage, and transform that intense emotional energy into a constructive creative force.

Grounded in our mission to reach boys directly, we kicked off by premiering the film live on YouTube in March 2026 for a few hundred early fans, alongside an intimate crew and supporter screening in San Francisco.

### STATS AT A GLANCE

# 58,475

views — RELEASE  
THE BEAST,  
premiered Mar  
30, 2026

# 20,220

views — Official  
Trailer, published  
Mar 20, 2026

# 654

hours watched,  
on the main film  
alone

All stats as of 7/26/2026,

### AARON'S NOTEBOOK 2D-STYLE SHORT — VALIDATING THE NEXT SERIES

# 9,960 views

### ACROSS 6 YOUTUBE SHORTS

Short cut-downs featuring Aaron's notebook drawings coming to life performed well and created audience engagement. The 2D animation style of these reflects what we are planned for the upcoming YouTube series.



## Rage Fighters

Created in Roblox, this is the game Aaron made to explore the emotional challenges he faces on the daily. In it, the characters from Release The Beast make appearances, and the Rage Meter from Aaron's story plays a part in the game design.

But beyond that, he's populated the battlefield with his inner demons, enemies like Mind Ninjas and Melt-Down Bosses.

He's shaped landscapes with gaming versions of everyday challenges like the toxic zone of online culture, the rage storm where unchecked anger spins out of control.

And he's given players access to core skills that help when you're overwhelmed by big emotions: **BREATHE**, **CHILL**, and **PAUSE**.

These are the super powers that players can use to get through any battle.

The below stats show how boys moved through the game on Roblox — from seeing it, to playing it, to using its emotional-regulation skills.

### STATS AT A GLANCE

FULL PERIOD ·  
UNIQUE MALE  
USERS  
EXPOSURE

**1.29M**

unique male  
users reached  
(unique users  
with impressions)

FULL PERIOD ·  
UNIQUE MALE  
USERS  
PLAYED

**15,655**

unique male  
users played the  
game

FULL PERIOD ·  
TOTAL  
TRIGGERS  
SKILLS USE

- Breathe  
**30,276**
- Chill  
**30,176**
- Pause  
**16,020**

FULL PERIOD ·  
PARTIAL  
MASTERY  
BY SKILL

- Breathe  
**2,503**
- Chill  
**2,466**
- Pause  
**1,699**

All stats are Male-filtered, 12/1/2025–7/26/2026. Skills use and partial mastery are event counts, not counts of individual boys. Updated 12 August 2026. Skill mastery figures in the original release were overstated; this edition reports partial mastery in their place. Reach and play counts now use de-duplicated totals.



THE LIVE EVENT

## Un-Tilted

This live event is where the audience gets to embody Aaron's creative process: watching the film, playing the game, and taking up Aaron's core tools — a sticky note and a Sharpie — to explore and share their own experiences of emotional overwhelm, and reflect on the tools they might use to get through them.

This last aspect of the franchise let us move from the digital world of story and play into the physical world of reflection and connection.

In every session, boys took part in every aspect of the group activity — drawing an emotional state, sharing their stories about hard things like anger and what they found underneath, and finally, deciding on a skill they could use in those moments.

### STATS AT A GLANCE

#### LIVE SESSIONS

16

across 5 states + DC

#### IN THE ROOM

114 + 63

boys (ages 8-14) + adults, in person

#### HAND-DRAWN

248

sticky-note reflections, shared out loud

"That boy comes every week. I've never heard him share. Today he talked about his feelings, shared a picture, and told us about something in his life that was challenging."

— MUSEUM PROGRAMMER, OAKLAND, CA

"They were more attentive to this film and game than anything we've ever done. I've never seen the boys share like this, especially about their emotions."

— AFTER-SCHOOL FACILITATOR, DENVER, CO



## FOUR THINGS BOYS SHOWED US

# We gave them multiple ways to unlock their inner lives. And they showed up.

We learned a TON from all stages of this process, but some of the key learnings about boys and how they engage emotionally and practically with a story really hit home.

### • THE FILM

#### They **connect**.

After watching RELEASE THE BEAST, boys talked about the connections they made to the character's emotions on-screen, and the connection lasted.

In one group, a full week after the screening, boys recounted every character and story beat, and how each made them feel. Then one boy went further saying "the skin is his emotions" — unearthing the story's core metaphor entirely on his own.

"the skin  
is his  
**EMOTIONS**"

### • UN-TILTED LIVE EVENTS — ALL THREE MODALITIES

#### They go **past "mad."**

After drawing an expression of their anger and watching the film, we dropped one piece of emotional insight:

#### **anger never comes alone.**

Boys drew the other emotions that came with their anger, then shared them with the group. Embarrassed, left out, small, unseen. Two in five captured words that named the feeling under the anger.

"I was **ANGRY**  
because I felt  
**LEFT OUT**"

### • THE GAME

#### They want to **contribute**.

While play-testing the Roblox game alongside developers, boys weren't just playing.

They were actively imagining what's next.

Across an average 35-minute play session they pitched weapon systems, quests, achievement structures. Boys at multiple locations asked to co-design the next update.

"let me  
**BUILD it**"

### • HOME GAME-PLAY SESSIONS

#### They take it **home**.

In un-facilitated game-play sessions, the kids still made personal connections.

In a post-play survey, a ten-year-old boy who got swarmed in game, said "I had to use my deep breathing powers to heal. It worked," then compared it to being bullied, and to real life.

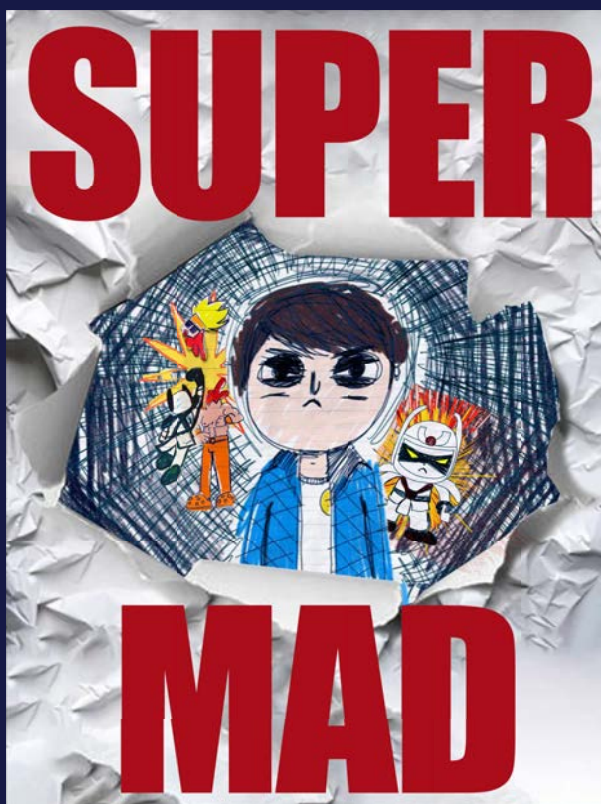
"use  
**BREATHE**  
to heal"

# NEXT

## GROW FRANCHISE

This small scale launch of our first franchise confirmed the model: film, game, and physical. One story, three doors in. We will pursue this model as we deepen this franchise.

## WATCH



We are developing a 2D animated YOUTUBE SERIES about Aaron and his friends and the emotional unfoldings of life as a teenaged gamer. From frustration to boredom, rage to regret... these irreverent and funny stories are ripped straight from the pages of Aaron's sketchbooks — and are told from the point of view of his creations. Overwrought, awkward, but ultimately helpful in exploring what it feels like to FEEL things, and how you get through it.

## PLAY



Next up for **Rage Fighters**

- Launch an awareness campaign about our recent updates
- Co-design and implement a new weapon system with key youth contributors from the Un-Tilted live tour
- Improve engagement funnel to strengthen onboarding new players
- Develop a streamlined linear animation-to-interactive production pipeline to serve further game development

## MAKE



Coming soon: The **UN-TILTED Family Sketchbook**. Inspired by our live events, this is the version you do at home. Each page is a collaborative art prompt drawn from our story world — a small daily practice that gives families a way to talk about the hard stuff without having to sit down and talk about the hard stuff. Designed and tested with clinicians. Made to be fun first.

## PLATFORM LEARNINGS

### YOUTUBE

We made a short film not knowing we'd be aiming at a YouTube audience. While it's great for storytelling and emotionality, the solo film isn't the best for building an audience. To grow the franchise we will adapt our approach and **build to the platform strengths**. Next time we'll integrate: **Hooks, humor and an intriguing first few seconds** to pump up engagement. We'll create frequent **content drops** giving the audience something to look forward to, and a reason to stay engaged. And we'll **engage with other YT creators** at all stages because when YouTubers join forces, their audience connects too.

### ROBLOX

We learned a LOT about building a game (there's a whole hour long talk we can share if you're really interested). But here's some quick Roblox insights:

Initial engagement really is all about **the small stuff**. The thumbnail, The tutorial, The first few seconds of play. Will a kid find your game? Budget for experimentation and refinement to be sure.

Roblox is about players connecting with others. So build opportunities for **social interaction** in the game.

**Don't fear the weapons!** These are key to fighting games. Work with your audience to understand their thoughts on the genre and co-design something that is incredibly fun and intrinsically insightful for whatever game mechanic is at the core of your genre.

**Sustained play** comes from a fun loop, a story that expands and a skill base that lets the player face friction and grow. But some kids will just want to chill out and watch the other guys battle while they find the easter eggs.

### FROM UN-TILTED

FULL DISCLOSURE: We didn't know the live events would matter to our flywheel. We wanted to learn how our intended audience experienced the work (film and game prove reach and use at scale, not qualitative depth). After experiencing the impact of the full cycle with kids, we want every future effort to include this kind of opportunity. Our one key learning?

**Don't just make your thing and leave.**

Give your audience a way to **MAKE** the story their own.

Trust that they have something to say.

Build towards that moment.

# THIS WAS FUN. AND HARD. AND WORTH IT.

Weaving a story around big themes  
and then making sure boys could  
and would use it in their lives was  
the real challenge.

And boys did both. They watched,  
they played, they drew, they  
shared — and inside this world,  
they found a freer emotional space.

And we're just getting started.

Boys still need this, and now that  
we have our sea legs, we're gonna  
ROCK this franchise.

## EXPERIENCE IT YOURSELF

► Watch Release the Beast, Rage Fighters, and other Ryzo Content  
on YouTube

[www.youtube.com/@Ryzo-Studio](http://www.youtube.com/@Ryzo-Studio)

🎮 Play Rage Fighters on Roblox 🎮

[www.playragefighters.com](http://www.playragefighters.com)

## WANT IN?

If you'd like to help us build what's next,  
we'd love to hear from you:

**[hello@ryzo.studio](mailto:hello@ryzo.studio)**

# Thank you!

## **To Our Supporters:**

Equimundo · Ryzo's Crowdfunding Friends · The Fabulous Greene Brothers · The Fubini-Merzenichs · David and Carla Crane

## **To the Un-Tilted event hosts:**

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Centers · The Ever Forward Club · Advocates for Young Men ·  
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with us along the way.

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Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital · The Mental  
Health Storytelling Initiative · The Impact Guild · Games for Change ·  
Civility and Education Team at Roblox

**Lastly, to the boys themselves, whose insights,  
engagement, and presence made everything more  
fun, more real  
and, more powerful.**

**Thank you!**

*Updated 12 August 2026. Skill mastery figures in the original release were overstated and have been corrected; reach and play counts now use de-duplicated totals.*