

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
ALL ABOUT FUNNYBONE TOYS

## All about Funnybone Toys

Funnybone Toys offers many games that put an emphasis on creativity and color.

Toys and games are essential to one's upbringing--playthings can even impact a person's cognitive development. Funnybone Toys is a company that understands the fine line between learning and play and they consistently produce unique and delightful products that are both fun to play with and mentally engaging. At Funnybone Toys, abstract and outside-the-box thinking are encouraged and the artistic elements of games are celebrated.



## Funnybone Toys often put an emphasis on color.

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Funnybone Toys was created in 2011 to provide products that are a combination of form, function, and beautiful, minimalist design. One of Funnybone Toys favorite elements of design is color, so color reigns supreme in every one of their products. In 2014, Funnybone Muse was launched and this platform allows the brand to offer other items that inspire consumers yet are outside the toy and game category. Every product that comes out of the Funnybone Toys' design studio shows the company's commitment to beautiful, minimalist design.

Julien Sharp is the President of Funnybone Toys. She previously worked in cruise ship entertainment, and saw first-hand how games and fun brought people together and enriched their experiences. After retiring from the cruise industry, Julien got a Masters in psychology, combining what she had learned from her bachelors in business and her experiences on board cruise ships to focus her study on the business of relationships. Her passion for people and games subsequently resulted in the development of Funnybone Toys. Recently, Julien spoke to the Examiner about her experiences working with this organization:



## Meagan Meehan (M.M.): How and when was Funnybone Toys started and why was that name chosen?

**Julien Sharp (J.S.):** We were founded in March of 2011, and spent that year designing three games to launch in early 2012. For the name, we have always loved "quirky" branding and one of our favorites is the name of David Letterman's production company, Worldwide Pants - it's memorable because it's odd. Now Funnybone Toys is maybe not so odd but when you add the tagline "Smart Brain, Big Hat" to it then it gives the brand a way of making a customer or retailer take a second look. In addition, our logo has a character with a big brain as its head with a spinner on top. We literally want to show that our games wind up your brain. However, we didn't want to be so "clinical" or "educational" that the fun elements of our games and toys would not be prominent in our branding. Thus we became Funnybone Toys - Smart Brain, Big Hat.

**M.M.:** Overall, how many toys and games has Funnybone Toys produced? Has one product been especially popular?

**J.S.:** We produced 3 games in our "Art of Card Games" series in 2012: Spectrix, Array and CUBU. In 2013 we produced our Disruptus innovation game and Arrazzles color building toy. Disruptus is our best-selling product of all time. It has been carried seasonally in Crate & Barrel; it is carried in all Barnes & Noble US stores; it has ranked as high as in the top 25 card games on Amazon, and was recently featured in the New York Times - gift guide 2015 - print and online. In 2014 we produced our Funnybones game, a modern version of the ancient "Knucklebones" game that has been played around the world since Greek & Roman times. We also founded our sister label, Funnybone Muse. We do a lot of travel around the world to get artistic inspiration

for our games and packaging, and in one of those trips to Japan we found a really cool rolling stamp product that wasn't sold in the US. We set up a distribution deal with the Japanese company, and rebranded the product in the USA as the "Rolli" stamp. Funnybone Muse is the label that we use for items that we import from Japan and sell in the US. In 2015 we produced our Juxtabo and Spectracube games. First year sales of these games are wonderful, particularly Juxtabo, which almost equals our Disruptus game in its first year. All of the above items can be seen on our website. We have 4 products being produced for 2016:

- Anaxi - a Venn-diagram-inspired game, where players connect words in surprising ways
- Spirot - a pixel-art-inspired game of sequences
- Arrazzles "Under the Sea" - it is the start of a new Arrazzles series, where the building cards show images of "under sea" life.
- Melvin+Simon Collage Memory Game - a classic memory game featuring a quirky dog and cat, on cards that embrace the beautiful art of collage

We also have a new line of artistic "flip books" for sale in 2016 - from Japan - under our Funnybone Muse label.

**M.M.: How do you come up with the ideas for your products?**

**J.S.:** Our products have two main elements: design and game play. Our design inspiration comes mainly from what we see as we walk down the street and look at graffiti, art, architecture, and books. The front of the ANAXI box is inspired by infographics crossed with graffiti. You'll see that Juxtabo evolved from a colorful wall that is in Dulles airport. For Disruptus we came up with a great way to explain game rules by having two characters engage in a conversation — this method was inspired by art we saw on a trip to Santiago, Chile. Arrazzles came from a striking 'nightshade' that we also saw in Santiago. Spirot and Disruptus take everyday objects and add artistic treatments to force you to look at them in different and hopefully inspiring ways. The game play starts with identifying the problem that we want to solve and then we work backwards and start devising different ways to solve it. Let me give you an example, so for Juxtabo we knew we wanted to have a color grid that started out with one pattern and ended up with different patterns during game play. So we came up with the double-sided, multicolor chips so color could be changed by placing colors side by side and having color flow from one chip to the next.

**M.M.: Can inventors submit their ideas to you? If so, how does that process work?**

**J.S.:** We do indeed get a lot of submissions for game ideas. We carefully review all of them. We are very particular to have games that would fit our product niche, and so far we haven't licensed any games from outside designers - our goal is to do this more in the future when we get to a certain number of products we have self-produced.

**M.M.: Thus far, what has been the most rewarding part of working with Funnybone?**

**J.S.:** Running a company that has such an amazing design focus is a dream. My business partner has the most inspired ideas, and I love my job of running all US sales efforts for these awesome products.

**M.M.: Where do you hope Funnybone Toys will be ten years from now?**

**J.S.:** We definitely want to have several more self-produced and some licensed products and have established our brand internationally.

**M.M.: Do you have any exciting future projects in the works?**

**J.S.:** We have over 40 product ideas in our pipeline - we just need to get them produced! Ideas are no issue for us.

## ABOUT FUNNYBONE TOYS:

While most people love to play games, very few appreciate the "art" that goes into their creation. This is because, for the most part, the art is hidden in the background, secondary to game play. But a new game design company was tired of seeing the art of games taking a back seat to play...so they decided put artwork on equal footing. Funnybone Toys was created in 2011 to provide products that are a true combination of form, function, and beautiful, minimalist design. One of our favorite elements of design is color, so color reigns supreme in every one of our products. We launched Funnybone Muse in 2013, allowing us to offer other items that inspire us, that are outside the toy and game category. Every product that comes out of our design studio will show our company's commitment to beautiful, minimalist design.