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Crayola to Rename Indian Red *As Feedback From Teachers Prompts a Change*

March 10, 1999 – Easton, Pa. – Brick red is befitting, carnation pink is classic, and sky blue is without a doubt the most appropriate hue to color the wild blue yonder. But what moniker best describes the deep reddish-brown crayon known as indian red? The maker of Crayola crayons is asking consumers to put their best color name forward for a chance at crayon immortality.

The crayon maker announced today it is changing the name of indian red, and in the process is giving crayon lovers young and old a golden opportunity to name a Crayola crayon. The change is in response to feedback received by the company from consumers and teachers who believe that some children wrongly perceive that the color is intended to represent the skin color of Native Americans.

“As a company that makes children’s products that are present in virtually every home and school, we have a special bond with families and a unique obligation to act on behalf of kids’ interests whenever possible,” said Stacy Gabrielle, Crayola spokesperson. “We also have a heritage of listening carefully to what our consumers say and how they feel about our products.”

“Although indian red was never intended to represent anyone’s skin color, the fact that some consumers feel strongly that it confuses children is reason enough for us to easily resolve the situation by renaming the crayon and inviting everyone to be part of the process.”

A deep reddish brown, indian red was introduced into the Crayola lineup in 1958 when the 64 crayon box debuted. The name indian red originated from a pigment, used mostly by fine artists in oil paints, that was commonly found near India.

The National Congress of American Indians is applauding the decision, citing it as a step forward in eliminating stereotypes in our society. “This decision underscores the American public’s growing sensitivity to images and symbols which have been perceived offensive to Native Americans, and more importantly, to native children,” said JoAnn K. Chase, executive director, The National Congress of American Indians. “We are pleased that Crayola has made such a decision and we encourage other entities to follow suit.”

Educators are also applauding the decision. “A change of this nature is positive for students,” said Louise Cosgrove, an elementary art teacher from the Salisbury Township School District in Allentown, Pa. “This is one way to be sensitive to Native Americans and not perpetuate a misconception about their heritage in the classroom.”

The change marks only the third time in Crayola history the crayon maker has renamed one of its ubiquitous wax sticks. Prussian blue was the first in the Crayola lineup to assume a new identity. In 1958, the crayon was renamed midnight blue because children could no longer relate to Prussian history. Flesh received a name change to peach in 1962 to recognize that not everyone’s skin is the same shade.

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Crayon enthusiasts who want to leave their mark in Crayola history books should draw upon their sense of color, creativity, and childhood when making name suggestions. The new crayon name, chosen by a panel of Crayola color experts, will be selected based on creativity, originality and appropriateness. The individual or individuals who submit the new name will earn a place in Crayola color history, a “Certificate of Crayon Authorship,” and an assortment of Crayola products, including a Crayola 64 box containing the renamed crayon. The new crayon name, which will appear on 13 million crayons a year, will be announced by July 31, and will be included in Crayola 64 and 96-count crayon assortments sold nationwide.

Colorers of all ages can send their color name suggestions to: Crayola Color Change, P.O. Box 3546, Easton, PA 18043-3546. Name suggestions must include name, age, address and telephone number and be postmarked by June 10. Parents may also submit color name suggestions for their children and themselves by visiting www.crayola.com.

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