

ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2019

2019



*I wish to go
To Paris*

Grace, 7
autoimmune disorder

Make-A-Wish®
ILLINOIS



*I wish to go to
Walt Disney World*

Kate, 5
nervous system disorder



721

..... WISHES GRANTED
..... FISCAL YEAR 2019
.....
.....
.....
.....



Together,

**WE CREATE LIFE-CHANGING WISHES
FOR CHILDREN WITH CRITICAL ILLNESSES.**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

You have helped to make this year a phenomenal one for the 721 children and families we served!

Through your support, this past year saw a number of significant achievements for Make-A-Wish Illinois, in elevating our mission delivery work, in reaching more eligible children, and in broadening our community presence.

In January we officially rolled out our new Wish Journey model for delivering wishes. The Wish Journey is made up of five steps, each carrying their own special significance, with a goal of building resilience and healing for each wish child. We developed new materials and content to impact the experience for wish kids and their families and we are receiving good feedback from them. You can watch our wish alum, Nick, explain the Wish Journey [here in this video](#).

An additional element of Wish Journey is conducting a scientifically validated [resilience assessment](#) for every child before and after their wish. By doing this, we are now able to measure and better understand the impact of a wish, collecting vital resilience data from wish families that will continuously enhance the way we create life-changing wishes.



This past year saw a record-breaking number of children referred to our chapter who will begin their wish journeys! Through efforts supported by your generosity, our referral outreach team qualified **891** eligible wish children from all communities throughout Illinois. We deepened our partnerships with major children's hospitals and transitioned to a fully digital platform for verifying the diagnoses of children.

On the community-building front, hundreds of fundraising events took place across Illinois to support the Make-A-Wish mission. These events were organized by amazing volunteers and included Highwood's Pumpkin Festival, Effingham's Buckin' for Wishes Rodeo, Peoria's I Spy a Wish, and Fairview Heights' Chicken and Beer Dance. Beyond fundraising, more than 1,600 volunteers gave their time as wish granters, board and council members, ambassadors, and offered much-needed assistance in our office and at a variety of events. They are truly a part of our team and if you are interested in becoming more involved as a volunteer, please [visit the volunteer section](#) of our website.

These achievements from the past year make it even more important to secure the revenue we need to reach every eligible child with a wish in the coming years. There are thousands of children throughout Illinois who need the resilience and healing power of a wish, and we are so appreciative that you are part of this journey with them.

Every gift given last year – and any gifts you make going forward – will give them hope, so they can look forward to tomorrow.

[VIDEO: Olivia and her mother talk about the importance of hope and a wish journey.](#)



Thomas Ellman
Chair, Board of Directors

Stephanie Springs
Chief Executive Officer

*I wish to go to
Walt Disney World*

Olivia, 8
blood disorder



MAKE-A-WISH ILLINOIS

Financials



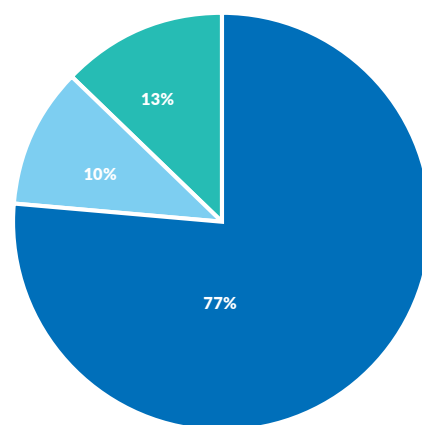
Fiscal Year 2019

Year ended August 31, 2019

Total Revenue	\$13,458,260
Total Expenses	\$14,510,863
Total Net Assets*	\$11,198,679

*Operating Expenses**

Program Services	\$11,188,322	●
Fundraising	\$ 1,934,302	●
Management and General	\$ 1,388,239	●



**Through the fiscal year ending August 31, 2018, the Foundation accrued for estimated costs of pending wishes (wishes in the pipeline that met certain, measurable criteria). This accrual never represented a legally binding liability but was considered a moral obligation to the child. This accrual was eliminated effective September 1, 2018, resulting in an increase in beginning net assets of \$5,014,613. This accounting change has no impact nor is reflective of any change in our objective to fulfill the wish of every eligible child. As of August 31, 2019, there were approximately 1,054 wish children in our pipeline.*

Copies of our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 2019, are available upon request. Call 800.978.9474



*I wish to meet my
bone marrow donor*

Gabriel, 7
blood disorder

HOPE IS MEDICINE

impact



Every wish is as special and unique as the child who receives it, though they all have one thing in common; HOPE. Research shows, and physicians agree, a wish can help improve a child's quality of life and produce better health outcomes. These life-changing wishes replace fear with confidence, sadness with joy and anxiety with hope – helping children battling critical illnesses see the impossible as possible.



Miles

“Their kindness gives us an extra slice of hope.”

One day, seemingly out of the blue, Miles, an active athletic boy collapsed while running a school race. Not only did he collapse, but he also seemed to have a seizure and kept losing consciousness. Miles' wish to go on a cruise with his family was just what they needed to get back on track after his medical crisis. In addition to family fun and adventure, the family also experienced the kindness of everyone involved in granting his wish.

“We've met so many people who have a common interest in helping through this experience,” Miles' mom shared. As Miles' continues to adapt to his new normal, restricted from impact sports and requiring some extra precautions to protect him from the sports he can still enjoy, he has happy memories of his wish and all the wonderful people he met along the journey to sustain him..

*I wish to go
on a cruise*

Miles, 10
cardiac condition





Grace

pictured on cover

“When you have a disease like this, there is so little you can control. This gave Grace back some of that control and I can see how it makes a difference.”

Born with the same autoimmune disorder as her siblings, Grace has always had to be careful with her health. In her family, it's not unusual to take extra precautions like avoiding water fountains or to spend time getting regular plasma infusions. That's just the way life is for Grace and brothers and sister.

It wasn't until Grace started school that she began to notice that her life is different than that of her peers. When she's feeling ill, she can't go to the nurse's office in case there are other sick kids there. And there are so many other safety rules that she must follow that make her feel separate from her friends.

“She doesn't feel how she looks,” her mom Dayna shared. “We call it the curse of looking good.”

These realizations were getting her down, and that's when her family decided it would be a good time to connect with Make-A-Wish.

“She wanted to stand under the Eiffel tower in the worst way,” Dayna, her mom, said. “She has been obsessed with Paris since she was really little. It was beautiful to see her empowered to ask for something like that, to give her the freedom to explore.”

Gabriel

pictured with Financials



“The connection was immediate. He's part of our family now.”

Diagnosed with a serious blood disorder at birth, Gabriel and his family hoped that there would be a life beyond illness – that they would find a bone marrow donor and Gabriel would find joy outside the hospital room.

After a year of blood transfusions and treatments, Gabriel received a life-saving bone marrow transplant, and **hope**, from an anonymous donor.

When Gabriel was referred to Make-A-Wish Illinois, he expressed his desire to meet the then-unknown donor who saved his life. Make-A-Wish arranged for Gabriel's donor Dennis to travel from Germany to meet Gabriel and his family. Through Make-A-Wish, they spent a life-changing week getting to know each other.

Gabriel's donor Dennis joined Gabriel's family in promoting the need for bone marrow donors in their community during his visit, and the family enjoyed showing Dennis around their home state.

COMING TOGETHER TO GIVE THEM HOPE

community

Working together, people like you are helping to give hope and change lives for children with critical illnesses. In doing so, they build personal connections with neighbors, friends and coworkers as wish families in their communities. Whether volunteers, fundraising or sharing the mission through their daily work, supporters find a fulfilling experience while being part of something larger; helping to make sure every eligible child has the chance to find hope through a life-changing wish journey.

Volunteers

Volunteers are critical in every level of the organization. Wish granters, board members, event committees and regional councils are just some of the ways that volunteers make an everyday impact in the lives of children with critical illnesses. Nearly 1,000 wish granting volunteers guide children and their families through the wish journey, helping facilitate discovery of the wish and working with the staff team to bring those dreams to life.

Learn more about Yesenia and the need for more bilingual volunteers [in the Wish Blog](#).



Yesenia (r), wish granting volunteer with wish kid **Autumn**

Community Events

From Highwood to Fairview Heights and dozens of towns in between, event organizers bring their communities together in support of Make-A-Wish. More than 200 events every year are fully planned and executed by third-parties to benefit Make-A-Wish Illinois. Each event is an opportunity to show local wish families the care and compassion of fellow community members while raising money for future wishes. In addition to these community events, Make-A-Wish Illinois hosts five Walk for Wishes across the state, where community supporters and wish alumni come together at these family-friendly fundraising events.



Great Highwood Pumpkin Fest



1,600

VOLUNTEERS ACROSS ILLINOIS

**COMMUNITY EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THIRD
PARTIES TO BENEFIT MAKE-A-WISH ILLINOIS**

250

890

**QUALIFIED REFERRALS SUBMITTED BY
MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS**


Medical Professionals

Every wish begins with a referral and by far most children are referred to Make-A-Wish through someone on their medical team. Many medical professionals find having a wish experience as part of the treatment process helps children cope with their illness. Recent research indicates wishes have both a positive physical and emotional impact. In June, the Women's Network of Make-A-Wish Illinois honored two medical professionals who integrate wishes into their treatments regularly, helping patients replace fear with confidence, sadness with joy and anxiety with hope.

Pictured: (l) Tanisha Jones, RN, BSN, C-FNP at La Rabida Children's Hospital and (r) Kevynne Chawla, MS, CCLS at Advocate Children's Hospital.




2019
Women Impacting Wishes
Honorees

A young man with short dark hair, smiling, wearing a black tuxedo jacket with satin lapels, a white dress shirt with black studs, and a black bow tie. He has a white pocket square in his jacket and a small circular pin on his left lapel. He is gesturing with his right hand towards the left. The background is white with light blue stars and a yellow curved shape behind him.

*I wish to be
in a movie*

Bonaparte, 13
blood disorder

A large blue five-pointed star.

WATCH: Bonaparte's
movie, *The Serum*

“A wish can give a
child inspiration,
hope, something to
look forward to and
something to remember
forever.”

KEVYNNE CHAWLA, MS, CCLS
HEMATOLOGY-ONCOLOGY
ADVOCATE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

[Read more](#)



*I wish to record
a podcast*

Azka, 5
rare disease

[LISTEN: Azka's podcast](#)

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