



## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



*I wish to go  
to Walt Disney World®*  
**Elliott, 4**  
**neurological disorder**

Together, we create life-changing wishes  
for children with critical illnesses.



*I wish to go to  
Walt Disney  
World®*  
Ellie, 2  
cancer

Brigette Young  
with Wish Kid Ellie

Dear friend of Make-A-Wish Nebraska,

We begin by sharing a quote that reflects the true meaning behind the mission of Make-A-Wish. It states "There are medications we can provide. There are treatments we can administer, and yet, there are pieces missing that can only be filled by the impact of a wish experience." Written by Dr. James Fahner, Make-A-Wish Medical Advisory Council.

Make-A-Wish has been granting the heartfelt wishes of children since our inception in 1980. Make-A-Wish® Nebraska granted 115 wishes last fiscal year – each one a life-affirming testament to the hope, strength and joy a wish provides. Our work must continue as over 140 children throughout the state are waiting for their wish to be granted. We believe their wish experience will be a game-changer for them as it has been for the other 2,806 children we have served since our Chapter's beginning.

Inside this report, are stories from wish kids that experienced firsthand the power of a wish come true. They are true testaments to the belief that a wish can change a life and they guide us in everything we continue to do. They inspire us to grant wishes that change the lives of the kids we serve.

THANK YOU for making wishes a reality for children in Nebraska!

Sincerely,

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At Make-A-Wish® Nebraska,  
we grant wishes to children  
throughout Nebraska who have  
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To refer a child you think might  
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# HOPE



*I wish to go to “The Avengers: Endgame” movie premiere*

**Lillie, 17**  
nervous system disorder

To wish kid Lillie, a wish is about HOPE.

Lillie was 15 years old when doctors diagnosed her with an incurable disease of the nervous system. Her life has forever been changed since this diagnosis and the future is very uncertain. To date, doctors have not been able to find a medication that controls her daily seizures. So far, she has been resistant or has reacted poorly to all medications she has tried. Her disease makes her exhausted and very often dizzy or faint. Her future is uncertain, and the road ahead can seem long and lonely.

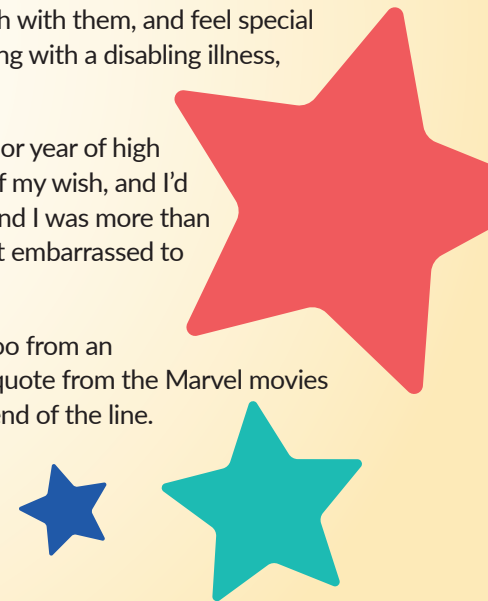
To Lillie, her wish was a gift of HOPE! When she was sick, or recovering from a severe seizure, she liked to read Marvel comics and watch the movies. They made her laugh and they made her happy. When determining her wish, she chose to go to the movie premiere of *The Avengers: Endgame*. It was everything she had dreamt about. It was something to look forward to. It became the promise that tomorrow will be a better day.

As part of her wish, she attended the red carpet event as well as the premiere and after parties. She met and talked with the stars of the movies – her heroes! The same heroes who helped her deal with the everyday effects of her illness. She spent countless afternoons watching them on her television and now she had the opportunity to talk with them, laugh with them, and feel special with them. She had never felt so important, free, or happier in her life. That day, she was not a girl living with a disabling illness, she was simply a guest at the premiere of *The Avengers: Endgame*.

Lillie’s wish changed how she saw herself and how she viewed the world. According to Lillie, “My senior year of high school I didn’t think I’d make it through, I didn’t want to make it through. Then I would be reminded of my wish, and I’d keep going, all the time reminding myself that my wish would come soon and would all be worth it. And I was more than right, because for the rest of my life I will carry the memories and the joy my wish brought me. I’m not embarrassed to talk about my disorder like I used to be. My wish changed my life!”

It was the most perfect and meaningful experience she could have ever imagined. She also got a tattoo from an autograph she received on her arm at the premiere. It reads “till the end of the line.” It is her favorite quote from the Marvel movies and means friendship. To her, it means this special wish will be an important part of her life until the end of the line.

For Lillie, this wish provides a much brighter road ahead and the HOPE to keep going.





# STRENGTH



*I wish to go to Hawaii*

**Jake, 7**  
brain tumor

To wish kid Jake, his wish was about **STRENGTH**.

In 2003, just days before Jake's 6th birthday, he started to have small headaches. At the recommendation of his pediatrician an MRI was done. They found a brain tumor the size of a lemon. Doctors originally thought his tumor was benign, but it turned out to be a highly aggressive type of pediatric bone cancer called Ewing Sarcoma that originated in the skull.

The tumor was extremely hypervascular and required a procedure be done to make surgery possible to remove the tumor. A difficult surgery followed. Despite losing 3 ½ times his blood volume, among many other challenges, doctors were successful in the attempt. Chemotherapy began immediately and continued for a year, followed by 6 weeks of radiation therapy.

Jake remembers how his family came together to support him through his illness, yet they spent a lot of time apart because of the appointments, treatments and hospital stays. When one parent was with Jake, the other parent was tending to the other siblings at home. He remembers his wish provided the family an opportunity to spend time together as a normal family on a trip of a lifetime, which was special!

At a young age, Jake had always loved history and military history in particular. Instead of Saturday morning cartoons, he chose to watch World War II documentaries. When he found out he could go anywhere for his wish, Jake knew immediately he wanted to go to Pearl Harbor. Knowing he had this wish to look forward to gave him the strength to get through his treatments, and planning the wish trip gave his family hope during a time clouded with worry and uncertainty. Planning his wish was the one thing his family could share in the excitement during this dark time.

This wish was more than Jake and his family could have ever dreamt. His favorite part was touring Pearl Harbor and the Navy ship, the USS Russell, where they got to eat with the men and women of the ship. Jake and his family were also special guests of the Admiral who gave them a private tour of the USS Arizona and of the Harbor where the damaged and sunken ships remain after the infamous Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941. He will never forget visiting the control room of the ship and getting to touch all the buttons and play with the equipment where he and his siblings could act like they were launching missiles or directing the ship.

Seventeen years later, Jake is cancer free. And to this day, he cherishes the memories of his wish and how his wish provided him with the strength to keep going during that difficult time.



# JOY



*I wish to go on a Disney Cruise Line®*

**Jerzi, 8  
cancer**

To wish kid Jerzi and her family, her wish was about JOY.

They remember the day well. It was May 13, 2017 when Jerzi was diagnosed with a Stage 3 Wilms Tumor. Less than a year later, the tumor had metastasized to other organs. Jerzi underwent multiple surgeries, a year of chemotherapy and radiation treatments that were directed toward her stomach and lungs. She was on 6 medications to counteract the side effects of the treatments she was receiving. During this time, Jerzi completed her schooling at the hospital and at home.

For Jerzi, her wish was to go on a Disney Cruise Line®. The decision wasn't easy but after discussing all possible options, she chose a wish that made her eyes light up and her enthusiasm radiate with excitement. No one in the family had been on a cruise or had experienced Disney in anyway. Through this wish they could do both!

The memory of this wish is something this family will cherish forever as Jerzi passed away shortly after her wish. They talk often about how special this trip was for them. On the wish, Jerzi was the happiest she had been since her diagnosis and as a family, they experienced things they wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. It started with the limo ride to the airport, their first plane ride, staying in a hotel, seeing the ocean, and playing in the sand! When Jerzi and her siblings saw the BIG Disney Cruise Ship for the first time, they giggled with excitement. They were able to bond as a family during this wish and not worry about doctor's appointments or other obstacles life threw their way.

Having these special moments to reflect on Jerzi's memory bring smiles to her siblings and parents' faces and brings much joy to their hearts!



# SHARE THE POWER OF A WISH



*I wish to go to Bolivia  
to see the Salt Water Flats*

**Leo, 16**  
cystic fibrosis

Leo's illness not only affected him but his entire family had to adapt to his diagnosis when he was just nine months old. When Leo learned he was receiving a wish, he thought about a videogame he played and the beautiful landscape of the Salt Water Flats. He wanted to go see them in person and share this special trip with his family.



*I wish to go to "The Avengers: Endgame"  
movie premiere*

**Lillie, 17**  
nervous system disorder

My senior year of high school, I didn't think I'd make it through. All the time reminding myself that my Wish would come soon and would be worth it all. I was right, because for the rest of my life I will carry the memories and the joy that my wish brought me.

*I wish to go to Legoland® in California*

**Sam, 10**  
genetic disorder/liver transplant

Like many children that face life-threatening medical conditions, Sam desperately needed something positive to look forward to. Make-A-Wish brought him the hope and joy needed to get through the toughest part of the transplantation process.

– Will and Colleen, wish parents



*I wish to go to Walt Disney World®*

**Sabrina, 4**  
leukemia



Sabrina wanted to be a pink and orange tiger with gems and blue fangs, yes BLUE. When she was given the mirror, she looked, thought, cocked her head and ROARED at herself. She did not stop roaring for the next two hours. Beautiful memories were made and the quality family time we had was priceless.

– Amanda, wish mom

Thank you to our generous

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## A special thank you to those who gave to Make-A-Wish in memory of loved ones

### In Honor of

Caitlyn Craig  
Chiamaka Ekeh  
Kahleb, Kyler, Hannah  
& Hailey Elliott

### In Memory of

Karen Beck  
Michelle Briggs  
Brinkley Chandler  
Jan Chase-Nelson  
Michelle Deras  
Mindy Dhoritey  
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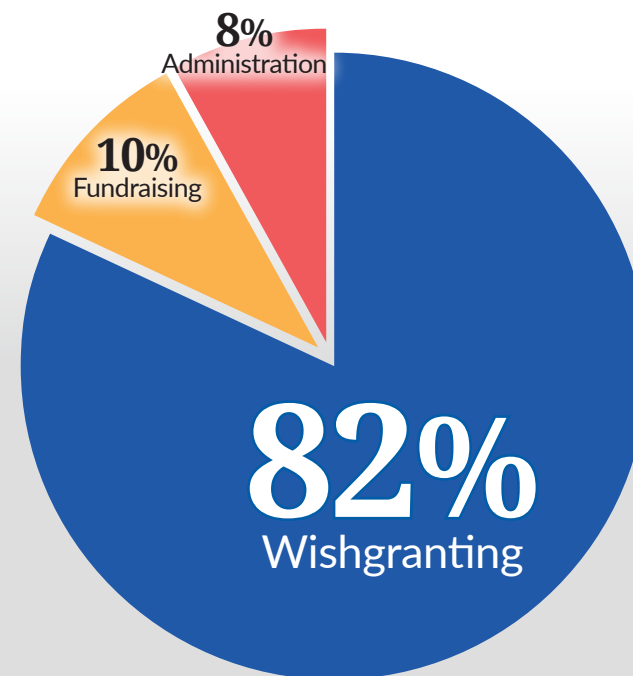
This Annual Report is dedicated to our Wish Kids who passed away during the fiscal year.  
Forever in Our Hearts.

# Financial Statement

Audited financial statement for Fiscal Year 2019 (September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019)

	TOTAL
Revenues, gains, and other support:	
Public Support:	
Contributions	2,266,964
Grants	360,125
Total public support	2,627,089
Internal special events	867,319
Less costs of direct benefits to donors	-157,237
Total internal special events	710,082
Investment income (Loss), net	-12,807
Other income	7,163
Net assets released from restrictions	–
Total revenues, gains, and other support	3,331,527
Expenses:	
Program services:	
Wishgranting	2,375,886
Total program services	2,375,886
Support services:	
Fundraising	307,551
Management and general	221,092
Total support services	528,643
Total expenses	2,904,529
Change in net assets	426,998
Net Assets - Beginning - Before change in accounting policy	7,320,083
Change in accounting policy	753,147
Net assets, beginning of the year, as adjusted	8,073,230
Net assets, end of the year	8,500,228

If you would like a copy of the full CliftonLarsonAllen audit, please contact the Make-A-Wish Nebraska office or visit [www.nebraska.wish.org](http://www.nebraska.wish.org)





# 115 Reasons to Smile

Fiscal Year 2019 was another outstanding year for granting wishes throughout the state of Nebraska. One hundred fifteen children with critical illnesses experienced the power of a wish this year.

Wishes ranged from the ever-popular trip to *Walt Disney World® Resorts*, to going on a shopping spree, to meeting their favorite celebrity.

Walt Disney World® Resort/Land® .....	56
Domestic Travel .....	14
International Travel .....	9
Shopping Spree .....	9
Meet a Celebrity .....	7
Room Makeover/Sensory Room .....	6
Playstructure/Playhouse .....	4
Disney Cruise® .....	3
Animal .....	2
Camper .....	2
Hawaii .....	2
Other .....	1

**Total Wishes in FY19 .....** 115

Name, Age	Illness	Wish	Hometown
Daphne, 11	nervous system disorder	Service Dog	Deshler
Connor, 10	genetic disorder	Disneyland®	North Platte
Yamana, 10	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Lucas, 8	leukemia	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Evansville
Hayes, 5	genetic disorder	Clearwater, FL to see the beach	Gretna
Gwenevere, 9	leukemia	Outer Banks of North Carolina	Omaha
Perla, 15	cancer	to meet J Belvin	Lincoln
Damon, 15	respiratory failure	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Alejandro, 4	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lexington
Madelynn, 9	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Papillion
Cooper, 5	leukemia	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Chaniya, 15	cancer	Shopping Spree	Omaha
Raef, 16	cancer	to meet the Denver Broncos team and see a game	Omaha
Zyanna, 8	gastrointestinal disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Hunter, 15	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Bellevue
Reece, 10	heart condition	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Zoe, 8	brain tumor	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Kalib, 10	heart condition	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Grand Island
Chloe, 16	gastrointestinal disorder	to go to Nashville to see Dollywood and the Grand Ole Opry	Oakland
Noah, 4	nervous system disorder	Sensory items	Omaha
Jackson, 5	heart condition	Walt Disney World® Resorts	South Sioux City
Gunnar, 6	cystic fibrosis	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Ryker, 7	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Wyatt, 12	lung disorder	to go to a Pittsburgh Penguins game	LaVista
Nathan, 12	bone cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Alex, 14	cystic fibrosis	Atlantis	Elkhorn
Briony, 9	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts and Universal Studios	Gothenburg
Ingrid, 4	heart transplant	All inclusive family resort in US	Lincoln
Kamarria, 17	leukemia	Bahamas	Omaha
Anthony, 18	rare disease	Walt Disney World® Resorts and Universal Studios	Omaha
David, 17	cancer	to meet the cast of Supernatural	Omaha

Name, Age	Illness	Wish	Hometown
Wilton, 3	renal transplant	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Milford
Jakob, 11	neuromuscular disorder	Shopping Spree	Weston
Brenna, 10	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Norfolk
Griffin, 12	genetic disease	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Ellie, 3	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Hebron
Declan, 4	neuromuscular disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Holdrege
Daisy, 9	brain tumor	Japan	Omaha
Parker, 7	rare heart condition	Legoland® in FL	Kearney
Daniel, 13	leukemia	Shopping Spree	Omaha
Asher, 4	genetic disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Tekamah
Kendall, 14	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Diamond, 18	respiratory disorder	Sensory Equipment	Omaha
Stefany, 13	lymphoma	Shopping Spree	Omaha
Fatima, 12	neuromuscular disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	South Sioux City
Kashden, 3	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Jerzi, 8	cancer	Disney Cruise Line®	Omaha
Emry, 5	kidney disease/transplant	Walt Disney World® Resorts	York
Lillie, 18	nervous system disorder	to go to the Marvel movie premiere	Bellevue
Leo, 16	cystic fibrosis	Bolivia to see the Salt Water Flats	Plattsmouth
Ellie, 10	neuromuscular disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Auburn
Oscar, 6	gastrointestinal disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Frederick, 4	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Broken Bow
Nicholas, 15	kidney disease	Last Dinosaur concert in LA	Lincoln
Talia, 10	congenital heart disease	Shopping Spree at the American Girl store in Kansas City	Omaha
Audrey, 16	nervous system disorder	Sensory Items	Omaha
Caleb, 10	gastrointestinal disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts to see the Haunted Mansion	Lincoln
Julian, 4	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Ella, 8	leukemia	Playstructure	LaVista
Dax, 4	liver disease/transplant	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Broken Bow
Lucas, 13	genetic disorder	to have a Hoyer lift	Pleasanton
Kylie, 5	brain tumor	Disney Cruise Line®	Lincoln
Mason, 17	autoimmune disorder	to go to the KTM Factory in Austria	Firth

Name, Age	Illness	Wish	Hometown
Tristen, 16	lymphoma	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Plattsmouth
Violeta, 8	bone marrow transplant	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Christopher, 12	rare disease	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Waverly
Zachary, 17	nervous system disorder	Rome	Centerville
Kamryn, 18	blood disorder	Hawaii	Grand Island
Gage, 6	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Samuel, 11	liver disease/transplant	Legoland® in CA	Omaha
Blaise, 7	congenital heart disease	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Oakland
Wyatt, 5	cancer	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Kearney
Maci, 4	genetic disorder	Playstructure	Omaha
Aliyah, 8	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Grand Island
Davis, 7	leukemia	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Jack, 8	bone marrow transplant	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Bentley, 6	skeletal disorder	New York to visit Dinosaur Amusement Park	Omaha
Lyndsey, 13	brain tumor	to meet Carrie Underwood	Benedict
Isabel, 5	rare disease	Camper	Callaway
Alexus, 5	genetic disorder	Goldendoodle Puppy	Omaha
Emma, 16	cancer	Paris, France	Omaha
Gerard, 4	leukemia	Playstructure	Omaha
Robert, 11	cancer	Legoland® in CA	Ord
TayLynn, 7	genetic disorder	Camper	Beatrice
Mckenzie, 14	nervous system disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Juniata
Killian, 9	autoimmune disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Doniphan
Leslie, 12	kidney disorder	Shopping Spree	Omaha
Connor, 3	brain tumor	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Bellevue
Addilyn, 3	genetic disorder	to have a party with my doctors and nurses	Fairbury
Fernando, 14	neuromuscular disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Omaha
Keeley, 18	nervous system disorder	Atlantis	Aurora
Myrrh, 9	blood disorder	Walt Disney World® Resorts	Lincoln
Joselyn, 17	lymphoma	Atlantis to swim with the pigs	Omaha
Isaiah, 15	lymphoma	Universal Studios in CA	Bellevue
Dler, 15	neuromuscular disorder	Electronic Shopping Spree	Lincoln
Keylee, 8	lymphoma	Hawaii- Aulani Resort	Table Rock





[nebraska.wish.org](http://nebraska.wish.org)

800-760-WISH (9474)

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11836 Arbor Street  
Omaha, NE 68144

Lincoln satellite office  
8033 South 15th Street, Suite B  
Lincoln, NE 68512

Kearney satellite office  
412 East 25th Street, Suite D  
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