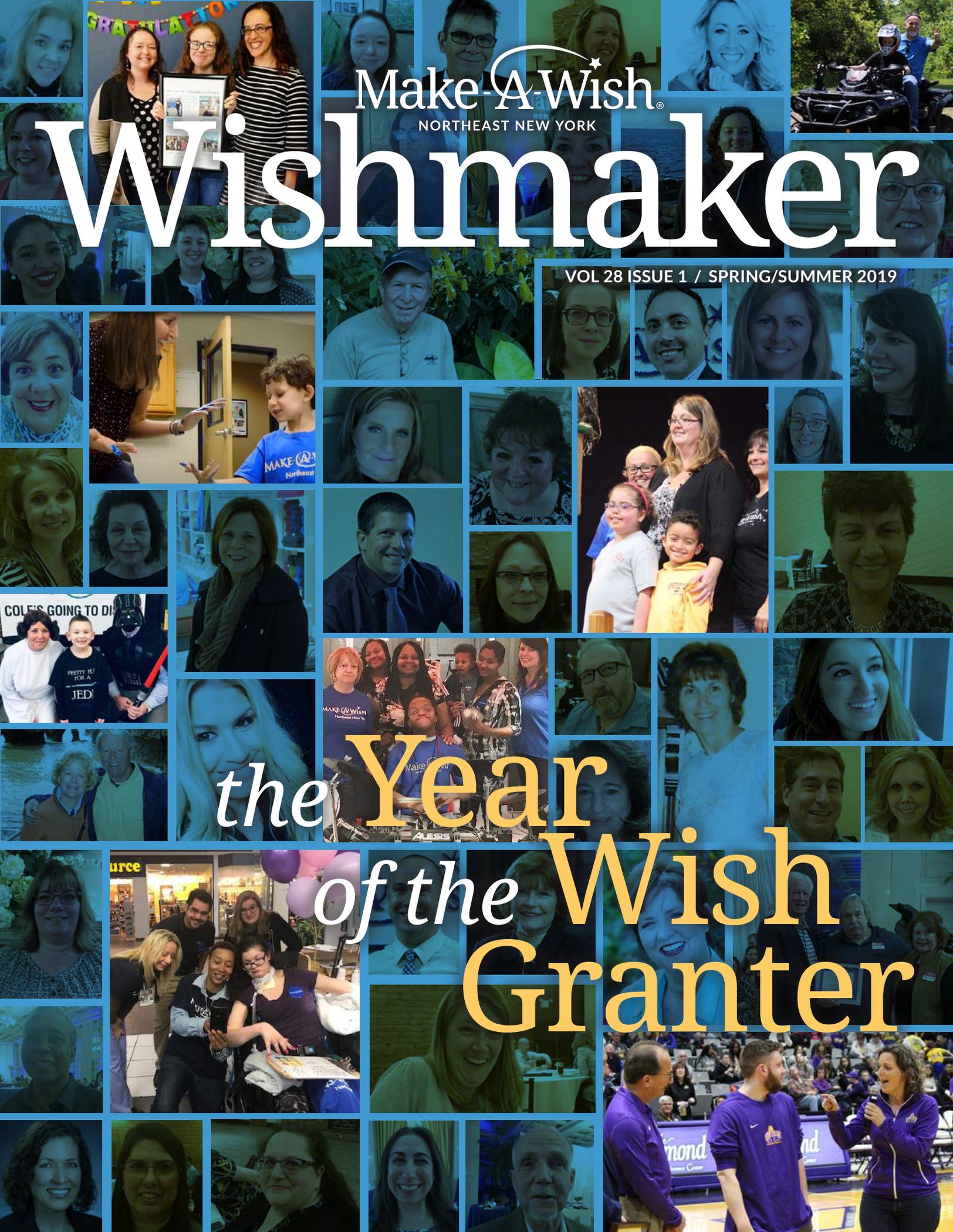


Make-A-Wish®  
NORTHEAST NEW YORK

# Wishmaker

VOL 28 ISSUE 1 / SPRING/SUMMER 2019

# the Year of the Wish Granter





## With gratitude *from the Board Chair and CEO*

To Our Valued Donors and Volunteers,

**Thank you for partnering with us to transform the lives of children with critical illnesses, one wish at a time!**



Sarah A. McKinney  
*Board Chair*

We are pleased to introduce this Spring/Summer issue of ***Wishmaker*** magazine as an illustration of the power of that partnership. At our 21st annual Wish Gala on March 23, we formally launched our *Year of the Wish Granter* to recognize all of our wish granting volunteers, past and present, who make the magic come true for our wish kids and families. Our volunteers truly are vital to our mission – they are the face of Make-A-Wish, working with our wish kids and families to ensure that their heartfelt wishes come true. They are a key reason why we have granted more than **1,850 wishes** during our 32 years as a chapter!



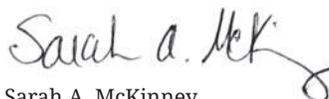
William C. Trigg, III, Ph.D.  
*Chief Executive Officer*

The 2019 Wish Gala, incidentally, netted more than \$320,000 for the Chapter – a new record and the continuation of a series of fundraising successes. Another wonderful fundraising success was our 26th annual Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign in late 2018 that grossed a record \$233,000 to support our wish granting program. The social and traditional media activity throughout the campaign played a role in a 100-percent increase of medical referrals during November and December 2018.

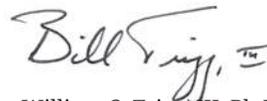
As you read about the wish stories highlighted in this issue, you will get a keen sense of how wishes are **life-transforming experiences** that inspire critically ill children, their families and entire communities to experience healing, hope, strength and joy during a very difficult journey in their lives. Even for Wish Families whose child or teenager passed away, “the power of a wish” continues to impact the families in positive and significant ways far into the future.

As we continue to pursue our goal of granting 90 or more wishes by the end of August, we thank you for your tremendous contributions of time, talent and treasure to make a **real and compelling difference** in the lives of our wish families, our communities, and each other.

Best wishes,



Sarah A. McKinney  
*Board Chair*



William C. Trigg, III, Ph.D.  
*Chief Executive Officer*



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ON THE COVER: Make-A-Wish® Northeast New York has more than 150 wish granters, the front-line volunteers who service the 90-100 wishes the Chapter grants each year. Pictured are but a few of them, and some of the wishes granted, as we celebrate *The Year of the Wish Granter*.

*The Year of the Wish Granter* —



# Celebrating Wish Granter



The annual Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Wish Gala at the Hall of Springs in Saratoga Springs this March celebrated wish granters, the volunteers vital to granting wishes for children with critical illnesses.

The event, which featured live and silent auctions and was hosted by Benita Zahn of WNYT NewsChannel 13 and Chad O'Hara of B95.5 fm, raised \$400,000 with the help of the nearly 450 people who attended and donated, and our sponsors. In honor of *The Year of the Wish Granter*, the original Make-A-Wish wish granters, Tommy and Kay Austin, came to the Capital Region from Texas to help celebrate all of the stirring work done by our volunteers.

Five wish ambassadors – Jasmine, Patrick, Sammy, Davia and Cameron –

were on hand and featured in a video that highlighted the role of wish granters.

"I've never experienced such niceness from strangers before," Cameron said in the video of wish granters Linda and Michael Doyle. "And when they came to my graduation party, it was just such a pleasant surprise to see them and how invested they were in seeing me grow."

Wish granter Frank Valiante summed up wish granting for everyone succinctly:

"It's not a cake walk. It's work. But you're going to love your work."

Guests enjoyed an inspirational night filled with dancing courtesy of the band Grand Central Station, succulent food and one-of-a-kind auction items, which, with the help of auctioneer Tom Stebbins, helped us reach our goal. Proceeds from this Gala are enough to fund roughly a third of the 90-100 wishes the Chapter plans to grant this year.

There was much to celebrate.

*The Year of the Wish Granter*



## The Year of the Wish Granter

# Our Gala Wish Ambassadors

Here is a closer look at the five wish kids and teens who served as our wish ambassadors at the 21st Annual Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Wish Gala in March



### Cameron's Class-y Wish

For 17-year-old Cameron, a class trip to Europe was the perfect way to end his senior year of high school. When he found out the class trip was to Italy and France, he was certain that his heartfelt wish was to go on this adventure with his friends before they each went off to college in the fall.

Cameron is still amazed two strangers, Wish Granters Michael and Linda Doyle, came into his life and helped grant his wish.

The 10-day trip consisted of touring many of the beautiful and historical sites that Venice, Florence and Paris have to offer. Cameron and his classmates from Columbia High School started the trip in Venice, where they toured St. Mark's Square, the Grand Canal and the Doge's Palace. Next, they traveled to Florence, where they visited Ponte Vecchio, Piazza Della Signoria and the Duomo.

They also got the chance to experience Pisa, the French Riviera and the Principality of Monaco, all before even heading to Paris! During the next two days Cameron was amazed by the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Arc de Triomphe and of course, the Eiffel Tower.

"My favorite part was to experience this with my closest friends," Cameron said. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."



### Davia Nets a Family Aruba Wish

As an eighth grader, Davia led her Schalmont girls' soccer team to an undefeated season

and a Class B state championship. During the off-season she started feeling back pain, before getting a startling diagnosis: Cancer.

"It wasn't something I was expecting them to say," she said at the time. "But they said it. Now I have to deal with it."

So she did. One way the 16-year-old dealt with it was going on her Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish to Aruba with her family, thanks to help from Wish Granter Gina Wright.

"I took my time with my wish [decision]. I didn't rush into anything," Davia said. "I took in the input from other people."

Davia returned to the soccer field her sophomore year, and scored the game-winning goal in the Section II final. "It's everything I've wanted, everything I've wanted to work for — and now I've got it," she said.

In other words, she dealt with it.



### A Princess Goes To Disney

Jasmine loves everything Disney. When asked what her perfect wish was, the 3-year-old didn't hesitate to ask to go to Walt Disney World to meet Mickey Mouse and the Princesses.

Mermaids told her she was on her way. She put on her ears and set off on this magical adventure with her family.

At Disney World, Jasmine met many of the famous characters, and even got to have meals with some of them! She and her family enjoyed passes to each of the parks, where they got to go on rides and take pictures. They also spent time at Universal Studios and Sea World. There were plenty of laughs and smiles

throughout the week as they experienced all of the magic together.

"Jasmine and her family are four wonderful, beautiful people," said Frank Valiante, who was Jasmine's wish granter along with Ray Gawlak. "They had been through a lot, and this wish gave them a chance to just be a family again and have a good time."

Jasmine and her family are grateful for this time they were able to spend together and hope to have more exciting trips like this in the future.

### Patrick Gets to See His Grandma

Patrick loves to spend time with family and play in the sun. When the 4-year-old was asked what his heartfelt wish



was, he said, "spending time with grandma and playing on the playground." Patrick's grandma used to live nearby, but moved to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, around the time he got sick, making time to have some fun in the sun with her a perfect wish that Wish Granters Jessica Gallo and Sandy Worona helped craft!

Patrick and his family stayed at a resort with Myrtle Beach's only indoor water park, where he got to splash and play all week. The trip included tickets to all of the famous Ripley's Attractions, such as the Aquarium, Mirror Maze, Moving Theatre and Believe It or Not Museum. When he wasn't exploring, Patrick was swimming in the ocean or running around the playground and going down all of the slides with his brother.

"To see him run to the beach that first time was amazing," mom Michelle said.

And there was plenty of time to spend with Grandma.

After being away from his grandmother for so long, Patrick and his family are grateful for the fun and relaxing week they were able to enjoy together.

# Honoring Wish Granter 'Lake George George'



No one is quite sure how many wishes “Lake George George” has captained as a wish granter for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, or how many he has assisted on formally or informally in his quarter-century as a volunteer.

Forget trying to put a number on the times he’s called for help from one of his many friends, whether it be for a load of top soil, carpentry, painting – or an actual ship captain. George Sicard was honored for his 25 years of volunteering for the Chapter at a Wish Granter Appreciation Night at Franklin Plaza in Troy. The original wish granters, Tommy and Kay Austin, spoke at the March event.

Sicard, a retired Glens Falls firefighter, has climbed mountains for Make-A-Wish, and organized motorcycle rallies. He said he was “not looking for another cause” when a friend approached him about wish granting in 1993. Hundreds, if not thousands of hours of volunteering later, he has no regrets.

“If you are a true wish granter,” he said, “you will take away more from it than you will give.”

The Austins presented service certificates to wish granters at the event. The Chapter has dubbed this The Year of the Wish Granter.

“You are the most important asset we have,” Tommy Austin told them. “Without you, we couldn’t do what we do. You are the very heart of the organization.”

## Sammy Has Game

Sammy is a gamer. The 8-year-old’s favorite thing to do is play Fortnite and follow his favorite players on YouTube. When asked what his heartfelt wish was, he couldn’t think of anything better than to meet his favorite player and YouTube star, Cizzorz, at his mansion in Los Angeles.

“I am obsessed with Cizzorz, his personality, how well he plays the game and his posts on YouTube,” explained Sammy, whose wish was put together by Wish Granters John and Judi Melby.

Sammy left for sunny California filled with excitement knowing that his wish was going to come true so soon. While in L.A., he and his family spent the first day exploring the Santa Monica Pier and beach, where they got to go on rides and do some shopping.

On the second day, Sammy got his wish. He met Cizzorz and the rest of the FaZe Clan at their mansion, where they talked and played Fortnite all day. Sammy got to ask questions and learn new tricks from his gaming role models and his parents got to experience all of his joy right along with him. They also got to go on a game-related shopping spree!

To end the trip, the family enjoyed an adventure-filled day at Hollywood Universal Studios before heading back to the Capital Region.

## New Class of Wish Granters



Make-A-Wish Northeast New York volunteers and staff pose after the newly minted wish granters were given their training certificates by CEO William C. Trigg, III, at the Chapter’s office.

# Saluting Some of Our Special Volunteers

For National Volunteer Week April 7-13, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York recognized wish granters and other volunteers with awards for their invaluable role in fulfilling the Chapter's vision of granting wishes to every eligible child in its 15-county region covering the 518 and 838 area codes.

"Without volunteers such as these men and women, there are no wishes. There is no Make-A-Wish," said William C. Trigg, III, CEO of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. "It is only through their dedication and time that Make-A-Wish Northeast New York can grant wishes to children battling critical illnesses. And the individuals we are recognizing with awards stand out in their efforts to assist the Chapter and Wish Families fulfill that mission."

Meet these outstanding volunteers:

## Above and Beyond Award



**Renee Elsinger, Loretta Capiello and Diane Duquette-Burl**

Collectively, they are known as "The Ladies of the North," a core group of wish granters who also volunteer for efforts large and small in the North Country region of our chapter centered in and around Plattsburgh. Whether it be individual wishes or helping at events, Renee, Loretta and Diane can always be counted on to lend their individual and group talents in the northern sector of our Chapter.



## Wish Star Award

**Leah Slocum**

The concert/festival PEAKFest is an event of growing importance on the fall calendar in Saratoga County, thanks to the efforts of Leah, who is also a wish granter and a member of the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board of Trustees.

## Wish Team Award



**John and Judi Melby**

Over the years John and Judi Melby have worked on 20 wishes together, making them a true wish super couple! During one of their most recent wishes, they may not have known much about YouTube gamers, but still crafted a wish for Sammy to meet Cizzorz of FazeClan that proved memorable. The couple says wish granting filled a void in their lives after retirement, but it is John and Judi who make Make-A-Wish complete.

## Rising Star Award



**James Cole**

Even though every wish is unique in its own right, James is always up for a new challenge to test his wish capabilities. In addition to helping grant wishes, James is reliably willing to lend a helping hand, whether it's counting letters to Santa as part of the Macy's Believe campaign or helping out with logistical issues at the Gala. James has proven to be an invaluable newer asset to the Chapter.

## Wish Champion Award



**Sandi Worona**

Whenever there is a wish to be granted, difficult or not, Sandi is on it. When there is an event table to be staffed -- or any job that needs to be done -- Sandi is on it. A Wish mom, Sandi epitomizes the strong bond between Wish Families and Make-A-Wish Northeast New York that lasts long after a wish has been granted.

# Wish Ambassador Luke Hoag Makes Us Believers

**If there was any doubt, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish ambassador Luke Hoag made believers out of all of us on National Believe Day.**

On Dec. 7, the 11-year-old walked into Macy's at Colonie Center carrying a sack of letters to Santa he collected, letters to be dropped off as part of the Macy's Believe campaign to benefit Make-A-Wish® America.

As onlookers cheered his triumphant arrival, Luke was trailed by wagons stacked with letters --- 77,000 in all, coming from all 50 states and several foreign countries.

Luke, who had been diagnosed with a brain tumor, received a Walt Disney World® Resort wish in 2010. He started collecting letters to Santa in 2015, and has delivered roughly 200,000 to Macy's to date.

"That trip to Disney World made a mark on me," he explained. "So I wanted to give back to Make-A-Wish."

The sixth grader arrived at the mall via a caravan from Hoosick Falls Central School, and was met by a red carpet, and a large contingent of media, shoppers and applause.

For every letter received through Dec. 24, Macy's donated \$1, up to \$1 million, to Make-A-Wish. On Dec. 7 only, in celebration of National Believe Day, Macy's doubled its donation for each letter collected, up to an extra \$1 million, taking the goal to \$2 million for Make-A-Wish.

Fellow wish ambassador Justice White of Greenwich also delivered letters — well more than 10,000 in all — on Christmas Eve.



Macy's has donated more than \$112 million to Make-A-Wish since 2003, including more than \$17 million through its annual Believe campaign.



## Lighting Up Lives

Kristy Pollak Memorial Holiday Lights Show organizer David Falso, front left, is joined by wish alums Josh and Troy and their families in presenting a check for more than \$18,000 to Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, at the Amsterdam Recorder. Thanks, Dave. Thanks, alums.

# Swishes for Wishes Hosted by Tri-City ValleyCats and Harlem Globetrotters

TROY – The Tri-City ValleyCats and Make-A-Wish Northeast New York have announced a partnership with the world famous Harlem Globetrotters to host “Swishes for Wishes Night” at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium this summer. This unique fundraising theme night will take place on Sunday, July 28, as the ValleyCats take on the Connecticut Tigers at 5 p.m.

The ValleyCats will be wearing Globetrotters-themed baseball jerseys that will be auctioned off during the game to benefit Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. To add to the festivities, there will be a pregame ceremonial “first pass,” wish family picnic, mystery autographed items, and a postgame launch-a-ball. All proceeds will help fund the 90-100 wishes the Chapter plans to grant this year for children and teens in the 518 and 838 area codes.

“Having the opportunity to partner with the Harlem Globetrotters, a world-renowned leader in family entertainment, in support of such a great cause was a no-brainer,” said ValleyCats Assistant General Manager Michelle Skinner. “This is a first-of-a-kind partnership across Minor League Baseball, which will go a very long way in helping Make-A-Wish Northeast New York grant life-changing wishes for children battling critical illnesses.”

“Make-A-Wish Northeast New York is thrilled to continue its long-running partnership with the New York-Penn League champion Tri-City ValleyCats,” chapter CEO William C. Trigg, III, said. “And to have the most famous basketball team in the world, the Harlem Globetrotters, involved ensures July 28 will be a memorable day for all at The Joe.”



*Pictured are Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, wish kid Patrick Buffaline, Harlem Globetrotter Tay “Firefly” Fisher and Tri-City ValleyCats’ mascot SouthPaw.*



## Tyhlar’s Great (Dane) Day

**ALBANY – Wish kid Tyhlar was having a really good day. Then it turned downright spectacular.**

“It was the best moment of my life,” the 15-year-old said.

Tyhlar, a Mechanicville junior varsity basketball player and Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid, was invited by the University at Albany and men’s basketball team head coach Will Brown to spend a game day with the team at SEFCU Arena. Tyhlar sat with the Great Danes for their film study and morning shootaround, and at their team meal, and behind the bench for their game against Hartford.

“They treated me as one of their own,” Tyhlar said.

At halftime, Tyhlar represented wish kids as the Chapter formally thanked the UAlbany athletic program for its generosity helping Make-A-Wish. But the composed teen broke down when Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board Chair Sarah A. McKinney stunned him with unexpected news: He was heading to the NBA All-Star Game the next month in Charlotte, N.C.

“It was a moment that I can never forget,” Tyhlar told media afterward of his wish being granted. “There are no words that can explain it.”

In Charlotte, Tyhlar met many past and present NBA legends, and posed with both All-Star teams.

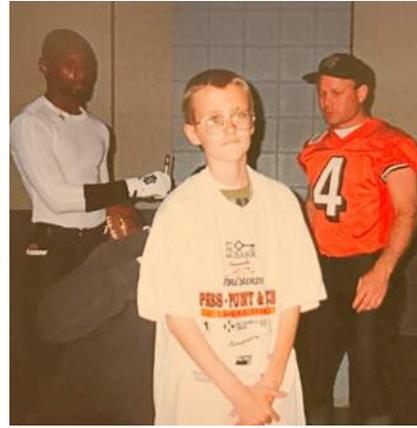
Following his wish reveal, after Tyhlar did halftime media interviews like a seasoned veteran, UAlbany associate athletic director Charlie Voelker summoned the teen.

“Tyhlar, we’re up right now,” Voelker said, “and we need you back on the bench.”

UAlbany won the game.



# A Wish Recalled Decades Later



As Jonathan Banker thumbed through his dated palm-sized photo album, details of his Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish started to return in force.

To be fair, it's not like his wish was yesterday. Or in the last decade. Or two.

Jonathan's wish came in 1995, after being treated at Albany Medical Center for a pineal tumor. Today he is 37, and an LPN for the very same medical facility that treated him a quarter-century ago.

"Me being in the hospital, seeing what the nurses did for me ... I wanted to do something like that," he said recently during a break.

He remembers his wish granters Larry Pohl and retired veteran broadcast journalist Dick Beach.

"It took me a little bit, but then I decided to go to Disney World," Jonathan recalled of his wish as a 13-year-old. "It was fun. I enjoyed the rides, the sights."

Jonathan served as an honorary captain at the Albany Empire's home opener at Times Union Center on April 27 – two days before

World Wish Day – which featured a reunion of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish alumni of all ages.

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kids will serve as honorary captains for each of the Empire's six home games this season.

Back in 1995, as part of his wish enhancement, Jonathan also got to attend an Arena Football League game, and met several members of the then-Albany Firebirds.

"I got to go back to the locker room and meet players," said the Mechanicville native who now lives in Troy. "It was exciting. I had never been to an Arena Football League game."

Jonathan is one of the overwhelming majority of wish kids who survive into adulthood and thrive. Album in hand, he looks back at his wish experience fondly.

"It made me feel a lot better," he said. "It lifted my spirits, my self-esteem."



## Weibrecht Inaugurates Whiteface Ski Event

Within hours of the last dance at the Chapter gala, skiers began pouring into Whiteface Mountain to participate in the inaugural Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Give-Back Sunday. Created by two-time Olympic medalist and Make-A-Wish Northeast New York trustee Andrew Weibrecht, the single-day activity was designed to raise money to support wishes, while helping to promote awareness of the Chapter's work in the North Country.

Through the generosity of Whiteface Mountain, during the day every skier who made a \$10 donation to Make-A-Wish was able to purchase a lift ticket for half-price. In addition, the world-famous Mirror Lake Inn donated a three-day, two-night stay, which was raffled off at a reception held in the main lodge at Whiteface.

But the real highlight of the event was the opportunity for 25 lucky skiers to ski with the Olympic medalist and participate in



a recreational giant slalom race in the afternoon. So unique was this experience that skiers came from throughout New York State, New Jersey and Quebec just for the opportunity to try to keep up with the Olympian.

More than \$10,000 was raised during the day. As importantly, newspaper and television promotion of the event was seen throughout New York, Vermont and Quebec in the weeks leading up to the event.

"It was a great day of skiing for a super cause," Weibrecht said. "Through the support of Whiteface Mountain, the New York Ski

Educational Foundation, the Olympic Regional Development Authority and our volunteers, our first-ever Give-Back Sunday exceeded all of its objectives. In addition, I am grateful to my family and all of my colleagues at the Mirror Lake Inn for their support. We look forward to making it even bigger next year."

# Pyper's Messy Wish

Pyper's wish reveal turned out to be a big mess.

Students at Boulevard Elementary School in Gloversville thought they were just going to a November assembly on Make-A-Wish Northeast New York's Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign, during which stars featuring wish ambassadors are sold at area malls, schools and businesses.

But Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Chief Executive Officer William C. Trigg, III, called 9-year-old wish kid Evan Brooks down from the bleachers, telling him that he is going to get to have his one heartfelt wish granted in the coming months.

But that was just the beginning.

Trigg handed the microphone to Ray Gawlak, manager of volunteer engagement and volunteer wish granter, who called Pyper over to tell her that, after months of waiting, her wish was about to come true.

Gawlak told the 10-year-old Nickelodeon fan that she would be going to the stage version of her favorite show, "Double Dare," when it came to Proctors Theatre in Schenectady, and that she could run the Double Dare Live! obstacle course.

Then things got, well, messy.

"What was your true wish? Do you remember what you wanted to have happen to you?" Gawlak asked the fourth grader. "I think Pyper wanted to be slimed, so guess what Pyper? We've got some slime here for you today."

Buckets of green slime were brought out onto the tarped gymnasium floor, along with pairs of goggles and metal folding chairs. Trigg suggested that Gawlak should be slimed, too, to the cheers of the assembly.

Gawlak then challenged Trigg to join in

the gooey fun, as well as school counselor Sue Grossi. The cheers and laughter from the students grew.

Pyper, Gawlak, Trigg and eventually Grossi each had a bucket filled with green slime poured over their heads, as the puddle on the tarped floor grew, along with the cheers from the students.

"Only for you," a slimed-slathered Grossi said to Pyper.

"It looks like she's a slime clown," Pyper laughed.

Pyper beamed throughout while her mother, Tammy Ayers, and stepfather, Lance Davis, looked on.

"That's all she's been talking about, being slimed," Ayers said. "That's all she wanted to do."

It got better: Pyper got to be slimed again on the set of Nickelodeon's traveling Double Dare Live! show at Proctors Theatre.

Pyper's wish has been long in the making, delayed by a kidney condition that caused her to need dialysis. Her mom said the child has been doing well since she received a kidney transplant about three years ago.

Pyper said her wish was worth the wait.

"I'm very sticky," she said giddily while toweling off. "That was fun."



See Tiago's video  
on our Facebook page



# Tiago's Snow Days

Tiago Cusano had never seen snow. But he had seen bobsledding.

**Recovering from radiation treatments, Tiago became fascinated with bobsledding – particularly the speed – as he watched the 2018 Winter Olympics on TV at his Miami Springs, Florida, home.**

"I want to ride one of those one day," Tiago said.

So when it came time for the 8-year-old to make his wish, he told Make-A-Wish® Southern Florida he wanted to go down an icy track.

With assistance from Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, Tiago and his family got to do just that and much more, as they were introduced to the miracle of winter in the home of miracles: Lake Placid, New York.

With brand-new cold-weather gear, Tiago and his family were greeted in mid-February like rock stars/royalty the moment they stepped foot in the idyllic Olympic village nestled in the Adirondacks.

Tiago met with Olympians past and present. The impressive roster included ski medalist and Make-A-Wish Northeast New York board member Andrew Weibrecht, whose family owns the famed

Mirror Lake Inn, where the Cusanos stayed.

Olympic bobsledders surrounded Tiago much of his wish, including medalists Elana Meyers Taylor and Lauren Gibbs, showing genuine interest in the family. The youth watched World Cup bobsled and skeleton races up close at Mt. Van Hoevenberg ("scary," he said), and appeared on international TV, and was the subject of his own news conference.

"So here we are," dad Kevin told the media, "and we are thankful to Make-A-Wish. ... It's above and beyond what we expected."

The mayor of Lake Placid, Craig H. Randall, appeared overjoyed to meet Tiago. "I know you," Randall told him. After hours in the village, it seemed everyone knew Tiago.

The youth, diagnosed with a brain tumor, also went to the top of the Olympic ski jump. And toured Herb Brooks Arena. And learned to snowboard and luge. There was more.

Tiago learned how to make a snowball – and throw one. He and his 12-year-old sister, Gianna, got into snowball fights

with each other, and anyone willing to throw one back at them. More than a few Olympians were game.

A kid from Florida who had never seen snow grabbed a fistful of Upstate New York winter by his mittens.

"I like cold more than hot," he said.

Of course, there was his bobsled run. The whole family got to ride. It was fast, fun.

Tiago smiled afterward and gave high-fives.

"I wish I could do it again tomorrow," he said that night before bed.

Tiago later got named an official member of the U.S. Bobsled team, ID card and all.

"I can't begin to tell you how powerful this experience has been," Kevin Cusano said.

While New Yorkers often flee to Florida in winter, the Cusanos were sad to say goodbye to an Upstate February.

"We've fallen in love with Lake Placid," mom Elena said.

The feeling was more than mutual.



## 'I wish to go to Walt Disney World® Resort'

### **Autumn, 10, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Barbara Jariri and Sabra Venezia  
Wish sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign 2018

### **Ryan, 12, from Troy**

Wish Granters: Erik Fellows and Christopher Fain  
Wish sponsored by 2018 New York State Laborers' Golf Tournament

### **Laney, 9, from Cohoes**

Wish Granters: Jerome Keenan and Stevie Church  
Wish sponsored by 2018 Play It Forward 518 Golf Tournament

### **Kirsten, 5, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Pete and Toni Cowie  
Wish sponsored by 2018 Kingsway Golf Tournament

### **Carmella, 8, from Delmar**

Wish Granters: Jessica Gallo and Sandi Worona  
Wish sponsored by World Wide Professional Services

### **Jaydn, 4, from East Greenbush**

Wish Granters: Pamela Chase and Pamela Moore  
Wish co-sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign 2019

### **Mylarose, 9, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Jeremy Rockmacher and Kelly Stang  
Wish sponsored by Gross Electric, Inc.

### **Miracle, 11, from Stephentown**

Wish Granters: Tanya Haas and Katie Krzys  
Wish sponsored by Ben and India Adams

### **Aurora-Joy, 5, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Lori DeBrino and Bonnie DiGirolamo  
Wish sponsored by 2018 Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament

### **Alexander, 8, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Joleen Bruyette and Francesca Casaregola  
Wish sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign 2019

### **Ineysha, 17, from Albany**

Wish Granters: Nicole Pickel and Pam Dutcher  
Wish sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign 2019

### **Jordan, 15, from Hampton**

Wish Granters: Eileen Dashnaw and Kimberly Crofut  
Wish sponsored by John W. Danforth Company

### **Edwin, 4, from Albany**

Wish Granters: Nicole Pickel and Emily Hennessey  
Wish sponsored by JE Dunne Construction Group, Inc.

### **Giada, 3, from Johnstown**

Wish Granters: Hanna Cimo, Lisa Cimo and Ray Gawlak  
Wish sponsored by Wish Jump 2018

### **Robert, 7, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Barbara Jariri and Sabra Venezia  
Wish sponsored by CAP COM Federal Credit Union/CAP COM Cares Foundation

### **Cole, 6, from Glens Falls**

Wish Granters: Zach Ogden and Maura Fox  
Wish sponsored by Wack's Ride 2018

### **Lochlan, 5, from Ballston Spa**

Wish Granters: Karen Kaufman-Wachs and Mary Dufort  
Wish sponsored by Joshua and Aminee Spiegel, and Christopher and Christine Edwards

the power of a wish

## 'I wish to HAVE'

### **I Wish to Have a Shopping Spree**

**Nicholas, 18, from Queensbury**

Wish Granters: Russell Matteson and Jesse Matteson  
Wish sponsored by Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign 2019

### **I Wish to Have a Shopping Spree**

**Maliha, 13, from Albany**

Wish Granters: Nina Benvenuto and Brenda Fitting  
Wish sponsored by B.C. Flynn Contracting

### **I Wish to Have a Hospital Bed**

**Miles, 4, from Clifton Park**

Wish Granters: Christopher Fain and Jessica Gallo  
Wish sponsored by FPI Mechanical

### **I Wish to Have a Shopping Spree**

**Gage, 3, from Albany**

Wish Granters: Linda Doyle and Michael Doyle  
Wish sponsored by Fund-A-Wish Donors

### **I Wish to Have a Shopping Spree**

**Isaac, 15, from Niskayuna**

Wish Granters: Pete and Toni Cowie  
Wish sponsored by Scott and Kelly Opiela, Michael and Robin Esposito, and Russell and Carolyn Wilks

### **I Wish to Have a Shopping Spree**

**Corryan, 15, from Albany**

Wish Granters: Karen Dominguez and Pamela Moore  
Wish sponsored by Stone Bridge Iron & Steel, Inc.

### **I Wish to Have a Vintage Arcade Game Room**

**Riley, 15, from Ticonderoga**

Wish Granters: Scott Sayward and Erin Duval  
Wish sponsored by Wack's Ride 2018

## 'I wish to GO'

### **I Wish to Go to Universal Studios**

**Jared, 16, from Troy**

Wish Granters: Erin Oliver and Leah Slocum  
Wish sponsored by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

### **I Wish to Go to Disneyland**

**Normando, 15, from Chatham**

Wish Granters: Nina Benvenuto and Cathy Scala  
Wish sponsored by Hudson River Bank and Trust

### **I Wish to Go to Disneyland to Meet Lightning McQueen**

**Samuel, 4, from Brushton**

Wish Granters: Kismet McCormick and Diane Roberts  
Wish sponsored by Softball on Snow 2019

### **I Wish to Go on a Caribbean Cruise**

**Kyrianna, 16, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Joleen Bruyette and Francesca Casaregola  
Wish sponsored by GTM Payroll Services

### **I Wish to Go on a Tropical Adventure in Costa Rica**

**Trevor, 15, from Greenwich**

Wish Granters: Bill Trigg and Heidi Eustis  
Wish sponsored by Price Chopper/Market 32 Employees 2019

### **I Wish to Go to the NBA All-Star Game**

**Tyklar, 15, from Mechanicville**

Wish Granters: Steve Shaw and Janielle Krawczyk  
Wish sponsored by Saratoga Casino Hotel

### **I Wish to Go to Hawaii**

**Logan, 10, from Saratoga Springs**

Wish Granters: Pam Seegraber, Janielle Krawczyk and Melissa Murphy  
Wish sponsored by Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament 2018

## 'I wish to MEET'

### **I Wish to Meet Cizzors, the YouTube Gaming Star**

**Samuel, 8, from Castleton on the Hudson**

Wish Granters: Judi Melby and John Melby  
Wish sponsored by Kyle and Danielle Kinowski

## 'I wish to BE'

### **I Wish to be Slimed at Nickelodeon Double Dare Live!**

**Pyper, 10, from Gloversville**

Wish Granters: Ray Gawlak and Frank Valiante  
Wish sponsored by 2018 Wish Jump



Make-A-Wish.  
**2019 WALK FOR WISHES®**



# Take a Walk in the Park with Us

The New York-Penn League titlist Tri-City ValleyCats call Joseph L. Bruno Stadium home. For one day in August, so do hundreds of champions of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, as the Chapter's Walk for Wishes® continues to grow into one of the marquee events on the summer calendar.

The Walk raises awareness for the Make-A-Wish mission, engages different communities while celebrating The Power of A Wish, and raises funds that make a difference in the lives of children with critical illnesses.

And ... it's a lot of fun!

Form your team now ahead of the sixth annual event on **Saturday, Aug. 10**. Sign up your friends, your family, your co-workers – it's up to you – and join wish kids and families, corporations, schools and community groups.

"It is such an inspiring day," said Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky. "You are surrounded on all sides by the mission of Make-A-Wish as we see Wish Families lead the event, followed closely

by the extended families, friends, teachers, colleagues and so many more who support our Wish Families through their journeys. Then all of that is just added to by the many members of our community who come out to show their support for the mission! There is no better way to spend a Saturday morning."

The Walk will commence at 10 a.m. that Saturday, with same-day registration beginning at 8 a.m. and opening ceremonies at 9:45 a.m. A family friendly event that is wheelchair accessible, the three-mile route in and around the campus of Hudson Valley Community College in Troy begins with a "Victory Lap" around the ballpark. (There is also an optional one-mile route.)

Walkers can register now at <http://site.wish.org/walknyny>. Participants can set up teams and solicit donations, or just make their own. If you raise at least \$100, you get a prized Walk for Wishes T-shirt.

Last August, a record 600-plus participants raised more than \$125,000 – a 33-percent jump over the year before and exceeding the Chapter's goal. There were 47 teams, the largest number ever for the Chapter, aided by nearly 60 volunteers.

This year will be even bigger. See you champions there.



# Riley's High-Score Wish

Riley would have been at home in the early '90s, when to play video games you had to go to an arcade and put your quarter on the console to signal you were up next.

So for his wish, the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid wanted his very own arcade, with vintage video games.

The 15-year-old's basement in Ticonderoga, NY, has been transformed into a personal game room, highlighted by three fully restored video arcade games: a 1989 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, a 1991 original Simpsons, and a 1992 original Mortal Kombat, which came from Arcade Game Sales of Maryland through Joe Childs; and two 2010 games -- Pac-Man's Arcade Party and Arcade Legends 3 -- which arrived through the generosity of Betson Industries. The company's branch manager, Dave Reiners, and wife, Elaine,



attended the wish reveal. This unique wish could not have come about without their support.

Erin Duval and Scott Sayward served as wish granters.

"When I first imagined this, I imagined a fun hangout spot for me and all my friends," Riley said at his wish reveal.

"I've always loved collecting retro games, and I've always been a huge gamer. And that's one of the reasons why I wished for an arcade like this."

The best part? Riley doesn't need quarters, and he always has next game.



## Wishmaking Monthly e-Newsletter Debuts

Debuting in January, *Wishmaking Monthly* is the new e-newsletter from Make-A-Wish Northeast New York that keeps you updated on the events, news and, of course, wishes going on at our Chapter. If you are not receiving issues, contact Director of Marketing and Communications Mark McGuire at [mmcguire@neny.wish.org](mailto:mmcguire@neny.wish.org) to be added to the mailing list.

# A Spring and Summer of Fun Await



Get a head start on planning your late spring and summer with these events to benefit Make-A-Wish Northeast New York

## June

- June 1** **Make-A-Wish Night at Fonda Speedway**  
Fonda, NY  
**Memorial Benefit for Superhero Aiden Jay Henry**  
Double D's Café  
Brushton, NY



- June 2** **Ryan's Make-A-Wish Fishing Contest**  
Six Mile Waterworks Park  
Albany, NY

- June 13** **Walk for Wishes® Team Captain Kickoff**  
Dave & Busters  
Guilderland, NY
- June 16** **Team Dame Golf Outing & BBQ**  
Fairways of Halfmoon  
Mechanicville, NY
- June 17** **Kingsway Community Annual Golf Tournament**  
Mohawk Golf Club  
Schenectady, NY

## July

- July 17** **11th Annual Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament**  
Saratoga National Golf Club  
Saratoga Springs, NY



- July 17** **Naked Turtle Golf Tourney**  
The Barracks Golf Course  
Plattsburgh, NY

- July 20** **Wish Jump SkyDive the Ranch**  
Gardiner, NY

**Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Day at Six Flags® Great Escape**  
Lake George, NY

- July 24** **NYS Laborers Golf Classic**  
Saratoga National Golf Club  
Saratoga Springs, NY

- July 25** **SP Livingston Golf Tourney**  
Winding Brook Country Club  
Valatie, NY

- July 27** **American Legion Post 337 Golf Tournament**  
Holland Meadows Golf Course  
Gloversville, NY



- July 27** **WACK's Ride 2019**  
Wayside Bar Grill  
Hudson Falls, NY



- Wish Fest 2019**  
Shuttleworth Park  
Amsterdam, NY

- July 28** **Wish Family Picnic/Tri-City ValleyCats Game**  
Joe Bruno Stadium  
Troy, NY

- Swishes for Wishes Night at The Joe**  
Joe Bruno Stadium  
Troy, NY

## August

- Aug. 10** **Walk for Wishes**  
Joe Bruno Stadium  
Troy, NY

- Aug. 15** **Play It Forward 518 Golf Tournament**  
Van Patten Golf Club  
Clifton Park, NY

- Aug. 17** **Bobbie Arsenault Memorial Family Day**  
Butler Park  
Averill Park, NY

# ‘I Know the Power of a Wish’

By Thomas Vielkind

Every once in a while, one goes back and looks at how far they’ve come. Three years ago, I was five months cancer-free after a 26-month bout with acute promyelocytic leukemia (APML), which I was diagnosed with at 14. I had been planning my Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish for a few months at this point: I desperately wanted to go to the Pro Bowl in Hawaii.

However, that wish was full, and I was placed on a waitlist; if someone was unable to go, I would take their place. But 10 days before the game, I received a phone call from my wish granter, Jaime Ralston. A few days later, I was on a plane bound for Hawaii.

The best way I can describe my wish is it was the finale to my illness. My trip served as a lens to look at all the hardships I had endured over nearly three years, and a means to celebrate how far I had come, how different a person I had become. My wish made me feel like a normal kid who was on vacation with his family, something we had not dreamed about for three or so years.

At the time leading up to my wish, I had simply been looking to get through high school as best as I could, all the while making monthly visits to hospitals and having any number of tests continually done. In the years following my wish, while I still have checkups, it feels as if that portion of my life is over.

My trip to Hawaii provides a bittersweet memory to my illness. While it was one of the most fun weeks of my life, it serves as a reminder of the toll a serious illness takes on oneself and family. I can never think about one without the other.

My wish remains a celebration of everything I overcame over a large swath of my high school years. But for others, their fight rages on. That inspires me going forward to be a wish ambassador and give back to Make-A-Wish®. I know these kids’ battle ... and I know the lasting power of a wish.

*Thomas Vielkind, 20, is a junior at Syracuse University. His wish was to attend the 2016 Pro Bowl in Honolulu, Hawaii. He and his family live in Guilderland, New York.*



*Thomas Vielkind, right, is pictured with fellow cancer survivor Eric Berry of the Kansas City Chiefs at the 2016 Pro Bowl.*



## Dr. Patel’s Promising Study of Wishes

We’ve known anecdotally about the transformational power of a wish, and now a first-of-its-kind study from Nationwide Children’s Hospital (NCH) is opening the door to possibilities of medical and financial benefits.

A team of researchers, led by Anup Patel, MD, director of the Complex Epilepsy Clinic at NCH, examined quality of life and health care utilization among patients who received a wish and a control group who did not. The study found patients who were granted a wish were more likely to have fewer unplanned hospital and emergency department visits.

The study compared patients who received or did not receive a wish and associated impact on healthcare

utilization and costs across two years. According to NCH, from 2011 to 2016, 496 Nationwide Children’s Hospital patients received a wish.

“Wishes are a nice thing to do for a patient, their family and siblings, but for the first time this study lets us say that a wish is more than just nice,” Dr. Patel said, according to NCH.

“A wish is something that potentially can help the health of a child get better over time, impact healthcare utilization and reduce dollars spent on healthcare.”

Dr. Patel says larger populations need to be studied to see if this pilot study can be replicated, and to bring greater scientific understanding to why wishes have such a positive impact.



# Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign Stars



The stars came out for our highly successful 26th annual Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign, from our eight wish ambassadors and corporate and broadcast partners to the many who donated to Make-A-Wish Northeast New York's longest-running fundraising event.

This year the campaign raised more than \$233,000, which could fully fund more than 19 of the 90-100 wishes we hope to grant this year. The Chapter far exceeded the \$135,000 raised the previous year.

The campaign saw significant changes this holiday season.

Stars were available at three new prices, \$1, \$3, and \$5, as a result of feedback from donors, but all six in the

Capital Region could still be purchased at the original price of \$15.

The campaign also added a kickoff event at Champlain Centre in Plattsburgh in addition to its opening at Crossgates Mall.

And Colonie Center hosted two events on Dec. 7: A Day of Wishes Telethon on WRGB Ch. 6 and the mall's inaugural Evening of Giving. Both raised funds for, and awareness of, the holiday campaign

Trustco Bank generously renewed its role in the campaign as the Presenting Sponsor, and we are thankful for their support of the mission and making stars available at all of its area branches.

This season, NYSCOPBA also signed on as

a Wish Champion in support of the campaign.

In addition to Trustco branches, stars were available at at Crossgates, Colonie Center, Wilton Mall, Aviation Mall, Champlain Centre and dozens of businesses and schools throughout the 15-county region. Every mall saw an increase in stars sold this campaign over the previous year.

A very special thank you goes out to the many volunteers who donated hundreds of hours to making the campaign such a success.



## Guarding the Future

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, thanks the NYSCOPBA board for the organization's vital support of our highly successful Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign.



Community Resource Federal Credit Union CEO/President Terry Langlois, center, talks to Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, at the credit union's Latham headquarters. Looking on is Jeffrey G. Avella, CRFCU's vice president of organizational development and a Make-A-Wish wish granter.

# Chapter Unveils New Corporate Giving Program

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York announced the creation of a new category of giving, designed to promote year-long engagement, principally with corporations.

Known as the Sustaining Partners program, the designation is attached to individual or corporate donors who commit to sponsorship of the Chapter's three major annual fundraisers: the Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign, the annual Wish Gala and the Walk for Wishes®.

A donation made by Community Resource Federal Credit Union (CRFCU) created the new program. Before the credit union's donation, businesses had supported one or two of the individual events, but never all three within a single year.

"We are very grateful to CRFCU for its commitment, which resulted in the creation of the Sustaining Partners program," Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, said. "With each of our donors, it is our hope that we can maintain a relationship that exists throughout the year.

"From our conversations with CRFCU personnel, they expressed a strong sense of commitment to be involved with Make-A-Wish Northeast New York all year long to ensure that their employees have the opportunity to experience the power of a wish, and to use their philanthropy to inspire others," Trigg continued. "For us, this is a strategic approach to developing long-term relationships with the business community."

Trigg pointed to the historic use of the Make-A-Wish Corporate Five-Star Alliance as the foundation for the creation of the new Sustaining Partners program. "Through the Five-Star Alliance, there are many ways for a

corporation to become involved with us," he said.

These partnerships include:

- 1.) Donate funds that can be used for wish granting and/or support of the Chapter's operations;
- 2.) Provide in-kind support of services and/or materials necessary to grant wishes;
- 3.) Actively engage employees in the Make-A-Wish mission as wish granters, fundraisers and advocates to promote awareness of the Chapter among fellow employees, customers, clients and vendors;
- 4.) Assist in the creation of marketing and advertising opportunities to help increase referrals and donative support, and;
- 5.) Facilitate introductions to corporate partners, vendors, manufacturers and/or business colleagues who may wish to become supporters of, or donors to, Make-A-Wish.

"Community Resource FCU is proud to become a Sustaining Partner of Make-A-Wish," stated CRFCU CEO/President Terry Langlois. "It's an honor to partner with an organization that shares in our mission of People Helping People!"

With the creation of this new category of giving, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York will be approaching current and potential new donors interested in being engaged with the Chapter 12 months a year to help provide the power of a wish to young people ages 2½ to 18 with critical illnesses.



## A Workout for Wishes

Mary Carey of Stuyvesant presents Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, more than \$1,700 raised for the Chapter at a January Zumba fundraiser at Hudson High School.

# Staff News

## Broschinsky Named Director of Development

Kirsten Broschinsky, a six-year-veteran of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, has been named Director of Development of the Chapter. As director, she will oversee the major fundraising events of the organization, including the Adopt-A-Wish

Holiday Campaign, annual Gala and Walk for Wishes®, and manage the Annual Giving program for the Chapter.

Broschinsky will continue to oversee development operations of the Chapter, supervising a new to-be-filled position,

Development Manager. She will also manage Corporate and Workplace Giving initiatives, as well as leadership giving with individual donors.

Broschinsky joined the Chapter in January 2013 as Manager, Special Events and Annual Fund. Her responsibilities included planning annual events such as the Gala, helping outside groups with their fundraisers to benefit Make-A-Wish, and working to develop and implement an Annual Fund plan that invited donors to support the Chapter throughout the year. In 2016, she was promoted to Director of Annual Giving.

“Kirsten has long been a key asset to our professional team, and will shine in her new role as Director of Development,” Chapter CEO William C. Trigg, III, said. “Raising funds is vital to what we do, since those funds translate into wishes for children with critical illnesses in the 15 counties we serve.”

A Utah native who grew up in Rock Springs, Wyoming, Broschinsky graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in American Studies from Utah State University in 2002. She received her Master’s degree in Public Administration from The George Washington University in 2007.

Her experience includes nearly five years as Manager of the Annual Fund at Utah Symphony | Utah Opera in Salt



Lake City, where she worked closely with donors and volunteer organizations, in addition to planned events. She moved to the Capital Region in 2011, and worked for a year at WMHT before joining Make-A-Wish Northeast New York.

## Connor Heads Medical Referrals

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York has hired Abby Connor as its new manager of Medical Referral Outreach. In this position, Connor is responsible for keeping the medical community updated on the referral process and wish qualifications.

The Syracuse native holds a Bachelor’s degree, and is about to complete her Master’s degree, in Human Development and Family Science from Syracuse University. Connor has always taken a strong interest in the non-profit

sector and child healthcare. Her passion for the Make-A-Wish mission makes her proud to work for the organization where she served as an intern.

“Abby’s role as manager of

Medical Referral Outreach is a critical one, as she will act as the liaison between the Chapter and the pediatric medical community in the 15 counties we serve,” Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, said. “We are excited to have her join our professional team.”

Connor played lacrosse as an undergrad at SU, and now enjoys coaching youth teams. She also enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.

## Dominguez Named Wish Coordinator

As a volunteer wish granter, Karen Dominguez experiences the joy of making wishes come true for children. Now she is excited to join the Chapter as the Wish Coordinator for Disney and Orlando theme



park wishes.

Dominguez is a graduate of SUNY Geneseo, and has more than 15 years of experience in working with children and their families at public schools in Florida and New York.

Dominguez lives in Latham, New York, with her husband, two daughters and beloved dog. She loves to travel, see Broadway shows and listen to any type of live music. As an avid reader, Dominguez also enjoys a quiet night at home with a good book and a chocolate dessert.

Her heartfelt wish is to travel to every Disney park around the globe!

## Siena Recognizes Watroba Siblings

Joe Watroba, a 2008 Make-A-Wish Northeast New York kid, and his sister, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Manager of Operations Mackenzie Watroba, were honored as two of the recipients of the Siena College’s G.O.L.D. (Graduates of the Last Decade) Standard Award.

The award annually recognizes five young alumni for extraordinary achievements. Award recipients distinguish themselves through professional success, service to the community and/or engagement with Siena College.

The Watroba family started Play It Forward 518 ([www.playitforward518.com](http://www.playitforward518.com)), a nonprofit built on the key concepts of community, giving back, and the importance of “play” in maintaining a positive outlook on life.



# Local Funds, Local Wishes

We thank these individuals, groups and organizations for their fundraisers on behalf of our wish program.



## Community Fundraisers      Amount Raised

Kristy Pollack Memorial Lights Display	\$23,441
PEAK Fest 2018 by PEAK Partners	\$15,207
New York State Laborers' Charity Golf Tournament	\$11,000
Play it Forward 518 Golf Tournament	\$10,000
All American Classics Auctions	\$8,536
Softball On Snow	\$7,539
Carson's Woodside Tavern Golf Tournament	\$3,200
James Dupuis Memorial Golf Tournament	\$2,000
Hudson Zumbathon	\$1,705
Dance Fire Studio Anniversary Gala	\$1,445
Adirondack Shelby Mustang Club	\$1,266
Schmitz Memorial Golf Tournament	\$1,000
"Tribute to Elvis" fundraiser by Linda Mitchell	\$903
Blood Drive in honor of Dylan and Nicholas Sutton	\$550
Alpha Rayne Pioneer Club "Sweets for the Sweet" fundraiser	\$125



## Kids for Wish Kids

## Amount Raised

Rocky's Music Studio's Winter Mini Jam in memory of Tyler Coyne	\$1,500
Saint Pius X School Fundraiser	\$500
Mrs. Vallee's First Grade Class	\$430
Claire Tolan's "Bake-A-Wish" Fundraiser	\$300
Shanzay Kashif	\$50

# New Era for Medical Referrals

Starting this month, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York is converting to a new online medical referral process. This transition is designed to benefit both the Chapter and the medical community.



The online referral process will be faster, creating opportunity for quicker medical eligibility determination. It will be time-saving for the medical community and the Chapter, presenting us the opportunity to grant more wishes.

Once the transition is complete, the Chapter plans to receive only online referrals. This is the most efficient and effective way to continue with the new referral process.

All referrals can be filled out on [md.wish.org](http://md.wish.org). Also on [md.wish.org](http://md.wish.org), you can find the Medical Eligibility Referral Guidance Sheets. These will give you more information on what may or may not qualify for a wish.

We are looking forward to moving on with the new online referral system. It will help us move towards our goal of granting a wish for every eligible child within the 518 and 838 area codes!

Visit [md.wish.org](http://md.wish.org) today to fill out a referral for a potential wish child. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Abby Connor, manager of medical referral outreach, at 518-456-9474.



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## Sebastian Plays Mumbo Jumbo

**Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Sebastian Lasher of Gloversville got to play the game of a lifetime**, spending hours online engaged in Hermitcraft thanks to a special invite from Mumbo Jumbo, the UK-based YouTube personality who makes videos on the popular voxel-based game "Minecraft."

Mumbo Jumbo, who has more than 3 million subscribers, grew impressed with the 15-year-old's gaming skills and technical knowledge: "You are better than everyone here!"

For Sebastian, a gaming enthusiast diagnosed with cancer, the day at home gaming with the personality across the ocean proved magical.

"Make-A-Wish went above and beyond to make my wish come true, and when it did it was better than I could have dreamed," Sebastian said. "I am forever and always grateful for all they have done for me and the other kids."

The wish equally touched Sebastian's mother, Holly Lasher.

"I am beyond grateful for Make-a-Wish," she said. "Watching my son's wish come true, as he smiled, positively lit up the entire room."

"Even with an outside-of-the-box wish, Make-A-Wish tried to make it an outstanding experience for him," she continued. "They even worked with Make-A-Wish UK to deliver such an amazing experience to my son. Thank you so much, to everyone that makes Make-A-Wish possible."

