

Best Wishes

FALL 2020

*I wish to have a
blue electric guitar*

Deonna, 12
cancer

Make-A-Wish®
MID-SOUTH



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Dear Friends,

This has been a year like no other. It has been a year of change, a year of reflection, a year of resilience, and a year of relying on new ways to connect. Truly, a year where we have all experienced life through the eyes of wish families.

We're all navigating uncharted territory. We're inconvenienced. We're uncertain. We're scared. We don't know what tomorrow may bring or what next week looks like and that's a very hard reality to operate in. Unfortunately, it was the daily reality for our wish families long before this global pandemic.

COVID-19 has brought added health worries and more isolation and vulnerability for wish kids and their families. While fighting their illnesses, children are now anxiously counting the days until their wish will be granted.

Now more than ever, hope is essential. And hope can't wait.

It's in times like these that we get to see the amazing heroes all around us. They are the incredible men and women -- just like you-- and the amazing kids and organizations who have joined forces to be the light in dark times. The champions for children fighting critical illnesses - giving them the life-changing hope of a wish.

What would you do for a child you love? Anything, right? We hope you will consider how you, your family, your friends at work or your community can make an impact on the lives of waiting wish children. We invite you to come alongside our team and help wish kids reclaim their childhood. By granting wishes, we can continue to give these children hope today, so they can look forward to tomorrow.

Best Wishes,
Casey Tansey
President and CEO

19
*Types of
wishes kids
are receiving
today*

21
*staff members
working
virtually from*

3
*different
states*



*I wish to have
a computer*

Lana, 4
leukemia

explained her mom, Bethany. “[her wish] was something we were really looking forward to, to brighten her mood. She was just so sick.”

As with many loving communities, they soon found the Make-A-Wish support system to be tight-knit. “We were surprised to know both of her Wish Granters when they came for her wish visit. One Wish Granter we knew from school, and the other I knew was a wish mom,” said Bethany. “Lana was just so glad to have visitors.”

As the global pandemic continued to send ripples around the world, Lana decided to wish for a big computer screen and color printer. Just weeks later, she was over the moon when her wish was granted!

“The excitement from Lana has been the best part of this whole process. She was so excited to decide on the computer and she was really excited when it came,” said Bethany. ***“We can’t go out, we can’t do anything. Even if the virus wasn’t here, she would still have to stay inside. So playing on her computer is the highlight of her day.”***

Lana has been out of school for months, but she’s been spending a lot of time on her new computer playing ABC Mouse. ***“With her educational games she has been able to keep up with her class in learning her letters. It has really helped her feel on track and makes her feel connected to her schoolmates.”***

“It feels really good to know that people care about what she’s been going through. It hasn’t been easy,” said Bethany. “And her wish is something we couldn’t have given her on our own.”

Lana not only enjoys playing her educational games, but also printing out colored pictures on her printer. The family is putting together a scrap book. They know even through these unprecedented times, there’s still a lot of joy to capture and remember.

A wish for connection during COVID

Many of us would say that COVID-19 has changed nearly everything about our lives...the way we work, grocery shop, interact with friends and how we stay connected. But wish kid Lana and her family saw those changes far before many of us.

At just four-years-old Lana started treatment for leukemia in the fall of 2019. ***To protect her compromised immune system, Lana had to be pulled out of the classroom, and couldn’t have any friends over.*** But little did she know, her wish would soon allow her to stay connected to her pre-K classmates.

When her mom referred her for a wish in early December, Lana was very sick. “She was losing weight, she didn’t feel well, was getting sick everyday,”



REFER A CHILD FOR A WISH

Referring a child for a wish takes only a few minutes and you only need basic information. A child can be referred by themselves, a family member or a medical professional.

Start the process today at midsouth.wish.org/refer

*I wish to have a
blue electric guitar*

Deonna, 12
cancer

From the cover

"[My wish] is a reminder of what I've been through and how I made it through. Every time I see it I feel proud of myself for being strong and making it through cancer, and now through this pandemic."

– **Wish kid Deonna**

Wishes are still changing lives

Thank you for making these wishes possible!



I wish to go to college

Edward, 17
blood disorder

"I thought Make-A-Wish meant the end, but really it was a whole new beginning."

– **Wish mom Vivian**



I wish to have a fish tank

Aria, 3
nervous system disorder

"She would just stare at the fish in aquariums....usually there's nothing that holds her vision... but watching fish just makes her happy."

– **Wish mom Jacquelynn**



*I wish to have a play set with
swings and a slide*

Briaunah, 9
brain tumor

"Her play set has been her place of refuge. She goes there to swing and calm down and allow herself some space...it's like her cool down therapy area"

– **Wish mom Savannah**

New depths of love for wishes

A Wish Grandma is wishing it forward after a life-changing experience for her family.

By: Dona Melikian

I'm a Wish Nana so I make time to volunteer as a way to give back for the amazing life-changing wish my family experienced in 2015. My grandson Ethan is now 10 and to this day he talks about his wish to meet Spider-Man.

Last year, he was asked to write a school paper about his favorite memory and he picked his wish as his topic. We left Arkansas in December of 2015 with an introverted five-year-old who had endured more medical procedures than most adults endure in a lifetime. During our his wish, this shy child had somehow transformed into an outgoing, life-loving individual. He came home full of life and ready to

conquer the world. My family and I owe a debt we cannot repay to his medical team and to Make-A-Wish Mid-South.

If you're considering volunteering, I'd say (and likely have told you already) that the blessings you'll receive by serving a wish family far outweigh the time and effort you'll put forth. Over the past four years I've been blessed so much more than I deserve. A wish family will take up residence in your heart from the first phone contact, text message, or face-to-face visit. While we may not always stay in contact after the wish reveal, I'm pretty sure Wish Granters carry each wish kid and family with them every day. It just doesn't get better than that, right?



Volunteer Dona Melikian (left) with wish kid Bella and Volunteer Donna Karpe.

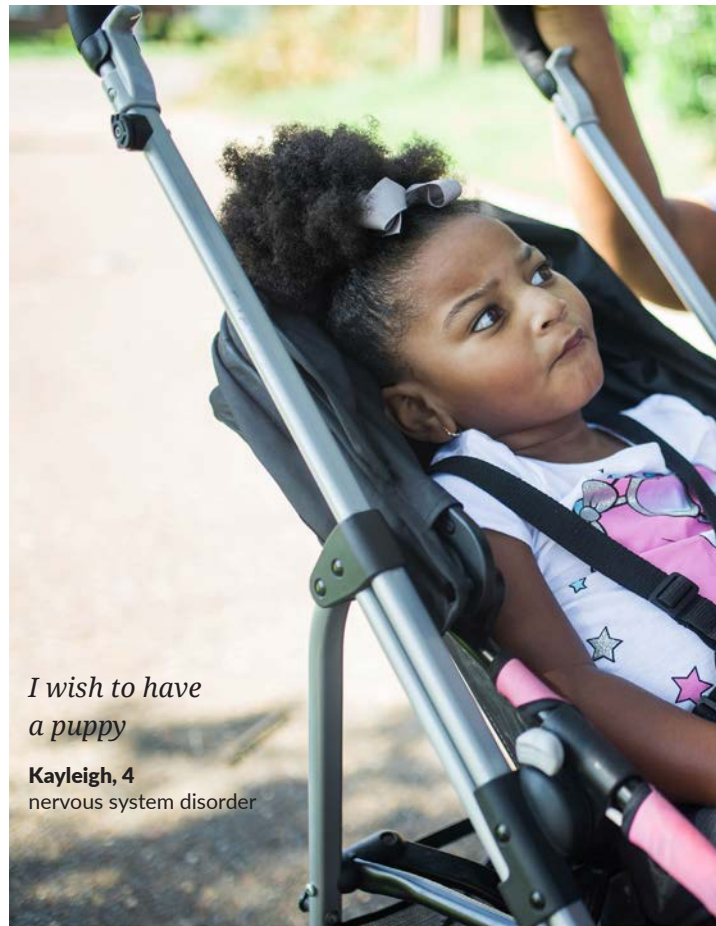
**Learn more about volunteering for wishes at
midsouth.wish.org/volunteer**

Wish K



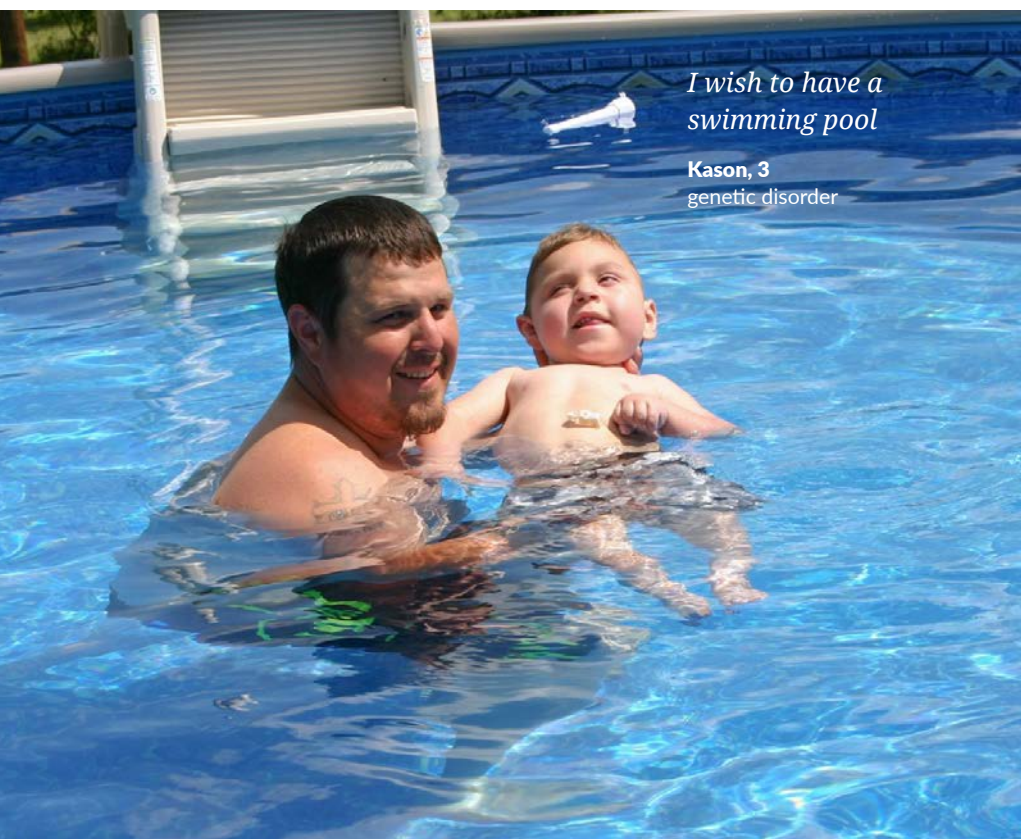
*I wish to meet
Sleeping Beauty*

Brynleigh, 7
cancer



*I wish to have
a puppy*

Kayleigh, 4
nervous system disorder



*I wish to have a
swimming pool*

Kason, 3
genetic disorder



*I wish to have a
gaming computer*

Warner, 16
brain tumor

Kids



Hope lives here

The COVID-19 Pandemic has shifted nearly everything in the wish process, but it hasn't put a damper on us all working for wishes. Together, we've adjusted for this crisis. Hope lives here, and we're committed to spreading that hope to kids waiting on their wish.



Wish parades

Passionate Make-A-Wish sponsors and volunteers have organized dozens of wish parades to celebrate wish kids! They've included petting zoo animals, yard-consuming balloon displays and custom wish kid art! It's amazing to see wish kids celebrated in such special and unique ways.

21

*New Volunteer
Leadership
Members
trained*



Virtual volunteer visits

Although Wish Granters cannot meet face-to-face with wish kids...that won't stop them from granting wishes! In the Spring, we quickly implemented virtual wish visits to meet wish kids and help guide them through the endless wish possibilities!

8 *shopping
spree
wishes*

4



Virtual staff meetings

Our staff at Make-A-Wish is working as hard as ever to continue to grant wishes! We've implemented weekly staff calls to share wish moments and be sure we're all on the same page as we fundraise, share stories and grant wishes!

96 *Virtual
volunteer
visits with
wish kids*

7 *Playhouse/
room redo
wishes*



Virtual Volunteer training

Wish Granting Volunteers are a crucial part of bringing wishes to life. That's why we've implemented virtual wish granting trainings for volunteers who desire to continue to grant wishes.

68 *Incredible
wishes
granted since
March*



Socially distanced wish granting

With so many changes in our world, Workplace Giving is a crucial means to granting wishes. The Make-A-Wish Mid-South staff, of about 20, is able to grant a wish each year from our Workplace Giving. This year, our team socially distanced and granted Diego's wish for woodworking tools!

*Major
events
went
virtual*

6 *swimming
pool/
hot tub
wishes*

*Visit midsouth.wish.org/help to help provide a wish
for kids waiting on hope right now.*



1. The Have-A-Heart Wishathon, Northeast Arkansas, February 21.
2. The Central Arkansas Wish-A-Thon, February 28.
3. Wine for Wishes, Memphis, February 21.
4. Walk For Wishes, Northwest Arkansas, August 15.
5. Dishes For Wishes, Memphis, August 23.
6. The KTCS Make-A-Wish Radiothon, River Valley, August 20-21.
7. The Make-A-Wish Mid-South Golf Classic, Memphis, August 31.

*The
ever*



*exciting
nts of 2020*

**Memphis**

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Northwest Arkansas

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SEASON OF WISHES

As you give thanks this holiday season, consider giving the gift of a wish. Visit midsouth.wish.org/help to give today.

How you can help kids right now:

- ❄ Make a gift in lieu of holiday gifts
- ❄ Host a virtual holiday party
- ❄ Get your school or company involved this holiday season
- ❄ Give in honor of a child you love
- ❄ Sell products for a purpose
- ❄ Host a round-up campaign at your business

On #GivingTuesday, our partner First Horizon Foundation will match all donations, up to \$10,000!

