

Make-A-Wish®  
NORTHEAST NEW YORK

# Wishmaker

VOL 30 ISSUE 1 / SPRING/SUMMER 2021

## Looking Ahead

*Make-A-Wish and  
Emerging From the Pandemic*

# With our gratitude

## To Our Valued Donors and Volunteers,

On June 10, we will celebrate our second (and last) **virtual** Wish Gala. We say “last” because going virtual is not something we plan to do on an **annual** basis with our gala celebration. Like a symphony performance or Broadway show, our Wish Gala has to be experienced in person to appreciate the full effect of our mission.

But given the current state of the pandemic, and our commitment to ensuring the safety of everyone with whom we engage, we will go virtual one more time. This year, however, the celebration will be an even more compelling and powerful presentation of our mission than last year’s. We will be reminded how, in the midst of the darkness surrounding families facing their child’s critical illness, hope can be the light that leads them into the realm of healing. This is indeed what wishes do — they create hope.

Which is why we have spent much of the past year being creative and collaborative in our efforts to grant every wish that could be granted safely, as you will read throughout the pages that follow. At the same time, we eagerly await the day when we can return to granting every eligible child’s wish. In the meantime, we are grateful to all of our donors, such as Beekman 1802, Commerce Hub, KeyBank, Alpin Haus and so many others, who continue to support us and to ensure our readiness to grant the 100-plus wishes waiting to be granted in the months ahead.

We are also grateful to welcome Jason Benitez, the vice president of Talent and Inclusion at the Capital Region Chamber, to the Board of Trustees. Jason was elected recently to the Board at a strategically important juncture in the corporate evolution of the Make-A-Wish® Foundation. Our chapter has joined with Make-A-Wish® America and its other 58 chapters to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in our outreach to eligible wish children and families, in our recruitment of Board, employee and volunteer candidates, and in our volunteer training and development. We have made this commitment publicly and in writing to ensure our ability to grant the wish of every eligible child throughout our chapter region.

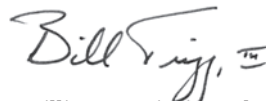
We are proud to share with you the stories of wishes granted in the past seven months and the ways we are engaging our donors and the community to partner with us in **granting the wish of every eligible child** in our chapter. Our wish families join us in thanking you for your support and engagement as donors and as volunteers. We wish you and your families a safe and relaxing summer ahead!

**Thank you for being partners with us to make life-transforming wishes come true for local children with critical illnesses! Please remain safe and well.**

Best wishes always,



Lisa M. Clifford  
Board Chair



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



Lisa M. Clifford  
Board Chair



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



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**ON THE COVER:** Wish kid Greyson Regels, like Make-A-Wish® Northeast New York as a whole, is looking ahead.

**Serving children in the 15 counties of the 518 and 838 area codes since 1987**

Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schoenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington counties in Upstate New York.



# Looking Ahead

## Make-A-Wish Prepares To Emerge From Pandemic

The end is near ... maybe. Of the pandemic, that is. But then again, as of the writing of this article, the foreseeable future continues to look uncertain.

We all know that we are not yet to the point where everything is returning to “normal” (however that is defined these days). But across the country right now, all 59 chapters of the Make-A-Wish® Foundation have or are preparing re-emergence plans, looking ahead to the day when we can grant EVERY type of wish, especially those involving travel.

And we **hope** that that day is drawing ever closer.

“The Make-A-Wish mission is rooted in our passionate desire to create hope, and then to foster it within each and every wish family we serve,” Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, said “This is what we do when we grant life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.

“Even during this unprecedented time in our history, we have not wavered from that commitment; granting the wishes we are able to grant now, while preparing for the wishes we can safely grant in the months ahead.”

Since last July, after a three-month pause at the onset of the pandemic, the chapter has continuously granted wishes, albeit not at the level we typically achieve in an otherwise normal year. The notable exceptions: travel and large-gathering wishes, which make up a significant percentage of what the chapter normally grants (75-80 percent). Wishes we have granted since last July ranged from shopping sprees to swimming pools to puppies to backyard play structures. In



10) and our eighth annual Walk For Wishes at Joe Bruno Stadium in Troy (Aug. 14) are slated to be in-person outdoor events — among our first such events since 2019. There will also be more fundraising events coming online in the weeks and months ahead, including several golf tournaments and the 10th annual Wish Jump!

As for what the fall and winter will bring, well, right now, we will remain hopeful — because that’s who we are and how we operate. Hope — shining brightly as we continue to make magical wishes come true for children and teens with critical illnesses — is the one definite.

We will be ready.

other words, the emphasis is on granting “I Wish to Have ...” wishes. (Note: You can read about some of these wishes in the pages that follow.)

As vaccines continue to become more available on a daily basis, and as businesses re-open more and more, hope grows, and people are feeling more certain that we are closer to the end of the pandemic than to its beginning. And yet, COVID-19 remains a serious public health threat. Consequently, Make-A-Wish America, following the counsel of a wide array of medical and public health experts, has not yet signed off on the return of travel and large-gathering wishes, and likely will not do so through the end of 2021.

“While there is room for optimism, we will continue to keep the health and safety of the children and families we serve at the center of all policy decisions we

make,” Make-A-Wish America President and CEO Richard K. Davis said in a March message to chapter leaders.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest and most complex challenge our mission has ever faced,” he acknowledged. “We will not waste any time in taking steps to resume 100 percent of our mission as soon as is safely possible.”

Thankfully, glimpses of normalcy are already evident within our chapter. While our Wish Gala on June 10 will be virtual in its entirety, it is shaping up to be one of the most compelling and inspiring celebrations of our local mission. Wish Fest at Riverlink Park in Amsterdam (July



# HOPE

SHINES BRIGHTLY

2021 VIRTUAL  
*gala*

## Hope to Shine Brightly

Join us June 10 for a story — the best of stories. It will be a story about the power of a wish®, and how you supercharge that power by creating hope.

Our *Hope Shines Brightly* Virtual Gala is slated for 7 p.m. **Thursday, June 10, to air on [wishgalaneny.org](http://wishgalaneny.org) and Facebook.** It will be a night of storytelling designed to highlight how wishes create hope and strength, and are a lifelong gift to wish kids and families.

More than a dozen wish kids will be featured in the Gala, and several will be spotlighted. See and hear how Jack's service dog wish and Cameron's wish to go on his senior class trip in high school changed their lives. And there will also be a surprise wish reveal!

"The Gala, whether virtual or in person, serves to highlight our mission, energize all the people inspired by the power of a wish and raise the funds necessary to create life-

changing wishes for children with critical illnesses," said William C. Trigg, III, CEO of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. "It is a night to celebrate — and to work toward creating hope for wish kids and families."

Headlining the evening will be Tiffany Rowe, a professional life coach who is very much attuned to the Make-A-Wish mission. Not only is she a former Make-A-Wish® America Board member, but she is also a wish alum. And what a wish: In 1988, the then-15-year-old met and was later called on stage to dance in concert with Michael Jackson! No surprise she is Chair of the National Board Alumni Association.

"I have been a 30-plus year volunteer for Make-A-Wish and the mission is in my very bones," she said. "My dedication to Make-A-Wish started with the granting of my own wish while battling and surviving a terminal bone marrow failure diagnosis.

"I could never give back in equal measure to the impact my wish had on my life and it is my honor to travel the country as a national spokesperson, raising awareness and support for our incredible mission. I also served for





seven years on the Make-A-Wish America National Board of Directors and I am currently the Chair of the National Board Alumni Association. I am very, very proud to play an active role in helping our chapters reach every eligible child.”

TO DONATE OR BID ON AUCTION ITEMS AHEAD OF THE GALA OR ON GALA NIGHT, GO TO [WISHGALANENY.ORG](http://WISHGALANENY.ORG)

Of course, there will be our online auction, with items ranging from vacation packages to gift certificates from local merchants and so much more that meets every price point.

Among the items available: Wish kid art! These pieces were a huge hit at the 2020 *When Stars Align* Virtual Gala, and we expect this artwork to be equally popular again this year.



Prior to the Gala, at 6 p.m. on Facebook, our Secret Celebrity Bartender will be announcing the winners of our Cheers for Wishies contest and making the winning cocktails and mocktails you can enjoy watching the Gala. You can see all the entries at [wishgalaneny.org](http://wishgalaneny.org).



So join us for a joyous night on June 10. We can't wait. And we cannot wait for hope, either. We must create it!



# Special Thanks

We thank our *Hope Shines* Brightly sponsors\*:



\*As of press time.

# Saluting Our Volunteers

Each year, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York recognizes a handful of standout volunteers, while noting every volunteer is essential.

“There is no Make-A-Wish without volunteers,” said William C. Trigg, III, CEO of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. “If not for these exceptional individuals, we could not create the hope and joy that come with life-changing wishes.”

In this most challenging of years, we are especially grateful for each and every one of them. In particular, the chapter recognizes these volunteers:



## Above and Beyond *Jessica Herzog*

Jessica is a North Country stalwart who will take on any wish or chapter need in and around Lake Placid, even if it means driving an hour or more. Regardless the task, she does whatever is needed to ensure every wish she touches is special.



## Wish Champion Award *Joleen Bruyette*

Whether it's serving as an enthusiastic wish granter, on a committee or lending a hand at an event, we can always count on Joleen to give of herself to Make-A-Wish, earning this wish alum the highest award we bestow wish granters.

## Wish Team

### *Maura Fox & Zach Ogden*

This team has paired on a half-dozen wishes, and each time brought joy and attention to detail that made for a positive and memorable experience for the entire wish family. Their enthusiasm and execution of wishes make for an ideal team.



## Rising Star *Laurie Abelson*

This award (think of it as a “Rookie of the Year”) goes to a newcomer whose very first wish — a camper for Nickolas — afforded her the opportunity to deploy one of her valuable skills: knowledge of American Sign Language.



## Wish Star *Andrew Guelcher*

The first-year member of the Make-A-Wish Board of Trustees hit the ground running, turning his Mohawk Honda and Mohawk Chevrolet dealerships into showrooms for our Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign stars and heavily promoting Make-A-Wish on social media.



## Special Recognition *Kimberly Klingbeil & Arleen Reyell*

This is not an annual award, but these volunteers deserve acknowledgement for repeatedly volunteering for mall booth shifts during this past year's Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign. Kim and Arleen stepped up again and again ... and again.





# ‘Unimaginable, Unforgettable Joy’

By Jessica Liburdi

Two cheerful women greeted me in the lobby of Boston Children’s Hospital, where I was being treated. One handed me a stuffed animal. My nervousness melted; this was different than the hospital meetings I had grown used to in my six years. These people were wish granters.

They knelt next to me. “If you could make a wish,” one asked, “where you would go... or who would you meet?”

“To see my Grandma,” I replied. I had a desire to spend a week together with my family; the thought of a trip to see my grandmother in North Carolina seemed unimaginable. However, the wish granters saw a wish much bigger than I could ever imagine. After learning about my favorite movies and characters, my wish was determined to spend a week at Walt Disney World® Resort.

I had been in a constant battle dealing with a birth defect — I was born without an esophagus — and related complications that would end up requiring 11 major surgeries, rehabilitation, and numerous hospitalizations. Travel

to me meant trips back and forth from Latham to Boston. These out-of-state hospital stays would separate our family — most painfully me from my twin sister, Angela.

Spending a week with my family, my sister, without medical treatments — and at Disney? I could not imagine. Yet these women were going to grant me my wish.

That trip to Disney happened nearly 28 years ago. I do not hold many distinct memories of age 6. But that wish will never be forgotten. Flying to Florida first class. A day spent at each of the theme parks. Staying at Give Kids the World Village®, where at the end of the day we were greeted with souvenirs in our villa. Every moment was packed with surprises and a gift.

It remains one of my limited childhood memories not clouded by the bright lights and harsh sounds of a hospital. I was treated like the most important little girl as we skipped lines and got called onto stages. The best part: Sharing it all with my twin sister. Angela and I missed many milestones together, but not this one.



I am beyond grateful for the social worker who referred me for my wish. It provided my family with a respite from my family’s focus being on my condition. We could focus on being a family.

Today, I am a thriving 34-year-old. My experiences have led me to become a social worker for adults and children diagnosed with developmental disabilities.

And recently I became a wish granter for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. All the memories of my first wish have come flooding back. I can’t wait to bring the same unimaginable, unforgettable joy to a child I experienced.

*Jessica Liburdi is a wish alum and wish granter for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York*



## CLASS IS IN SESSION

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO Bill Trigg (center left) and staff welcomed the chapter’s new class of wish granters to their training. Wish granters are the volunteers who work directly with wish families and help a child realize their true heartfelt wish. We could not create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses without these volunteers. Welcome aboard, class!

There are many ways you can assist the chapter. Interested in volunteering? Go to [wish.org/volunteer](http://wish.org/volunteer), or contact Ray Gawlak, manager of volunteer engagement, at [rgawlak@neny.wish.org](mailto:rgawlak@neny.wish.org) or 518-456-9474.



# Wyatt's Spree a Journey

**Wyatt's Make-A-Wish Northeast New York shopping wish was less of a spree and more of an ultra-marathon — covering more than 100 miles round trip starting at his Lake Luzerne home and spanning the length of the Northway south, with a lot of stops in between.**

The 16-year-old's first destination was the Cricket Wireless store in nearby Queensbury, where employees literally rolled out the red carpet for the teen. There, Wyatt and wish mom Charlotte got phones and service, and Wyatt also received bags and bags of accessories and other swag.

"We are very honored to be a part

of Wyatt's wish," said Gregory Deolall, an indirect sales executive for Cricket Wireless who greeted the family. "We wanted to make it something special and amazing for him."

Other stops on Wyatt's spree included Walmart, Scott's Hallmark Shop, PetSmart, Michael's, Best Buy, GameStop, the Lego Store, the Disney Store, FYE, Build-A-Bear Workshop, and dining at Dunkin' and Olive Garden.

Zach Ogden and Maura Fox served as the wish granters, assisted by Laura

Mazzara, a wish granter and member of the chapter's Board of Trustees.

In addition to his brother, Paul, and his mom, Wyatt was accompanied on his wish by his Build-A-Bear, Daisy — a longtime companion who has been by his side providing comfort throughout treatments.

Wish mom Charlotte said this wish provided another type of comfort as her son battles leukemia.

"This day brings up Wyatt's spirits," the mom said. "This shopping spree has lifted up his spirits. It makes him feel so good to get out today."

Wyatt's wish was sponsored by the "neighbors" (customers) of Beekman 1802.



## A Wish, and Best Friend

Meet Jonathan's new best friend — and his wish — Cash! The 18-year-old from Spencertown met his adorable new puppy at a Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish reveal in the late fall. Special thanks to PetSmart, LongHorn Steakhouse and Hudson Valley Community College.





## A Night at the Movies Right at Home

Every night can be a night at the movies for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Jody, thanks to his wish: A home theater room makeover, complete with a large-screen TV, sound system, movie-theater style recliners, Marvel movie décor, a popcorn machine and more of his favorite movie theater snacks!

After his wish reveal, the 13-year-old from Berne settled in with family and friends to watch his first movie in his personal cineplex: "Naruto the Movie."

Special thanks to Magnolia Audio Video and Best Buy for making Jody's wish possible.

# The Good Neighbors of Beekman

We are big fans of Beekman 1802 — not just for its artisan products, but because they really do live by the ethos of being good neighbors.

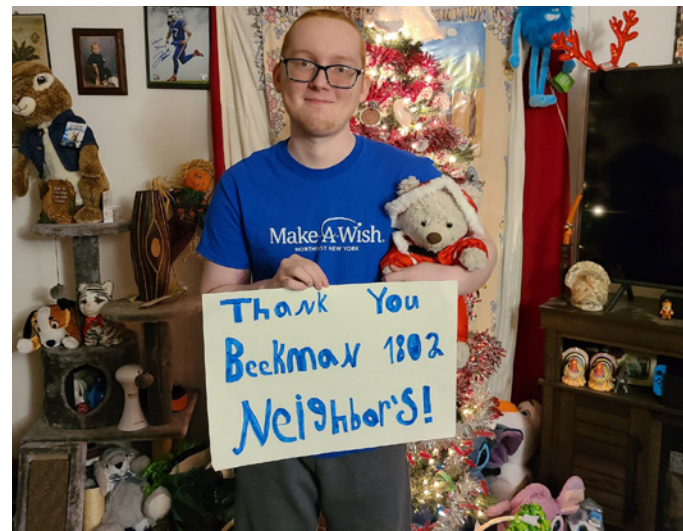
In early December, co-founders Josh and Brent ran a 12-night marathon on their Facebook page that not only highlighted Beekman 1802 products, but also charities. During the marathon, they spotlighted Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wishes sponsored by the Sharon

Springs-based Beekman and its "neighbors" (customers): Jonathan's puppy wish and Wyatt's shopping spree.

(Fun fact: Wyatt's family members are

longtime \*huge\* fans of "The Amazing Race" — and, as many of you know, Josh and Brent were the winners of "The Amazing Race 21"!)

They also urged their passionate followers to donate to the Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign via [adoptawishnyny.org](http://adoptawishnyny.org).



Look for Josh and Brent to make a couple of appearances in our *Hope Shines Brightly* Virtual Gala on June 10th ([wishgalaneny.org](http://wishgalaneny.org)).

They truly are good neighbors.



# A Deserved Wish

Caroline is not a teen who complains, even through her bouts of seizures over the years, even through her surgery ordeal. The one time she asked, “Why me?” was when she learned she was getting a Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish.

“She was so concerned when she was granted a wish that she was taking a wish away from someone else,” wish mom Michelle said. “Or that she didn’t really deserve it for some reason. I don’t think she realized how sick she was.”

“When I had [seizures] it was very difficult, but I kind of forget what it was like, honestly,” said Caroline, 18. “I tried to get that out of my brain.”

She was, in fact, not taking a wish from someone else and certainly was worthy of one. Caroline’s wish was a three-day shopping spree — with some relaxation mixed in — in New York City.

Experiences included Macy’s (“She had a personal shopper!” mom said), the Nike store, Lululemon and a massage. Caroline received a full fashion makeover.

“She said it was the most fun she ever had,” wish mom Michelle said. “It was certainly the most fun I ever had.”

Roland J. Down Service Experts sponsored the wish. Employees sent Caroline and her family off with gifts, and lined their street cheering as their limousine headed to the Big Apple.



# Wishes Granted

## 'I wish to HAVE'

### **I Wish to Have Life-Enhancing Equipment**

**Jayden, 9, from Schenectady**

Wish Granters: Bonnie DiGirolamo and Emily Hennessey

Wish sponsored by 2020 Fund-A-Wish Donors

### **I Wish to Have a New York City Shopping Spree**

**Caroline, 18, from Wilton**

Wish Granters: Zach Ogden and Maura Fox

Wish sponsored by Service Experts

### **I Wish to Have a Puppy**

**Jonathan, 18, from Spencertown**

Wish Granters: Katie Krzys and Tanya Haas

Wish sponsored by Beekman 1802

**Ryan, 14, from Voorheesville**

Wish Granters: David Perritano and Jim Bettini

Wish sponsored by United Health Group

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

**Wyatt, 17, from Lake Luzerne**

Wish Granters: Zach Ogden and Maura Fox

Wish sponsored by Beekman 1802

**Caidon, 11, from Rensselaer**

Wish Granters: Kandi Terry and Erin Oliver

### **I Wish to Have a Playset**

**Brandon, 10, from Plattsburgh**

Wish Granters: Diane Duquette Burl and James Moser

Wish sponsored by John and Patti Hinkle

### **I Wish to Have an Online Shopping Spree**

**Jaxon, 8, from Latham**

Wish Granters: Jeff Avella and Erika Bienick

Wish sponsored by 2019 Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign

**Muyan, 17, from Albany**

Wish Granter: Abby Connor and Scott Liloia

Wish sponsored by Fenimore Asset Management

### **I Wish to Have a Home Theater Room Makeover**

**Jody, 13, from Berne**

Wish Granters: Kiki St. Jacques and Robert Bullock

Wish sponsored by The Seery Family



## 'I wish to MEET'

### **I Wish to Virtually Meet Wiz Khalifa**

**Nathan, 15, from Malone**

Wish Granters: Diane Roberts and Maria St. Denis

Wish sponsored by 2019 Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign

**These wish granters** also participated on wishes that cannot be publicized: Joleen Bruyette, James Cole, Dena Delude, Kate Bukowski, Diane Duquette Burl, Michelle Zerkowitz, Diane Roberts, Maria St. Denis and Cathlyn Lamitie.

**NOTE:** Due to the coronavirus pandemic, fewer wishes than normal have been granted this period.

TO A SPECIAL PLACE

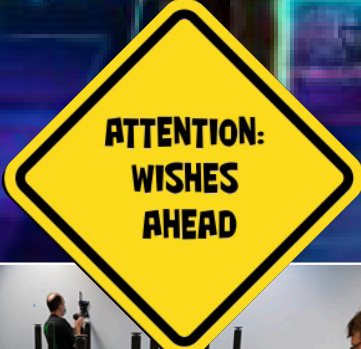
# WORKING on the WORKSHOP

IN BOTH ARGYLE AND ALBANY, WORKERS ARE HAMMERING OUT SOME MAGIC SOON TO BECOME A REALITY RIGHT HERE IN OUR MAKE-A-WISH NORTHEAST NEW YORK OFFICE.

We first told you a year and a half ago about the Workshop of Wishes. This project will provide a unique setting in which children and teens who qualify for a wish will be invited to our transformed office to think about their wish (or options) in ways that will excite imaginations and fill them with joy and anticipation.

With world-renowned Adirondack Studios finishing production and design work at its Argyle facility and our Albany office, we hope to welcome the first wish kids to the Workshop of Wishes in the coming months.

This fantastical setting we've dreamed about for more than five years is about to become very real, and wish kids are about to experience a whole new realm of possibility.

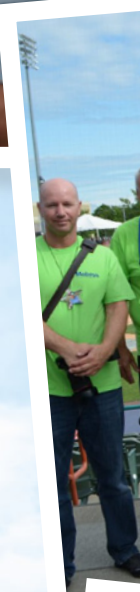
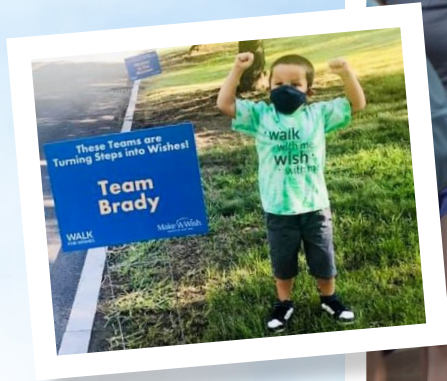


**WHERE WISHES  
COME TRUE**

**NOTICE**  
**IMAGINATION  
REQUIRED**



2021 **Make-A-Wish**  
**WALK**  
**FOR WISHES**®



# A WALK, AND A REUNION

The Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Walk For Wishes has always been about more than raising funds for life-changing wishes.

The annual gathering at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium in Troy has also served as a reunion of sorts, where the extended Make-A-Wish family gathers to celebrate the power of a wish®, and each other's kinship.

That was lost among so many things last year due to the pandemic when the Walk went virtual. But the chapter has slated its eighth annual Walk For Wishes to be an in-person event this year, on Aug. 14 at The Joe.

"We will be excited to once again be at The Joe greeting wish kids and families, volunteers and all who support the Make-A-Wish mission," said Kirsten Broschinsky, the chapter's director of development. "It will be a relaxed, safe environment with necessary health precautions in place, but one that will allow Make-A-Wish supporters who have



not seen each other in a while to catch up and share their inspiring stories."

That is also true among individual teams, particularly corporate teams. With many businesses turning to remote work during the pandemic, team building — at least in person — has taken a backseat. Raising funds for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York has long been lauded by employers and employees alike as a positive bonding experience.

"Now, with remote work environments, the Walk can be especially beneficial for such teams," Broschinsky said. "You can do good for wish kids and your workplace culture!"

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.)

Participants can set up teams, share their stories, and ask for support from family and friends. If you raise at least \$100, you get a prized Walk For Wishes T-shirt. Teams are already raising money: You don't want to fall too far behind in this race! Register your team today at [wishwalkneny.org](http://wishwalkneny.org) and share why wishes matter to you!

Each year, the Walk For Wishes brings together wish families, local businesses and community supporters in a celebration of the power of wishes in the lives of children battling critical illnesses. The Walk continues to grow and is now one of our most important fundraisers — and that's all because of YOU! **And this year, we need you more than ever.**





# REGISTER at [WishWalkNENY.org](http://WishWalkNENY.org)

**NOTE:** As has been the case throughout the pandemic, we monitor the counsel of authorities as COVID-19 continues to affect our communities. If a decision is made to adjust the August event for the safety of all involved, we will notify participants as soon as possible. We encourage you to follow Make-A-Wish Northeast New York social media channels for the latest chapter developments.



# Adopt-A-Wish Campaign Far Exceeds Expectations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew it would be difficult to reach our goal for the 2020 Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign. We realized mall traffic would be down, and there would be difficulty recruiting volunteers to staff our booths.

All that turned out to be true. And, sure enough, we did not hit our goal. We *shattered* it.

Make-A-Wish Northeast New York raised more than \$228,000 in our 28th annual Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign, exceeding our goal by more than 30 percent! We raised more than we did in 2019; in fact, the total is the campaign's second highest in the past decade.

So how did this happen?

A stunning third annual Day of Wishes telethon, in which we raised \$41,760, including more than \$25,000 in day-of donations. Those totals eclipsed the first two telethons combined.

And area businesses, both employers and employees, stepping up to contribute far more than we expected.

There was Trustco Bank not only serving as a Presenting Sponsor, but its branches selling more than \$20,000 in stars, more than last year.

And Beekman 1802 and its "neighbors," contributing a \$10,000 donation to the campaign.

And Wish Champion Sponsor NYSCOPBA, sponsors PhRMA, Glens Falls National Bank, Alpin Haus, The Property Shop, and Coldwell Banker Prime Properties, and Day of Wishes match donors, including Chris and Christine Edwards, Ayco and other anonymous donors all contributing.

And there were many other individuals worth noting, ranging from our wish ambassadors to all those who gave at malls and online.

"There were many factors that went into the success of the campaign. What is clear is we could not do what we do without all our stakeholders being invested in and contributing to our mission," Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO William C. Trigg, III, said. "That's what we saw here: The Make-A-Wish community rallying to overcome challenges and obstacles to ensure we can continue to create life-changing wishes."

Once more: **We thank you.**



Wish ambassador Evan personally raised nearly \$900 for the Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign.



# Believe It! Macy's Honors Luke with National Award

## Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish ambassador Luke Hoag

has become practically synonymous in this region with the Macy's Believe campaign, delivering tens of thousands of letters addressed to Santa to Macy's each Believe Day to benefit fellow wish kids nationwide.

This year, because of the pandemic, he took his efforts virtual, while also launching a Wish Heroes campaign for the chapter.

And Macy's has noticed, bestowing the 14-year-old with its national "Believe For Goodness Sake" Award for his ongoing efforts. Luke was one of two volunteers across the country recognized for their involvement in the Believe campaign.



Since starting his efforts in 2015, the Hoosick Falls teen has personally collected more than 250,000 letters. With Macy's donating \$2 per letter on

Believe Day, that means Luke — who was diagnosed with a brain tumor and went on his wish to Walt Disney World® Resort in 2010 — has been personally responsible for raising a half-million dollars for helping create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.

"Thank you for the award. I am honored," Luke said. "I truly enjoy doing this for

Macy's and Make-A-Wish. I am looking forward to next year!"

We are incredibly proud of this young man, and are also looking forward to what he does next.

# An All-American Gift



## Ava, a second grader at the Waterford-Halfmoon Union Free School District Elementary School,

learned about Make-A-Wish while her school was fundraising for our chapter. When she got two Kira American Girl dolls for Christmas, she thought she didn't need both — so she decided to give one to a Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid waiting on a wish!

Here, she presents the doll to our Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky. Ava, your donation will bring hope, strength and joy to a kid battling a critical illness. That is the best gift of all. Thank you!



# Kids Give Back

## Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Nicky and his sister Camilla set up a concession stand in their front yard in January, joined by friends Reagan and Mae.

The day was cold, the cocoa they sold was hot, and the cause they were raising money for — Make-A-Wish — warmed hearts.

And there was a lot of warmth on that cold day, as the kids raised \$500 for the chapter in just a few hours!

"It was SO cold that day, so it was an easy sell — but we also have wonderfully generous family, friends and neighbors," wish mom Jules said. "The kids were so proud, and so were we!"

But that day, the mom said, was about more than raising money.

"[Make-A-Wish has] played such a huge part in shaping their little hearts," she said. "Being the recipients of such kindness at a young age has made them realize the importance of paying it forward and sharing that kindness with others. Thank you for giving them that sense of empathy and service, You guys mean so much to our family for a million reasons, but that is one of the biggest."

# A Sweet-Toothed Superhero

**This is Mia, and her mom Devin.** The 4-year-old from Saratoga County makes The Most Delicious chocolate chip cookies ever. Not only that, but after she makes them she delivers her goodies to “superheroes who are making the world a better place in our local communities,” mom said.

And guess who got a delivery?! Make-A-Wish Northeast New York! Here an extremely grateful CEO Bill Trigg thanks Mia – who just happens to be a neighbor! You know what, Mia? We think *you* are a superhero. Thank you!



## A Wish that Makes for a Better Life

**Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Jayden and his grandmother Luz pose on the 9-year-old's wish day.** He received life-enhancing medical equipment for his Schenectady home, including a stroller, ramp, and portable washer. This will allow Jayden to go outside more! Special thanks to Northeast Mobility.



## Hockey For a Cause

**Captains from Capital Cup for Kids, an adult hockey tournament, present Make-A-Wish Northeast New York CEO Bill Trigg a check for \$12,000 – enough to fund a full wish – at Building on Love.** Building on Love is a non-profit that partners with the tournament and provides temporary financial support for local families caring for a child facing a recent life-altering medical diagnosis.

Despite the 2020 tournament not being held because of the pandemic, the Capital Cup for Kids community still rallied to raise funds for our chapter and its wish kids and families through online fundraising and personal donations. That deserves a loud stick tap and round of applause!

## Top-ranked Wish Kid

**Congratulations to 2007 Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish alum Dakota, now 17, who earned the top rank of Eagle Scout for his community service project: Signage for the highway department in his North Country Town of Moors.**

## Before the Joy, A Referral



**Ten-year-old Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Brandon** enjoys his wish granted over the winter, a new playset, outside his Plattsburgh home. Too cold? Are you kidding? Look at the joy on his face.

Like all wishes, Brandon's began with a referral. Do you know of a child like Brandon who may be eligible for a wish? To learn more or make a referral, visit [wish.org/refer-a-child](http://wish.org/refer-a-child), or contact Manager of Medical Referral Outreach Abby Connor at 518-456-9474 or [aconnor@neny.wish.org](mailto:aconnor@neny.wish.org).

## A Dash of Ginger

**Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kid Ryan**, along with mom Stephanie and dad Mike, welcomed a new member of the family: Ryan's wish, Ginger! The puppy arrived at her new home just in time for Ryan's 14th birthday.



Special thanks to Healthy Pet Center of Delmar, NutriSource Pet Foods, Orchard Pups and The Village Animal Clinic for helping make Ryan's wish happen!



## A Good Deal x 2

**Did we say how much we love our volunteers?** Wish granter Cathy Scala dropped off these high-end goodies from Walt Disney World® Resort. Not only does their purchase benefit Make-A-Wish® America, but the bundle will be available at our Make-A-Wish Northeast New York *Hope Shines Brightly* Virtual Gala on June 10. Cathy even brought over more toys for our wish closet that we will give out to wish kids. Thank you, Cathy!



## Five Questions with ... Lisa Clifford

Lisa Clifford joined the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board of Trustees almost seven years ago, rising to Board Chair last summer. A senior vice president/regional family wealth strategist with Key Private Bank, Clifford answered five questions to Wishmaker:

**You have been on the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board of Trustees since 2014. What is it about its mission that drives you to commit so much of your time, energy and passion to the Foundation?**

It is so incredible to be part of an organization that creates life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. You can see the immediate impact of your generosity and how a wish truly transforms the lives of children, their families and our community as whole.

**Do you have a favorite memory from your years with Make-A-Wish?**

My favorite memory during my time with Make-A-Wish was meeting Gannon, who

received his wish to go to Walt Disney World® Resort a few years ago. Gannon became part of our KeyBank Warriors for Wishes team and this personal connection is one of the reasons why our Walk For Wishes is one of my favorite events.

**As we all emerge from the pandemic, hopefully in the months ahead, and health and safety restrictions are at last lifted, what are you looking forward to doing the most?**

I'm looking forward to traveling again as a family. We had to postpone a celebratory trip for our 25th wedding anniversary and our youngest son John's high school graduation to Atlantis, and I'm excited to reschedule!

**If you could receive a Make-A-Wish wish, what would it be?**

Make-A-Wish has such a long, incredible partnership with Disney. I'd love to experience first-hand the magic that happens for our wish kids and families at Give Kids The World Village®.

**Tell us one thing about Lisa Clifford that most people don't know.**

My favorite place is Gloucester, Massachusetts, where I have been going every year since I was a child. Good Harbor Beach continues to be a special place where memories are made as a family.



**The Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board of Trustees has elected Jason Benitez as its newest member.**

## Benitez Joins Board of Trustees

Benitez is vice president, Talent and Inclusion, for the Capital Region Chamber. He is responsible for strategic direction, guidance and implementation of the Chamber's talent and workforce development, as well as its inclusion and diversity initiatives.

"I'm thrilled to be associated with a great organization such as Make-A-Wish," Benitez said. "It is my hope I can bring a lens for diversity, equity and inclusion that builds upon all the good Make-A-Wish Northeast New York does in our region. That includes finding new, creative ways to better connect our important mission to a wider array of communities."

Previously, Benitez served as the associate dean/director for Diversity and Inclusion at Union College, where he helped implement strategies to enhance equity practices across the college campus.

"We are excited for what Jason brings to the Board, particularly with respect to advancing our own diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives," said William C. Trigg, III, CEO of Make-A-Wish Northeast New York. "His experience, insights and perspective will enrich the chapter and the wish experience for our children and families."

Benitez is the 19th member of the all-volunteer Board.

Benitez received both his bachelor's degree in sociology and master's degree in higher education administration from the University at Albany. He resides in Slingerlands with his wife and two children.

# Weibrecht Skis (Solo) For Wishes



**W**hen Andrew Weibrecht, the two-time Olympic ski medalist and member of the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Board of Trustees, launched Ski For Wishes in 2019 at Whiteface Mountain, he envisioned

an annual end-of-season fundraiser for the chapter that involved him skiing with donors.

The first year's event proved to be a promising foundation. But the 2020 Ski For Wishes had to be canceled at the last moment in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. The same went for the slated third annual installment this March.

But Weibrecht, a three-time Olympian, was not going to let a second season of snow go by without trying to raise funds skiing. So he started heading up to an Adirondack peak.

Actually, he started heading up to all 46 of them. Solo.

"This felt like a thing to do: Ski all 46 high peaks," Weibrecht said. "With Covid, we had to cancel Ski For Wishes the past two years. To keep that tradition alive, I decided to embark on my own Ski For Wishes."

Sometimes the skiing is good, sometimes sketchy along the narrow trails made for hiking. And that one time his binding broke and he had to go miles downhill on one ski? That kind of slalom skiing is not fun.

Two long-time partners of Weibrecht, Head and Stio, as well as his family's Mirror Lake Inn are supporting the efforts. Weibrecht won his Olympic silver medal on Head skis, and he has been an ambassador for Stio, an authentic outdoor brand based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the past two years. He is equipped with both brands as he tackles his Make-A-Wish mission.

Weibrecht is collecting donations for Make-A-Wish Northeast New York through a chapter web page: [https://secure2.wish.org/site/TR/WishYourWay/Make-A-WishNortheastNewYork?px=5973959&pg=personal&fr\\_id=3729#.YEADF2jYqUk](https://secure2.wish.org/site/TR/WishYourWay/Make-A-WishNortheastNewYork?px=5973959&pg=personal&fr_id=3729#.YEADF2jYqUk). He hopes to make a significant dent in peak quest by the end of the season, and pick up the fundraiser in the 2021-22 winter season.

After that, Ski For Wishes is slated to return to Whiteface in March 2022. Weibrecht is looking forward to skiing with some company.



# At Last, An Eventful Summer



**G**olf tournaments, parachuting and music — oh my! While these three things may sound like they have little in common, the thread that ties them together is they are all upcoming events to support Make-A-Wish Northeast New York.

Last summer looked a little different than previous years due to the pandemic, but this summer many of our usual community events will be back in full

force. As the summer calendar fills up, we are excited to reunite with old friends, make some new ones, and come together to make magic happen. From Latham to Lake George, we will gather together safely to have fun and raise money.

Though they will be in person, these events will look quite a bit different from the events in the past. All Make-A-Wish Northeast New York-related events follow public health guidelines, and we

are working diligently with our event organizers to make sure that all our participants are being safe.

Golf tournaments, motorcycle rides and even parachuting out of a plane will all happen to benefit Make-A-Wish Northeast New York this year, and we can't wait to see you there. For the most up-to-date calendar, make sure to check out our website [wish.org/neny](http://wish.org/neny) and our social media channels.

## CALENDAR

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

New Make-A-Wish Northeast New York events are being added periodically. Be sure to check [wish.org/neny/local-events](http://wish.org/neny/local-events) for updates.

#### JUNE .....

- June 7 **Kingsway Community Annual Golf Tournament**  
Mohawk Country Club  
Schenectady, NY
- June 10 **Hope Shines Brightly Virtual Gala**  
[Wishgalaneny.org](http://Wishgalaneny.org) or Facebook
- June 28 **Walk For Wishes Team Week**  
(Through July 6)

#### JULY .....

- July 10 **Wish Fest**  
Riverlink Park  
Amsterdam, NY
- July 21 **Naked Turtle Golf Tourney**  
Barracks Golf Course  
Plattsburgh, NY
- July 24 **Wish Jump**  
Skydive the Ranch  
Gardiner, NY

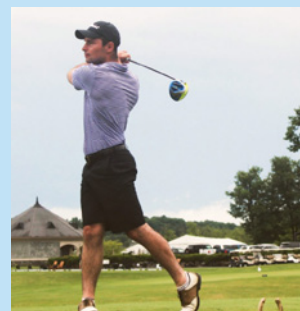
- July 31 **Wack's Ride 2021**  
Wayside Bar & Grill  
Hudson Falls, NY

#### AUGUST .....

- Aug. 7 **FunFly Charity Airshow**  
Fort Edward, NY
- Aug. 14 **Walk For Wishes**  
Joseph L. Bruno Stadium  
Troy, NY

#### SEPTEMBER .....

- Sept. 21 **Coldwell Banker Prime Properties Golf Tournament**  
Van Patten Golf Club  
Clifton Park, NY
- Sept. 29 **13th Annual Tech Valley Charity Golf Tournament**  
Saratoga National Golf Club  
Saratoga Springs, New York





# Rounding Off Your Donations



**We know that last year was tough for everyone and that people can no longer volunteer or donate in the same way they have in the past.**

That's why Make-A-Wish Northeast New York is partnering with the micro-financing platform roundit.

The app roundit allows you to give as you go about your daily life. As you make purchases for things like food and gas, the spare change is donated to us, making it easier for our donors to give in small amounts, on an ongoing basis.

You can get started in three easy steps:

1. Sign up for a free, secure account at [roundit.com](http://roundit.com) or the app store. Set up takes two minutes!
2. Select your round-up amount and optional monthly giving limit.
3. Live your life.



Something as simple as setting up roundit can make a real difference creating life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.

Check it out at [roundit.com](http://roundit.com)!

## Wish Fest Returns as Live Event at New Venue

The fourth installment of St. Mary's Hospital Presents Wish Fest, the community/music festival in Amsterdam to benefit Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, will be held July 10 at a new venue, Riverlink Park, and will be headlined by local recording artists Madison VanDenburg and David J.

The Rock Junkies and the X-Squad Water Ski Show Team will also perform.



The festival, which kicks off at 2 p.m. that Saturday, will also feature a variety of food, drink and attractions suitable for all ages. The day will be capped by a fireworks show.

The festival, like all Make-A-Wish Northeast New York-related events,

will follow all public health guidelines, including capacity. For updates, go to the Wish Fest Facebook or Instagram pages, or [wishfestnyny.org](http://wishfestnyny.org).

Bridge Street and then Shuttleworth Park hosted the event its first two years, while the 2020 Wish Fest was virtual.

"The Amsterdam community and beyond has really responded to Wish Fest and our efforts to help create wishes

for children with critical illnesses," organizer Ray Gawlak said. "People are looking forward to a safe, fun-filled day of outdoor music and activities."

For more information or to donate, go to [wishfestnyny.org](http://wishfestnyny.org).



## Make your donation go further, with less effort!

**A monthly donation means your generosity can be spread out over time to fit your budget.**

Your sustaining donations help ensure wishes are granted as soon as we can make them happen!

Even a gift of \$5 per month can make a difference in the life of a child battling a critical illness. That's \$60 that could be used for lunch on a wish trip, a video game during a shopping spree, or pool floats for a swimming pool wish!

**Sign up online by visiting [wish.org/neny](http://wish.org/neny) and click "Donate," then select "Monthly Gift." Your donation becomes automatic, and you'll be eligible to receive exclusive benefits!**

For questions, call 518-456-9474 or email [neny@neny.wish.org](mailto:neny@neny.wish.org).

# Local Funds, Local Wishes

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

## Community Fundraisers      Amount Raised

SP-Livingston Wish Hero Campaign	\$9,500
Naked Turtle Wish Hero Campaign	\$6,120
Wack's Ride	\$5,663
Coldwell Banker Prime Properties' COVID Fundraising Efforts	\$3,237
Ryan's Fishing Tournament	\$870
Wish Jump 2021 Fundraising Efforts	\$740



## Kids for Wish Kids      Amount Raised

Kiwanis Kids at Poestenkill Elementary	\$175
Sand Creek Middle School	\$300
Wells Central School Fundraiser	\$945



## One For You, and One For a Wish Kid ...

Jason Lee, marketing and communications supervisor for Six Flags Great Escape Resort, and Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Chief Operating Officer Bob Bullock showcase holiday bears donated by the resort for wish kids. The bears are part of an annual holiday promotion at the resort: For each bear purchased in the hotel gift shop, an identical bear was donated to Make-A-Wish as a gift for a local wish kid.

This is just the most recent in a series of promotions by our friends at Six Flags Great Escape Resort designed to help the chapter and its wish kids and families. Thank you, all!

## A Kid Helping Kids

This is Spiridhon and his dad, Sotir. Spiridhon, 8, a third grader from Guilderland, decided he wanted to donate something to Make-A-Wish Northeast New York wish kids, so he brought over a bag of new toys and games to the office.

We. Are. Impressed. And grateful. Thank you, Spiridhon (and dad, too)!



## Viva VIA Aquarium!



Make-A-Wish Northeast New York is grateful for its partnership with Via Aquarium and all it has done for wish kids and families, from hosting wish reveals to providing passes. Recently, chapter CEO Bill Trigg presented a poster expressing our appreciation to aquarium Marketing and Public Relations Manager Ashley Watson and General Manager Tom Lavin. Thank you, both, and everyone at the aquarium!

# You Can Be a Champion of Hope



At Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, we are proud to debut our new business partnership program, the Corporate Champions of Hope. Over the past year, we've seen our community step up in ways big and small to help us continue granting wishes, even during a pandemic. The Corporate

Champions of Hope program recognizes that your level of support and engagement is unique to you — just as each wish is unique to each child.

As a Corporate Champion of Hope, your commitment throughout the year will help make every wish come true, giving children with critical illnesses experiences of hope and joy when they need it most. You will also join a select group of philanthropic businesses who help us innovate rapidly to grant wishes in new ways now — and into the future.

Throughout the year, Make-A-Wish Northeast New York promotes activities that engage, educate and inspire our communities. As a Champion of Hope, your support can be a mixture of event sponsorship, Adopt-A-Wish support and unrestricted giving that enables the chapter to continue its outreach and make sure we reach every eligible child in our region. Our goal for you is to find the right giving and engagement level for your business and your employees. The levels of support and the associated benefits are just the beginning of a conversation that ensures your experience is meaningful and your impact is transformational.

Keep in mind, regardless of how you support Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, you are partnering with one of the most trusted non-profit brands in the nation, and one trusted to be wise stewards of your philanthropic support. In fact, on average, 75 cents of every dollar donated is directly spent on wish granting.

**Together, we can continue to be a light of hope for today — and tomorrow.**

To begin the conversation about becoming a Corporate Champion of Hope, please reach out to Director of Development Kirsten Broschinsky at [kbros@neny.wish.org](mailto:kbros@neny.wish.org).



## Alpin Haus Joins Champions of Hope

For Alpin Haus President Andy Heck, the commitment to support Make-A-Wish Northeast New York began with attendance at the chapter's annual gala in Saratoga Springs about a decade ago.

"It made an immediate impact on us," Heck said. "Lorraine [his wife] decided to become a wish granter and then my daughter, Nicole, decided to as well."

The president became more personally invested in the Make-A-Wish mission as his wife and daughter would return from working on wishes. "They told me not just about the impact on the child but also the siblings and parents," Heck said. "I also witnessed at Alpin Haus the joy of a family getting their RV as part of a wish."



The multi-state Alpin Haus has now become the newest member of an elite category of giving: a Corporate Champion of Hope. Headquartered in Amsterdam, Alpin Haus specializes in the sale of RVs, boats, snowmobiles, skis and snowboards, pools and patios and spas. It even operates its own fitness center.

For Andy Heck, the decision to become even more involved with Make-A-Wish reflects the core values established nearly five decades ago by the family corporation.

"We have always believed in helping our community and making a difference in the lives of others," he said. "As such, we get involved with so many different organizations. We believe that, as part of our community, we make a difference in helping to create a better place to live and work."

What would Heck say to other business leaders thinking becoming involved with Make-A-Wish Northeast New York, perhaps as a Champion of Hope?

"We can help bring hope and joy to children who need it so badly," Heck said. "Make-A-Wish is an amazing organization, and seeing the difference you can make, first-hand, with children facing health challenges is so rewarding."





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# Wish Alums: You Can Be an Ambassador of Hope!

**When a child becomes a wish kid, they and their family become lifetime members of the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York community.**

Long after a wish is granted, many wish kids and families remain active in Make-A-Wish, including being involved in events, and acting as our ambassadors and advocates throughout the year.

When wish alumni represent the chapter and the Make-A-Wish mission, they “pay it forward,” helping to ensure that future wish kids also realize their true heartfelt wish while battling a critical illness.

Whether as an ambassador at one of our signature chapter events — our annual Gala, Walk For Wishes or Adopt-A-Wish Holiday Campaign — hosting their own fundraiser, advocating for the Make-A-Wish mission at any number of community events, or appearing on posters or even in the media, wish alumni serve as the embodiment of hope for all the wish kids and families who follow.

Would you be interested in becoming a wish ambassador? If so, contact Director of

Development Kirsten Broschinsky at [kbro@neny.wish.org](mailto:kbro@neny.wish.org) or 518-456-9474. We would love to hear from you again!



## GEAR UP FOR A GREAT CAUSE



**Freshen up your summer wardrobe at the Make-A-Wish Northeast New York Wish Store!** Get yourself some high-quality, low-cost, limited edition Make-A-Wish Northeast New York swag, with proceeds going toward supporting local wishes! (These items also make for thoughtful stylish gifts, too.)

You can do good and look good at the same time. Just go to [wickedsmartapparel.com/collections/make-a-wish](http://wickedsmartapparel.com/collections/make-a-wish).