

WISHES

Make-A-Wish[®]
NEBRASKA

Official Newsletter of
Make-A-Wish Nebraska

Spring 2022



*I wish to ride a
unicorn*
Madeleine, 6
lymphoma

wish.org/nebraska



Brigette Young, President and CEO
of Make-A-Wish Nebraska,
with wish kid Aspen

Dear Friends,

Children who are fighting critical illnesses experience extreme emotional challenges every day. For a young mind to wrap itself around medical terms, harsh treatments and scary surgeries is not only exhausting – it is traumatic.

Such mental distress can impair a child's long-term healing and leave them feeling hopeless. But just one spark of hope can change everything.

With hope, a child with a critical illness finds light in the darkness of their current circumstances.

It transforms their perspective, replacing feelings of trauma with hope for tomorrow. Their spirit is rejuvenated, and they have renewed motivation to persevere – and envision a brighter future.

In these times, hope is essential for children with critical illnesses and it's because of a community of supporters, like you, the unknown feels less scary for a wish child and their family.

Thank you for restoring hope with a wish come true. A wish begins with hope – and hope begins with you.

Sincerely,

Brigette Young
President/CEO

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– Greater Nebraska

2022 FISCAL YEAR

2022 Fiscal Year Wishes Since September 1, 2021

Berkley, 10	leukemia	I wish to have a play structure	Ricky, 14	cancer & liver disease	I wish to have a shopping spree
Calista, 14	nervous system disorder	I wish to have a swimming pool	Alex, 15	leukemia	I wish to have a Hobby Town shopping spree
LaAreal, 16	brain tumor	I wish to have a shopping spree in LA	Sven, 14	brain tumor	I wish to have a pontoon boat
Koby, 14	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to have a camper with a lift	Elliott, 8	leukemia	I wish to go to Great Wolf Lodge
Joelle, 11	absence of pancreas	I wish to have a room makeover	Caitlyn, 11	genetic disorder	I wish to go to Disney World®
Abigail, 6	wilm's tumor	I wish to have a pink playhouse	Harley, 19	cancer	I wish to go on a trip to see the Redwoods in CA
Calvin, 13	cancer	I wish to have a hot tub			
Benjamin, 15	brain tumor	I wish to go to Disney World®			
Millie, 4	brain tumor	I wish to have a playhouse with 2 swings			



I wish to have a shopping spree in L.A.
LaAreal, 16
brain tumor



I wish to have a bulldog
Zion, 5
nervous system disorder



I wish to have a playhouse
Millie, 4
brain tumor

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



I wish to ride a unicorn
Madeleine, 6
lymphoma



Madeleine's Wish Story

When you are six years old, your imagination has no limits. When you are six years old and are sick, your imagination breaks barriers and extends beyond doctors' offices and emergency rooms. A child can imagine they are a princess, or they imagine they are going on safaris. In Madeleine's case, her dream was to ride a unicorn.

Wish kid Madeleine battles lymphoma – spending lots of her time in doctors' offices and receiving treatments.

Despite her illness, Madeleine spends her time doing the things she loves, such as playing princess and dreaming of unicorns. Madeleine LOVES unicorns.

When she found out she would be receiving a wish, she knew there was only one thing she wanted – to ride a unicorn.

Thanks to our friends at HETRA, Madeleine's wish came true in June 2021. When Madeleine arrived at HETRA for the big day, there was a carriage waiting for her. The carriage was pulled by two friendly fairies. She was then greeted by two knights. When she went inside, she opened a treasure chest where she found a special helmet adorned with a crown fit for a princess.

Next, Madeleine met the Fairy Queen who introduced Madeleine to the magical unicorn. The Fairy Queen told Madeleine: "This unicorn, named Lady, has lost her way. Her wish is to return home and rejoin her unicorn friends and family, but she needs your help to fulfill this wish!"

Madeleine was given several tasks to complete in order to help Lady return home. These tasks included finding 8 hidden jewels, completing a unicorn puzzle, and finally, visiting a wishing well to wish for Lady to return to her family.

Together, Madeleine and Lady completed all the tasks and when they reached the wishing well, Madeleine grabbed her magic wand and said "I wish for Lady to find her way home!"

All the fairies and the Fairy Queen rejoiced in Madeleine's success and Madeleine went on to enjoy a feast with the knights, fairies, and her new friend Lady.



Harlan's Story

Written by Harlan's mom, Erin

Heart defects happen in 1 in 100 babies. We found out at our 20-week ultrasound that our 3rd child would have severe congenital heart disease. Harlan was born with half a heart, and his defects are 1 in 200,000 for how unique his heart is.

Our world was turned upside down knowing three open heart surgeries were the only known means of survival. Harlan's first open-heart surgery was at 2 days old and his second at 5 months old. His heart continues to be monitored and a third surgery is in his future. I had to become his full-time nurse, and NG tube fed him the first 6 months of his life. Having a 4-year-old and 2-year-old at home at the same time, seemed unreal and keeping it all together would be impossible, but I've learned on this journey that you don't know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.

There is no cure, only monitoring, procedures and surgeries. This disease is lifelong. Harlan was, and is, a fighter and showed us with his

amazing resilience that he would defy the odds and be a warrior. On the outside not knowing Harlan, you'd never know he fights this battle every day, but if you ask him where his heart is he'll show you and tell you ...the strongest hearts have the most scars.

He is your typical 3-year-old boy who loves the outdoors, playing in the mud, riding bikes, fishing and keeping up with his older brothers. Harlan's love of climbing, the outdoors & trees at an early age drew him to wanting a treehouse from the time he could talk. Receiving this wish to have a treehouse means he can go into his backyard every day and have a place to escape, play and just be a kid, away from doctor appointments and medications he takes daily, to be free and let his imagination run wild.

This wish lets us see, feel and experience the hope we all want for kids like Harlan who battle childhood diseases daily. This wish has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience for



I wish to have a treehouse
Harlan, 3
congenital heart disorder

all that Harlan and our family has been and will continue to address in the years ahead. We are honored for this amazing treehouse and the years of adventure that await Harlan in his own backyard. Truly, we are forever grateful.



Kainen's Story



I wish to have an art studio

Kainen, 10
genetic disorder

Ten-year-old Kainen is a very positive person. According to his mom, Theresa, he is "a ray of sunshine that blinds you when he smiles." What most people probably don't realize when they meet Kainen is that he battles multiple diseases including intestinal disorders, cardiac complications, autonomic nervous system problems, Mitochondrial Disease, and most recently, he has become a COVID long-hauler.

The impact these diseases have had on Kainen have been far reaching. He relies on a feeding tube for 100% of his nutrition. He can't regulate his body temperature, blood pressure, or nervous system. In September 2021 Kainen contracted COVID-19, which intensified his already tough health battles. He pulled through but continues to have secondary complications from repeat lung infections and more.

"For our family all this means is that we spend tons of time traveling out of state for specialty care every three months for weeks at a time, and this puts a huge financial burden on our family which in turns creates stress," said Theresa. "Stress of how we're going to pay for the next trip, pay for adaptive equipment or medicine that insurance will not cover, and also the stress of will Kai even be here the next day."

When Kainen and his family found out he would be receiving a wish, they wanted to take some time to travel, not for health reasons, but as a family. Kainen originally asked to go on a Disney Cruise Line, but due to COVID, he ended up changing his wish to an art studio.

"The art studio was actually his back up wish...he, however, is very happy with his art studio," said Theresa.

"This was very important to him because he uses art as an emotional outlet to help manage his pain and distract himself."

When Kainen found out his wish was being granted he was very excited and began figuring out all the details for the set-up. According to his mom, Kainen had plans and was intent on being involved with all the planning, loving every minute of seeing his wish come to life in photos and then in person.

"When the structure went up, Kai and I were away for a month-long treatment halfway across the country on the East Coast. His Dad who stays behind to work, would send us photos of the progress," said Theresa.

For Kainen's family, the art studio gives them hope for the future. For Kainen, it provides him joy to have his own space to create and escape if needed.

"By supporting Make-A-Wish Nebraska, you, the donors, are providing more than just money or material. You're not just supporting Make-A-Wish, but also these kids, like my son," said Theresa. "In my son's case his donors gave him HOPE in something to look forward to even when he was hanging on through painful treatments or invasive tests. They gave him STRENGTH, because when it was really bad, he would grasp onto his wish like a lifeline at times, when all he wanted to do was give up... For Kai, his wish, an art studio, is something that will keep giving back to him."



World Wish Day 2022

Every year, Make-A-Wish Nebraska – along with other chapters and affiliates worldwide – celebrate World Wish Day on April 29, the anniversary of the first wish that inspired the founding of Make-A-Wish in 1980.

In the month leading up to and immediately following World Wish Day, Make-A-Wish will rally its global community of supporters to help restore hope with a wish.

Having granted more than 520,000 wishes for children with critical illnesses worldwide since 1980, Make-A-Wish staff, volunteers and supporters have heard wish families state time and time again that their wish changed their lives. Help restore hope for local wish kids today by donating at [wish.org/nebraska/donate](https://www.wish.org/nebraska/donate)

**RESTORE
HOPE**
with
a wish

American Laboratories and Kenny and Ramona Soejoto

For over 6 years, American Laboratories (ALI) has been supporting Make-A-Wish Nebraska through their ALI Gives Back Program. As part of ALI's Value Statement, "to support the sustainability of our local community," the ALI Gives Back Program was created in 2016. As part of this program, local, non-profit organizations are nominated by employees based on their special or personal connections. All nominations, reasons, and connections are reviewed and a select few are chosen for a donation on behalf of ALI. The impact of a wish leaves a lasting impression among those connected to the wish. Because of these connections and the work Make-A-Wish does, we have been selected as the recipient of the ALI Gives Back Program for all 6 years!

"Every year, Make-A-Wish hosts a Radiothon with the Classic Rock 105.9 radio station to raise money in order to grant wishes. This is an event that ALI has participated in every year since 2016 to announce our donation," said Jamie Deloske, Director, Sales Operations/ALI Gives Back Program Coordinator at American Laboratories. "The amount of wishes granted through the Radiothon and the stories shared that day warms the heart. It is always our favorite event!"

ALI has many connections to Make-A-Wish recipients through their employees and their friends, family, and neighbors. Kenny Soejoto, CEO of American Laboratories, and his wife, Ramona, connected with Make-A-Wish when they lived in California and New York and then reconnected here in Nebraska. The Soejotos' first experience at a Make-A-Wish fundraiser enabled them to see what Make-A-Wish does for children and their families.



Personally, one of the Soejotos' children had a condition with seizures, and although they didn't know about Make-A-Wish at that time, they feel a personal connection

to our organization and mission to help local children as they battle their illnesses. With these donations, they have been able to support wishes to provide service animals that detect seizures and other critical illnesses.

To date, American Laboratories has donated over \$138,000 to Make-A-Wish Nebraska!

Thank you, American Laboratories and your ALI Gives Back Program for your support of our mission, and most importantly, our wish kids!



This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of our wish kids who have passed away since our last publication

Keaton, 8
nervous system disorder
*I wish to have a
pontoon boat*
(Wish Year 2021)

Taryn, 15
complex heart disease
*I wish to go to
Walt Disney World®*
(Wish Year 2014)

Ricky, 14
cancer and liver disease
*I wish to have a
shopping spree*
(Wish Year 2022)

Listed are wish kids we have been made aware of, we apologize for any unintentional omissions.

Make-A-Wish®

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If you know someone who would like to receive our mailings, or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact our office by email info@nebraska.wish.org or call 800-760-9474.

To refer a child:

Visit wish.org/nebraska
Call 800-760-WISH (9474)

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

Events

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes

May 12, 2022 | Omaha

Norfolk Golf Tournament

May 16, 2022 | Norfolk

Fox in the Hen House Golf Tournament

June 9, 2022 | Lincoln

Truck Center Companies Annual Golf Tournament

June 10, 2022 | Omaha

Lincoln Federal Savings Annual Golf Tournament

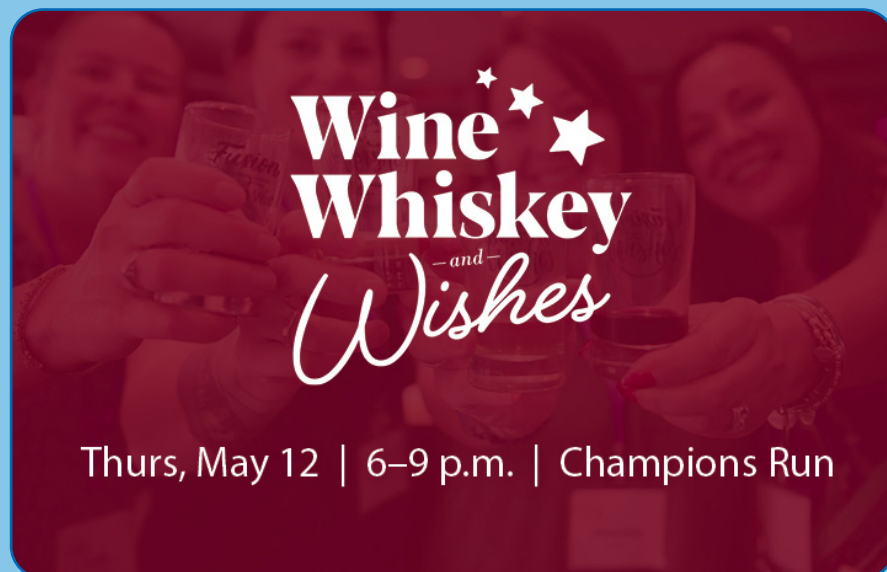
July 9, 2022 | Lincoln

Evening of Wishes Gala

August 18, 2022 | Kearney

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes

September 8, 2022 | Lincoln



Visit wish.org/nebraska to learn more