



Meet Anneliese

WISH GRANTED, 2021

For nearly two years, 7-year-old Annie slept standing up. Diagnosed with end-stage kidney disease in June of 2019, Annie's parents learned how to operate her dialysis equipment at home. However, the machines being used for her nocturnal treatments required her to be upright to operate properly.

I wish to be a farmer

Anneliese (Annie), 7
kidney transplant



"We had many sleepless nights," Luis, Annie's dad, recalled. "There are so many things that go into dialysis – from sterilization to, in our case, figuring out a way to support Annie so that she could get much-needed rest. We were all tired. When we got the call that there could be a kidney available – we just prayed that it was a match."

The kidney awaiting Annie was in San Francisco, nine hours from the family's home in Las Vegas. Luis and Giovanna didn't hesitate. Together with siblings Ezekiel and Genevive, the family of five made the trek to California, hoping that Annie would be the recipient. She was.

"It was a moment of pure gratitude and relief," Giovanna said, her eyes brimming with tears. Now six months post-transplant, Giovanna says that Annie still fatigues easily, but her energy levels and mood have improved tremendously.

"Being able to spend time together as a family without constant worry about Annie has been a huge relief," Giovanna said. "Don't get me wrong, Luis and I still have a lot of anxiety when it comes to Annie; it's just a different kind. We are just in the next part of this journey. Right now, we take it day by day and enjoy our time together as a family."

When Annie found out that she was eligible to receive her one true wish, she knew that she wanted her whole family to experience it with her. An aspiring veterinarian, Annie's wish came to her in a dream where she was milking cows and picking vegetables on a farm. While she lives in the city, Annie's love of animals grew thanks to a neighbor who had a horse and some chickens that she visited regularly. The animals no longer live next door, but their impact on the little girl was long-lasting.



"She just has a heart for animals," Giovanna said.
"She always has."

Arriving in Fallon, Nevada, for her wish trip, Annie's admiration of farm life was immediate. Stepping into the guesthouse at the Frey Ranch, where the family stayed, her eyes immediately went to the cowgirl outfit sitting on the bottom bunk. Local seamstress, Rebecca, found out that Annie was coming to Fallon and wanted to contribute. She provided jeans and a western-style shirt along with sparkly boots and a cowgirl hat. Annie didn't hesitate to jump right into the outfit.

That enthusiasm continued throughout Annie's entire trip to the small farming community. The little girl embraced each aspect of the experience, from bottle-feeding piglets, baby goats, and a baby calf; to harvesting seeds, riding a tractor, and making homemade ice cream. She even hopped right up on a horse called Tiny for a ride around the fairgrounds but admitted that "Tiny was his name, but he wasn't tiny, he was big."

The same might be said about the impact that little Annie had on the town of Fallon.

"I've been a little nervous about today because I didn't want to disappoint," Isidro Alves, owner of Sand Hill Dairy, said. "I wanted to make sure there were smiles on faces, and I think we got that. Just seeing her walking alongside the cows and riding in the tractor around the grounds ... you could tell she was in her element. I'm going to carry this day with me. I feel fortunate to have been a small part of her wish, and I know the whole town feels the same."

Those sentiments were echoed by community members across the city.

"It was a little emotional coming out here today and watching everything go on," said Julie Guerrero, a Churchill County employee and former wish child. It's been 25 years since Guerrero's wish was granted, but spending time with Annie brought back the feelings of joy she experienced during that time. "I always look back on those memories of my time with Make-A-Wish very fondly, so thanks for letting me be here."

Annie's final day in Fallon was spent with the town's mayor, Ken Tedford. Mayor Tedford presented Annie with a gift basket filled with farm-related items, but the little girl immediately took to a rainbow-colored stuffed pig sitting at the top of the basket. She hugged the stuffed animal all throughout her tour of City Hall and took it on a firetruck ride across the town.

"It feels like that pig is her spirit animal," said Kelli Kelly, executive director of the Fallon Food Hub. "Colorful and farm-loving."

