

Impact Report | Fiscal Year 2021



*I wish to have
a Princess
Birthday Party*

Amina, 6
sickle cell disease

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Phil Lussier, President & CEO & Wish Dad

This year has been like no other in the history of our organization - a year of both successes and challenges. Even as the full year was impacted by COVID-19, the resilience of our wish kids and families, combined with the commitment and creativity of our volunteers, supporters and staff, resulted in an incredible FY21 for Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York.

While travel wishes were paused throughout the entirety of the year, our commitment to granting all wishes deemed safe led us to create 419 life-changing wishes for kids across our communities. One of those was a milestone for our chapter - Keira's wish for a bird sanctuary was the 17,000th wish our chapter has granted since our founding in 1983. The challenges of FY21 reinforced our understanding of the full journey of a wish; that the ability to look forward to something wonderful can be just as powerful as the wish itself and the effects can last long after it is granted.

In an effort to continue engaging with our various communities in a changed world, we greatly increased the number of virtual activities and events. We connected families with volunteers to imagine or re-imagine their wish and families to each other through our alumni program. We brought virtual wish celebrations to kids who were isolated and our individual donors and corporate partners together for virtual splashes, cooking classes and other events that brought them closer to the mission they are generously supporting. We continued to tell inspiring stories on our social media platforms of the kids and families we serve and the impact the wish can have on them – creating sparks of hope in dark times.

Lastly, this year we continued to ask ourselves what actionable steps we could and should take as an organization to further address diversity, equity and inclusion – from both an internal and external perspective. Our commitment to reach every eligible child begins with ensuring DEI practices that will provide more equal access for our wish kids.

I am thankful for the entire Make-A-Wish family of supporters who helped make every wish possible. For our volunteers who safely focused on restoring hope to wish kids; for our medical partners who continued to recognize the power of a wish in their plan of care; for our volunteer leaders who provided invaluable guidance; and for our donors whose generosity and unwavering support provided the funds we need to grant wishes now and plan for the future.

It comes from a very personal place when I say thank you to all of you for bringing hope to children when they need it most. You truly do transform lives, one wish at a time.

With gratitude,



OUR MISSION

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

*I wish to have a
backyard playset*

Carson, 3
cancer



419 KIDS HAD THEIR WISHES GRANTED!

The need to re-imagine wishes that involve travel or large gatherings continued throughout FY21, but 419 children embraced the joy of a wish that could be safely granted. We know that the excitement and anticipation of a wish is no less important than the wish itself.

Wishes that Fuel Empowerment

Wish kids undergoing treatment often feel a loss of control over their lives. A wish offers them the ability to choose for themselves, which can be empowering. Virtual shopping sprees were popular for this reason, giving kids endless options to be themselves.

Wishes that Create More Family Time

Having their very own backyard pool or playset is the wish of many kids, especially during FY21. These wishes not only foster quality family time, they can also help increase a child's activity level and improve health outcomes through more exercise, fresh air and sunshine.

Wishes that Enhance Mobility

Mobility issues caused by a critical illness can make it difficult to join in family activities. Wishes like lifts to get out of bed to water wheelchairs for the beach allow kids to be safe, comfortable and mobile as they enjoy more activities.

Wishes that Provide Companionship

Many wish kids have compromised immune systems, isolating them from friends. But pals with four legs are always there, ready to play or cuddle. While puppies and kittens were the most wished for, one wish kid thought outside the (litter) box and wished for his own goats!

MEDICAL PARTNER COMMITMENT

COVID-19 complicated the delivery of healthcare during FY21, but our medical partners continued to include Make-A-Wish in the plan of care for their eligible patients. They know that the wish experience has a positive impact on a child's physical well-being and overall quality of life.

More than 130 medical professionals made over 560 referrals for wishes in FY21. NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital was the top referring facility in Metro New York, while Roswell Park Cancer Institute (Buffalo) and Golisano Children's Hospital (Rochester) were the top referring facilities in Western New York.

We are deeply grateful for the members of our chapter's Medical Advisory Council who helped us navigate the safety of wish granting throughout the pandemic.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Volunteers are the backbone of Make-A-Wish. Our community of almost 800 volunteers plays a vital role in the wish-granting process. Whether they are meeting with children and families to discover a wish or working with staff on fundraising events, our volunteers are at the heart of this organization.

In FY21, 132 new volunteers joined our committed corps. We also created a new role – wish consultant – for volunteers with expertise in certain areas such as interior design, technology, construction and more. They can provide valuable knowledge and skills in bringing many wishes to life.



"It's wonderful to have something new and different for her to do. I'm so glad for her to be able to come out here, to breathe fresh air, and to do something she loves."

~ Chaney, Keira's mom

CELEBRATING 17,000 WISHES!

Our chapter finished the year on a high note by granting Keira's wish for a bird sanctuary - our chapter's 17,000th!

Eleven-year-old Keira spends much of her time looking through the window to the world outside. She was born with a severe congenital disorder that makes her joints and muscles weak and fragile.

Her wish was to turn her backyard into her own personal oasis, filled with one of her favorite things – birds. She loves to watch them whiz by and listen to their sounds, which is music to her ears.

Keira uses a power wheelchair to move around, so she wished she could get outside and have more space. That meant extending her family deck to give her more room to explore. She chose a swing that is safe for her to swing side-to-side (the only way to swing, she told her mother), and a bird bath and feeders to welcome her feathered friends. Keira now spends as much time as she can swinging and listening to the birds, a true escape in her own backyard.

We are privileged to have granted the wishes of 17,000 children like Keira in our communities and look forward to granting every wish yet to come.



*I wish to go to
Walt Disney
World® Resort*

Ja'meir, 3
gastrointestinal
disorder

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES: REACHING EVERY ELIGIBLE CHILD

It is only through a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) that Make-A-Wish will fulfill its vision of reaching every eligible child. In the past year, we have made progress in addressing this need in myriad ways.

We established a framework for our DEI efforts to be implemented to achieve desired outcomes in:

- Board diversity
- Expanding our network
- Training and support
- Equitable practice

We have taken a multi-pronged approach to addressing these areas and have been meeting with staff and board leadership to increase our knowledge of the types of oppression our children and families who are Black and Indigenous People of Color experience. This greater understanding builds empathy, leading to better engagement and overall wish family experience.

By broadening our medical outreach, we are finding the kids where they are.

Most of our referrals come from private or research hospitals and healthcare facilities. However, many children of color are treated in public or smaller community hospitals, or receive crisis care from urgent care centers and emergency rooms. In FY21, plans were initiated to identify and make connections at public hospitals and outpatient clinics in NYC to reach children we had previously missed.

By increasing community engagement, we are expanding our network of supporters.

As we deepen our presence in communities, we create access and allies. In FY21, we established a Community Council in Staten Island, an addition to those already established in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

By recruiting a more diverse and inclusive volunteer base, we are reflecting our mission and our values.

Our volunteer corps must reflect the diversity of the children we serve, with representation from the same neighborhoods. Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services is critical to engaging families and children in the wish journey and maximizing wish impact.

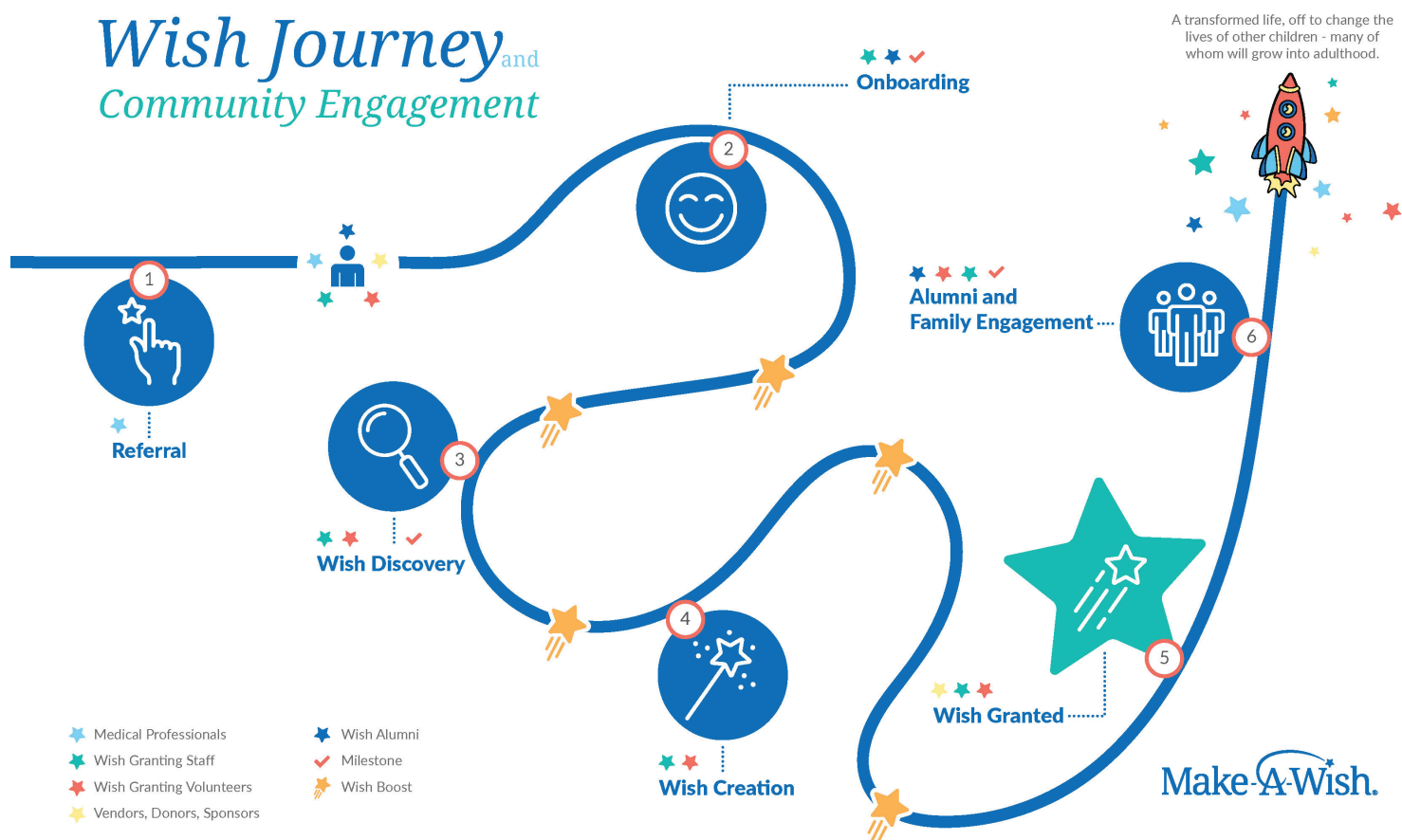
By working with a minority-owned DEI consulting group, we are being intentional throughout the wish journey. We continue our strategic efforts including board member recruitment, messaging, expanding our network in the community and diversifying our donor base.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

Through the power of wishing we are providing an ongoing community of hope, strength and support for a child's health journey.

From the moment a child is referred for a wish to their becoming a lasting part of the Make-A-Wish community, there are important steps along the way that help kids (and families) look forward to the brighter days ahead that a wish brings.

A constant and dedicated community – medical providers, volunteers, vendors, donors and staff – supports a family along their journey. The moment the wish is granted, the wish child becomes a member of the Alumni Community, allowing us to continue a relationship that lasts a lifetime.



We are keenly focused on fostering our relationships with all members of the Make-A-Wish community to continue providing the best experience possible for the children we serve. In FY21, this included:



- Engaging our social community of over 15K followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- Communicating bi-weekly with our 30K supporters through an e-newsletter to show the impact of a wish, the community we serve, and how funds are used.
- Partnering with local media to share Make-A-Wish stories, including major fundraising events and wish stories.



- Increasing recruitment efforts to greatly expand our volunteer corps in Brooklyn and the Bronx to rectify disparities for wish kids in those areas.
- Retraining our volunteers to understand our values around community while also using a wide-ranging interpretation service to ensure no child is left waiting due to a language barrier.
- Training an additional 38 medical professionals from nine medical facilities on how to make a wish referral.



- Utilizing virtual platforms to continue stewardship activities across our communities, providing:
 - Volunteer training and appreciation
 - Wish celebrations
 - Donor appreciation events, including Circle of Hope celebrations
 - Fundraising events, including a virtual Splash from Home in lieu of an in-person Long Beach Polar Bear Splash in FY21



- Celebrating World Wish Day in 2021 with a month-long online Wish Heroes fundraising campaign, which raised over \$155,000. Thanking generous Wish Hero donors with an exclusive live-streamed concert by Cami Clune, from NBC's *The Voice*, on World Wish Day.



- Welcoming all wish kids and families into the Alumni Program, offering them a meaningful and lasting connection to Make-A-Wish through a dedicated Facebook group, online and in-person family engagement activities, mentoring, fundraising opportunities and more.

DONOR SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

We are grateful for all of our creative, dedicated, and generous supporters. Not even a pandemic could stop them from continuing to ensure that wishes could be granted to children throughout the communities of Metro New York and Western New York.

Real Estate Council

The Council is comprised of New York City real estate leaders who support and promote our mission. Its members, who represent top companies in the industry, help fund wishes through both fundraising and in-kind services, resources, and expertise to grant design and construction related wishes.

For kids who must comply with the challenges of treatment for a critical illness, redesigning or renovating their room empowers them to create a space that is uniquely theirs, a true reflection of who they are.

In FY21, The Real Estate Council helped transform the lives of 10 wish kids by donating over \$42,000 of in-kind resources and services to grant wishes in our local communities.

For more information: Jennifer Jung at 646-558-5556 or jjung@metrony.wish.org.

Kids for Wish Kids®

Kids for Wish Kids enables K-12 students to discover philanthropy by selecting their own fundraising project and managing it from start to finish. Students develop leadership skills and learn about teamwork while working towards a final goal - making a difference in the life of another child.

In FY21, schools throughout Metro and Western New York raised more than \$200,000. They held virtual trivia nights, student vs. teacher sports competitions, color runs, holiday concerts and more.

For more information: Brianna Ortega at 646-517-8763 or bortega@metrony.wish.org.



*I wish to be
a firefighter*

Samuel, 11
cystic fibrosis



*I wish to have
a French
Bulldog puppy*

Martina, 3
rare disease

Junior Board Annual Golf Outing

The Junior Board is a group of young, next-generation philanthropists dedicated to supporting and promoting our mission. Their focus is to provide leadership support for fundraising efforts and recruit prospective leaders while engaging in the mission as wish-granting volunteers.

They held two successful golf outings in FY21 at the Sunningdale Country Club in Scarsdale, NY. Guests enjoyed 18 holes, lunch and cocktails, and raffles and prizes in a day-long celebration which raised over \$155,000.

For more information: Brianna Ortega at 646-517-8763 or bortega@metrony.wish.org.

Make-A-Wish Radiothon

97Rock and News 4 celebrated 27 remarkable years of the Make-A-Wish Radiothon on September 30 – October 1, 2021, raising \$280,000.

Listeners and viewers across Western New York tuned in, donated, and bid on auction items while our media partners shared inspirational stories from wish kids, families, volunteers and medical professionals.

Since its inception in 1994, the Radiothon has raised more than \$3 million to help grant wishes.

Williamsville Central School District Fundraiser

Students in the Williamsville Central School District helped raise over \$110,000 in April 2021. Their initial goal was to raise \$60,000, an amount they far exceeded.

Student leaders in each school in the district designed their own fundraising program, WillPower for Wishes, to help grant wishes for kids within their district who are battling a critical illness.

Donor Spotlight - Legacy of Wishes Society

As a loyal supporter of Make-A-Wish, Sue Jaffe understands that when a wish comes true, it creates strength, hope and transformation for a child with a critical illness. She is also aware that Make-A-Wish is currently able to grant only half of all eligible wishes.

Through her decision to support Make-A-Wish with a monthly donation and planned gift, Sue is helping us get closer to granting the wish of every eligible child. "I have it in my will that Make-A-Wish is getting a nice portion from my estate," Sue said. "The organization does so much for children who really need it – to change their environment or give them joy in their lives."

A planned gift, left through a bequest, retirement plan, life insurance policy or other means, ensures your legacy lives on, enhancing the lives of children with critical illnesses. At our chapter, we help to tailor gifts and pledges to meet your interests and tax situation. A planned gift does not impact your spendable income, but it does enable some individuals to make a larger gift, expanding their legacy for years to come.

For more information contact Lizzy Merkouris at merkouris@metrony.wish.org or 646-558-5613.

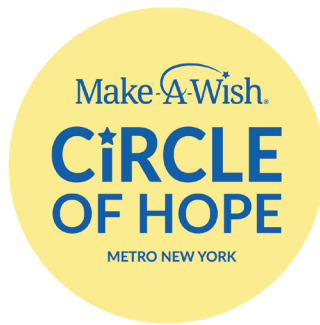
"We seize every moment with Sebastian. We will remember his wish day for a lifetime. It was a day he was completely free from all worry. He was just Sebastian – our animal loving boy."

~ Liz, Sebastian's mom

*I wish to
spend the day
with a llama*

Sebastian, 7
nervous system
disorder





Thank you to our Circle of Hope members for their investment this year to make wishes come true.

Circle of Hope members are business leaders, philanthropists, visionaries, families and wish parents who care deeply about giving kids battling critical illnesses hope for a brighter future. Members enjoy a VIP donor experience that showcases the work they are supporting. In FY21, they were invited to a tequila tasting with Cincoro Tequila and a cooking class with renowned Chef Frank Prisinzano. We are looking forward to another year of granting wishes with our Circle of Hope members!

Marie Arrigo
Kenneth and Alissa Blumberg
The Brilliant Family
The Burns Family
In memory of ellen cannon
Thomas Cassidy
Daniel and Jennifer Castaline
Sari Chang and Kevin Guthrie
Jackie and Adam Cohen
Zach and Andrea Coopersmith
Jonathan Davis
The Delaney Family Foundation
William G. and Martin Dessoiffy
Brian Donaghy
Patrick Donaghy
Lili and Wilson Ervin
Emma and Jonny Fine
The Fitzgerald Family
Halee Sage & David Friedman
Anmarie and Jim Galowski
L.T. and Lina Gibson
Barrie Glabman & Adam Schwartz
The Goddard Family
Sylvia Golden, Golden Ram Imports
Giving | Grousbeck Fazzalari
Michael and Susan Katzke

Chip and Sheryl Kaye
Gerard and Penney Klingman
The Leas Family
Eileen H. Libutti
Larry L. Luong Family Foundation, Inc.
The Lussier Family
National Mah Jongg League Foundation
Mannion Family
Michael Mockus
The Michelle O'Neill Foundation
Sarah Pontius
The Stewart J. Rahr Foundation
Madeleine K. Rudin
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Susan & Stephen Scherr
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Naveen R. Shahani
Rabia Sheikh
Jennifer and Albert Sohn
Jane and Frances Stein Foundation
Ivan and Sheri Taback
The Tan Family
The Thomas Family
John Xikis Foundation Inc
Anonymous (34)

Circle of Hope members contribute \$5,000 or more annually. For information on joining this special program, contact Elizabeth Merkouris at emerkouris@metrony.wish.org or 646-558-5613.

FINANCIALS

MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION® OF METRO NEW YORK AND WESTERN NEW YORK, INC.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2021

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Public Support:			
Contributions	\$ 7,007,771	\$ 14,392	\$ 7,022,163
Grants	123,086	—	123,086
Total Public Support	7,130,857	14,392	7,145,249
Internal Special Events	385,167	—	385,167
Less Costs of Direct Benefits to Donors	(53,976)	—	(53,976)
Total Internal Special Events	331,191	—	331,191
Investment Income, Net	1,158,234	1,185,358	2,343,592
Forgiveness of Paycheck Protection Program Loan	1,080,000	—	1,080,000
Other Income	3,500	—	3,500
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	2,858,759	(2,858,759)	—
Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support	12,562,541	(1,659,009)	10,903,532

EXPENSES

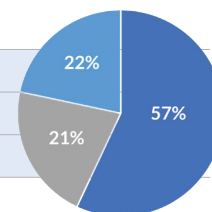
Program Services:			
Wish Granting	4,537,595	—	4,537,595
Training and Development	311,825	—	311,825
Public Information	330,518	—	330,518
Total Program Services	5,179,938	—	5,179,938
Support Services:			
Fundraising	1,941,226	—	1,941,226
Management and General	1,969,090	—	1,969,090
Total Support Services	3,910,316	—	3,910,316
Total Expenses	9,090,254	—	9,090,254

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	3,472,287	(1,659,009)	1,813,278
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Net Assets - Beginning of Year	7,727,004	10,896,517	18,623,521
Net Assets - End of Year	\$ 11,199,291	\$ 9,237,508	\$ 20,436,799

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 5,179,938	(57%)	●
Fundraising	1,941,226	(21%)	●
Management and General	\$ 1,969,090	(22%)	●



NOTE: In Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 our mission was significantly impacted with the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for and execution of wishes declined as families and medical partners managed through the challenges. Our program expense ratio has dropped far below our historical levels. We expect a return to more normal in our next fiscal year as more possibilities for granting wishes are opening. Children are waiting for the wishes, we will be granting them as fast and as safely as possible.



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Vice President, Metro Mission Delivery

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Gina Florescu
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