



Make-A-Wish®  
NEW JERSEY

# Hope *Matters*

..... 2022 NEWSLETTER .....



# President's Message

**Thomas P. Weatherall**  
President &  
Chief Executive Officer

pre-pandemic wishes. So instead of that international destination, wish kids asked for a camper, an environment their family could control while still being able to travel among the states. Instead of that trip to a warm island, they asked for a backyard pool; instead of that photo safari, a puppy; or special music and recording equipment; a room makeover, and still several hundred other wishes we were able to grant during this most difficult time, arguably the most difficult in our almost 40 years of wish granting in the Garden State. So despite these seemingly overwhelming obstacles, we persevered. How could we not; was there any alternative? Our mission - and the kids and families we serve - inspire our every decision, action and goal setting...daily.

In addition to keeping our commitment to grant every eligible New Jersey child's wish during this time, we also received more affirmation, support and acknowledgements of our work from market research and charity watchdog groups, who studied the HOW we go about making it all happen and how it comes together. We're thrilled to share that Make-A-Wish has been recognized as the #1 Most Trusted Nonprofit Operating Locally Across 50 States! We are proud to uphold this mark of quality and excellence, based on 2022 Morning Consult data. Thank you to our valuable supporters who have positioned Make-A-Wish to be the nation's leading

children's wish granting organization, operating in every community in the United States.

Furthermore, we know that donor trust is essential to achieving our mission of granting wishes to children with critical illnesses, and it's vitally important that our supporters know how their gift is spent. Our four-star Charity Navigator rating is just one way we demonstrate our strong governance approach and place the highest priority in our board and staff's fiduciary responsibilities to our supporters!

I hope we continue to earn your trust, confidence, and ultimately your continued financial support. We simply cannot do this without you. We receive no government support, nor do we charge our families any fees. Rather, we rely 100% on the benevolence of the New Jersey community. And how grateful we are that you have continued to make us one of the leading chapters within all of Make-A-Wish, year in and year out.

Here's wishing you and your family a wonderful holiday season, and better days ahead in '23! On that last note, stay tuned for big news and plans we have for the coming year!!

*Best Wishes,*

**Tom Weatherall**  
President & CEO  
Make-A-Wish New Jersey

Dear Friends,

We're all familiar with the expression, "May you live in interesting times." I've recalled this saying during various stages of my life, just as I'm sure you have, as well. But in these last few years, 2020 through to today, like never before has that expression carried so much weight.

These have been extraordinarily challenging times, in every aspect of our society, and certainly in the nonprofit space. Here at Make-A-Wish, our operations also weren't spared the extreme challenges during the pandemic era, be it in wish granting, or fundraising. We carefully listened, learned and pivoted where we could, and the result was we never ceased granting wishes...they simply took on a different look than



## OUR MISSION:

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



Photos Courtesy of The New York Football Giants



# Sam Wins At NFL Draft

## SAM'S LIFE-CHANGING WISH TAKES HIM FROM THE STANDS TO THE CENTER OF THE ACTION

It was a wish that was a lifetime in the making, when four globally recognized entities banded together with Make-A-Wish to change the life of a young man named Sam Prince.

**Those entities?** The New York Football Giants, Eli Manning, the NFL and ESPN.

**The wish?** To announce the 1st-round draft pick for the Giants in Las Vegas at the NFL Draft.

**The impact?** Immeasurable.

Sam, now 19 years old and having faced a lifetime of medical challenges, including a heart transplant, has been a fan of the Giants for as long as he can remember. From going to games to throwing draft parties himself, to even hosting his own podcast, Sam is a fan in the truest sense of the word.

When Sam was asked that powerful question that brings the mission of Make-A-Wish to life – *“if you could have one wish, what would it be?”* – Sam didn’t hesitate.

He wished to make the first round draft pick on national television for Big Blue.

As plans for the 2022 Draft went underway, Sam’s moment was at the front of the minds of dedicated partners at the Giants organization and the NFL, as well as ESPN, a longtime partner of Make-A-Wish with the “My Wish” series. They joined together immediately to help create and capture an experience for Sam he couldn’t have possibly imagined.

Sam’s wish began with a trip to the stadium under the guise of a ticketing issue, only to be surprised with a VIP tour by his favorite Giant and hero, Eli Manning. After a day filled with one surprise visit after another, including time with co-owner, President & CEO John Mara, Sam was then taken into General Manager Joe Schoen’s office with Head Coach Brian Daboll, to find out that he was headed for Vegas to represent his hometown team at the NFL Draft.

While backstage in Las Vegas before the draft, Sam met NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. Just before heading on stage, he was given the name to read on behalf of the New York Giants – Kayvon Thibodeaux - the very player he’d told Mr. Mara he would pick if it were up to him.

Sam’s moment on stage reached billions worldwide. Eli Manning even took to social media with recognition of Sam’s infectious energy, sharing that “My boy, Sam, won the draft last night.”

Sam’s wish represents the ripple effect that a wish can have on an entire community – from towns to cities, to states, to an entire nation. These four leaders in the professional sports world came together under one belief - wishes restore hope, and that hope is essential in the fight against a critical illness.

# Jules' Dino-mite Wish Comes True



## I wish to meet dinosaurs

Jules, 5

Langerhans cell histiocytosis

When Jules was just seventeen months old, he was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer, known as Langerhans cell histiocytosis.

For over two years, in a fight for his life, he went through multiple treatments. Despite his medical challenges, Jules has always been a happy child, and the light of the world to his entire family.

Jules always had a fascination with dinosaurs, for as long as he could remember. While he favors Tyrannosaurus Rex and Stegosaurus, Jules is a true dinosaur fanatic, eager to learn everything he can about the creatures that roamed our Earth once upon a time.

When Make-A-Wish came into Jules' life, there was no doubt what his one true wish would be – *to meet dinosaurs!*

Jules got the surprise of a lifetime when he went on a North Jersey scavenger hunt, beginning at his home and traveling by limousine in response to the clues he was given to The Learning Experience in Hoboken, New Jersey, great partners of Make-A-Wish.

After exploring the facility and, through a mini dino dig discovering yet another clue, Jules' family hopped back in their VIP transport and off they went to Jersey City's Liberty Science Center, where Jules was in store for a night of private access to the entire museum.

After a grand welcoming ceremony filled with cheering fans from the Liberty Science Center, The Learning Experience and Make-A-Wish, the adventures continued. Jules and his brother Caswell explored the entire facility, completely closed for just their family all night,

including digging for fossils, holding a variety of exotic animals and learning all about different species from past and present.

His prehistoric fun culminated with the highlight of the night, when Jules came face-to-face with an exact replica of a dinosaur named SUE – a dinosaur Jules had done much research on – the largest and most complete tyrannosaurus skeleton ever found! SUE even joined Jules and his family as they dined like celebrities for a dinner featuring Jules' favorite dishes.

Jules' wish came as a welcome respite and opportunity to turn the page from the realities that come with a critical and life-threatening illness. It is now a memory that will live forever in the hearts of his entire family, especially as they celebrate the future scientist that has finally been declared cancer free.





# Knighthen Says “Aloha” to Paradise



## I wish to go to Hawaii

**Knighthen, 10**

rare vascular tumor

Just a few days after Knighthen was born, his parents noticed black and blue marks that looked like bruising on his left leg. After extensive testing, at just three and a half months old, Knighthen was diagnosed with kaposiform hemangioendothelioma, a rare vascular tumor.

*“In the midst of his chemotherapy, there was a shining bright light of a nurse whom I will never forget. She suggested we contact Make-A-Wish. She shared in our excitement and tears through a year of chemotherapy and then celebrated with us when we were informed that Knighthen’s wish would be granted. What did he wish for? A trip to Hawaii. We spent an incredible week in Oahu, together, the first time since Knighthen was born that just the four of us had a vacation together without any worries or cares in the world. Make-A-Wish pulled out all the stops, everything was perfect and the smiles didn’t leave our faces for the whole week.*

*The thing about having a sick child is that everything stops when he needs us. His younger brother has had to do and see things other young children never have. And Knighthen, our Knighthen, he is the bravest person I know. He has endured so much at such a young age – more than some will ever endure in their lifetime.*

*Make-A-Wish changed our story. They took years of bad and ended them through something good. They gave us something to look forward to, they gave us reprieve. He smiled every single minute of that trip and got to experience once in a lifetime things. Waterslides, shave ice, swimming with dolphins, snorkeling with gorgeous wildlife off the side of a catamaran. And SO. MUCH. JOY. And peace.*

*We will never forget any of this. The good, the bad, the joy and the pain – it’s all there in our story. It’s all just as important to me as the rest. We are beyond grateful to Make-A-Wish for everything they have done for our family. You change lives for the better. You will always be a part of our story – one of the best parts – forever.”*

- Kristen, Knighthen’s Mom





# In Valor, There is Hope



I wish to be a police officer

**Samaree, 6**  
sickle-cell disease

**Dalton, 6**  
seizure disorder

I wish to be a firefighter

**Antonio, 9**  
end-stage renal disease



First responders have always held a significant place in Make-A-Wish history. Its founding was inspired by a seven-year-old boy in Phoenix, Arizona named Chris Greicius, who was battling leukemia. Chris always wanted to be a police officer, and members of law enforcement gathered to create a life-changing day for him, a day that inspired those involved to create what would become known as Make-A-Wish. Soon after, the first official wish granted was for another seven-year-old boy named Frank “Bopsy” Salazar, also battling leukemia, who wished to be a firefighter.

Over this past year, right here in New Jersey, we were brought back to those humble beginnings.

Last August, two young children who had never met, Samaree and Dalton, shared the same noble wish - *to be police officers*. Samaree, battling sickle-cell disease, wanted to wear a uniform and “save somebody.” Dalton, facing a seizure disorder, wanted to “catch bad guys.”

The boys’ wishes were granted in partnership with the New Jersey State Police, with a police motorcade, visits with their local hometown police departments and trainings at the New Jersey State Police Headquarters. Then, in front of over 100 law enforcement officers representing over 50 departments

from local, county, state and federal agencies, the culmination of the day's activities took place at the Samuel & Josephine Plumeri Wishing Place, home of Make-A-Wish New Jersey, where they were sworn in by New Jersey State Police Colonel Patrick Callahan, with Make-A-Wish New Jersey President & CEO Tom Weatherall, Chairman & CEO of Amicus Therapeutics, former Board Chair of Make-A-Wish America and Wish Dad John Crowley, and wish alum Megan Crowley on stage as well for the momentous occasion.

New Jersey State Police coordinated a helicopter flyover above the castle and a presentation of patches from every law enforcement department in attendance. The historic day included a Pipes & Drums procession, and a motor vehicle arrest by Samaree and Dalton when they learned that the wishing crystal had been stolen from the castle.

Fast forward one year, to when nine-year-old Antonio, who courageously faced end stage renal disease and received a kidney transplant from his father, was granted his one true wish – to be a firefighter. Antonio's wish came true, thanks to the generosity and dedication of his hometown of Passaic along with firefighting communities from across the state and beyond.

After a morning filled with special firefighting activities including putting out a real fire with Passaic Fire Department and a special ceremony with the Mayor, Antonio was escorted via a motorcade with his family to the Wishing Place in Monroe Township.

Antonio was elated to step out of the Fire Chief's vehicle and walk down a receiving line with over 100 firefighters, in uniform, standing side by side to welcome him. Antonio stepped onto the stage, joining Make-A-Wish New Jersey President & CEO Tom Weatherall, Passaic Fire Department Chief Patrick Trentacost, and Monroe Township Fire Department Captain Jim Grande for a swearing-in ceremony and the fulfilling of his wish in front of his new firefighting family.

Antonio's heroism was immediately called upon, when he was needed to help save the day and rescue a princess from the balcony of the castle. Antonio boarded the ladder truck without delay, rose into the sky and made his very first rescue as an official firefighter. Upon their return to the ground, Antonio was greeted with cheers, recognizing his courage, bravery, and selfless dedication to answer a call for help.

Samaree, Dalton and Antonio's wishes are a reminder that children look up to their heroes, and we stand on the shoulders of our founding members, our heroes, who inspire us daily to bring hope, strength and joy into the lives of children with critical illnesses – over 500,000 deserving children around the globe since those first days of Make-A-Wish over 40 years ago.





# Elisha Goes Glam And Regains Her Self-Confidence

## I wish to be a model

Elisha, 18  
cancer



Elisha walked into the room and immediately paused. She looked around the space to take it all in. It was all there! Bright lights, cameras, a new wardrobe and her own private team of people from Jack Studios in Manhattan, including a stylist and a make-up artist.

The day was finally here. Her wish day!

Elisha's wish - *to experience what it would be like to be a model in New York City* - was under way, and she was taking her first steps into the fashion industry with an exclusive photo shoot designed just for her.

After the devastating news of a cancer diagnosis, Elisha's wish would come at a time when she needed it most. Following a long and arduous journey that would include a multitude of

medical protocols, Elisha's wish would serve as the beginning of a new chapter in her life, and a chance to focus on her future.

Elisha's unforgettable day came together with the help and support of the world renowned brands under the G-III Apparel Group of DKNY and Starter, along with former New York Giants linebacker Carl Banks. She and her friends were pampered with hair and makeup by celebrity makeup artist Frank Guyton, styled by wardrobe stylist Amanda Kraemer, and photographed by fashion photographer Greg Sorensen.

*"My experience with Make-A-Wish was something out of a fairy tale. All my life I have always known that I wanted to be a "star" and with my wish being granted I got a glimpse of what my future could be. I truly felt in my element during the photo shoot. It impacted me in ways I didn't know it could. It boosted my confidence and made me realize life is filled with so many opportunities. I couldn't be more grateful to Make-A-Wish for making my wish come true. Thank you for all you have done for me."* - Elisha





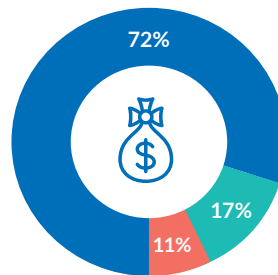


*I wish to have  
a Sweet 16*

Jessie, 17  
cancer

## You make *life-changing moments happen*

Make-A-Wish New Jersey relies on the support of generous donors like you to create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.



**HOW YOUR GIFT IS SPENT**  
*Five Year Average (FY17- FY21)*

- 72%** Wish Granting
- 17%** Fundraising
- 11%** Administration

### BECOME PART OF OUR LEGACY OF WISHES SOCIETY



Our Legacy of Wishes<sup>SM</sup> Society is comprised of generous individuals who have shared their inclusion of Make-A-Wish New Jersey as a beneficiary in their Will or other estate planning. This forward-thinking generosity is critical to our ability to confidently ask that one life-changing question to every eligible child—**“If you could have one wish, what would it be?”** Deferred giving delivers requisite certainty as we grant the wishes of an ever-increasing number of children in our state each year.

Legacy Society members represent the hope of deserving wish kids today, tomorrow, and in the years to come. We thank you for your belief in the power of a wish and hope you will consider membership in this distinguished group. For assistance, please contact a member of our Development Team at [development@nj.wish.org](mailto:development@nj.wish.org) or **609.371.9474**.

# Supporting Make-A-Wish

## ADOPT-A-WISH



By fully or partially funding a wish, the Adopt-A-Wish® program provides a unique opportunity to make a direct and substantial impact on the life of a wish child, their family and entire communities. Visit [nj.wish.org/aaw](http://nj.wish.org/aaw) for more information.

## GIVE THE GIFT OF A WISH



This holiday season, honor someone special with a donation in their name. Your gift will be a lasting tribute to your loved ones and make a difference in the lives of the children we serve. Make your gift at [nj.wish.org/donate](http://nj.wish.org/donate).

## STOCKS & SECURITIES



Give the gift of a wish by donating stock or securities. A gift of stock to Make-A-Wish New Jersey can benefit you in two ways: you may receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value, and at the same time you may avoid capital gains taxes on appreciated stock. Call **609.371.9474** for more information.

## DOUBLE YOUR DONATIONS

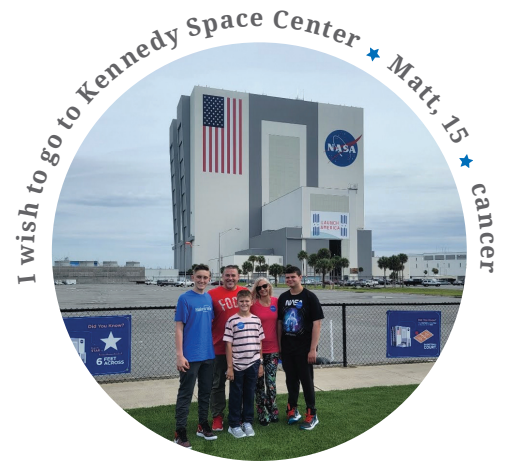


Many companies encourage employees to donate to their favorite charities by matching their contributions. That means the impact of your gift may be doubled or possibly tripled! Visit [nj.wish.org/matching](http://nj.wish.org/matching) for more information.

## AMAZONSMILE



AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support Make-A-Wish New Jersey every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases. Make Make-A-Wish New Jersey your charity of choice at [nj.wish.org/amazonsmile](http://nj.wish.org/amazonsmile).



## WHEELS FOR WISHES



Your unwanted vehicle can help make wishes come true! To learn more, visit [newjersey.wheelsforwishes.org](http://newjersey.wheelsforwishes.org).

## WISHES IN FLIGHT



Help wish kids take flight by donating your unused air miles today. For more information, visit [nj.wish.org/miles](http://nj.wish.org/miles).

## MORE WAYS TO GIVE



For more information, contact our Development Team at **609.371.9474** or [development@nj.wish.org](mailto:development@nj.wish.org).



## PUT YOUR DONOR-ADVISED DOLLARS TO WORK



Donor-advised funds (DAFs) have become popular vehicles for charitable giving because they can provide tax benefits and centralize philanthropic giving. You can help grant wishes for children with critical illnesses today and in the future through a DAF grant recommendation. Simply contact your financial institution or community foundation to recommend a grant to Make-A-Wish New Jersey.

# Make-A-Wish

# FAMILIES FOR WISHES



## YOUR FAMILY CAN HELP MAKE A CHILD'S WISH COME TRUE

Your family can restore hope when it is needed most in the lives of wish families across New Jersey. Make a one-time donation or start your own online fundraising page on our **Families for Wishes** page by scanning the QR code. Together, we can transform lives, one wish at a time.

# Meet Our Medical Advisory Board

We have an ambitious vision – to grant the wish of every eligible child in New Jersey. We believe that wishes change the odds for children fighting critical illnesses.

Wishes have the ability to:

- Help kids look past their medical conditions
- Decrease families' anxiety
- Bring entire communities together

We cannot do what we do without the dedication and willingness of our wonderful Medical Advisors.



The Unterberg Children's Hospital  
 Monmouth Medical Center | RWJBarnabas HEALTH

## DR. CHRISTOPHER J. FESTA

Attending Pediatric Intensivist  
 Unterberg Children's Hospital  
 Monmouth Medical Center



Newark Beth Israel | RWJBarnabas Medical Center HEALTH

## DR. HARINI RAO

Attending Physician, Pediatrics  
 Hematology/Oncology  
 Newark Beth Israel Medical Center



Hackensack Meridian Health

## DR. BURTON APPEL

Senior Attending Physician, Pediatrics  
 Hackensack University Medical Center  
 Attending Physician, Pediatrics  
 Jersey Shore University Medical Center

## ★ How We Make Wishes Come True

Each of the four steps to granting a wish builds on the next to create unforgettable experiences for wish kids and their families.



### STEP 1 The Referral

We rely on medical professionals, parents, family members and children themselves for referrals. Children who have been diagnosed with a qualifying critical illness, and are between the ages of 2 1/2 and 18 at the time of the referral, may be eligible for a wish.



### STEP 2 Medical Eligibility

The child's treating physician plays an integral role in determining the child's medical eligibility. Visit [md.wish.org](http://md.wish.org) to learn what critical illnesses may qualify for a wish.



### STEP 3 The Wish

Our dedicated staff and volunteers meet with the child and their family to learn the child's one true wish. They connect with our wish kids, awaken their imaginations and help them envision the seemingly impossible.



### STEP 4 Creating Joy

Our staff and volunteer wish granters create an unforgettable experience driven by the child's creativity. They strive to personalize each wish and create life-long memories for not only the wish child, but the entire family.

★ Thank you to all our medical partners and referral sources who help us reach more eligible children every year! Visit [nj.wish.org/refer](http://nj.wish.org/refer) to learn more about eligibility or to refer a child today.



**Make-A-Wish® New Jersey**

Samuel & Josephine Plumeri Wishing Place  
1384 Perrineville Road  
Monroe Township, NJ 08831

800-252-WISH (9474)

609-371-WISH (9474)

FAX: 609-371-8919

[nj.wish.org](http://nj.wish.org)

[jersey@nj.wish.org](mailto:jersey@nj.wish.org)



## THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 PARTNERS

Our chapter is proud to partner with companies on both the national and state level through innovative and customized sponsorship programs to help us continue to work toward our goal of granting the wish of every eligible child in New Jersey.

