

Growing to Achieve Our Vision – to grant the wish of every eligible child.

OUR YEAR IN WISHESSEPTEMBER 2022 - AUGUST 2023



Together, we granted 430 life-changing v





Because of

YOU, we surpassed our goal by 50 wishes!





vishes for children with critical illnesses.



But we're not done!

"RECORDS ARE MADE TO BE

Broken"



Kathy JettonPresident and Chief Executive Officer

Right now, that has never been more true than at Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina.

This is what growth looks like: During our founding year, 1985, our chapter granted a total of 12 wishes. Fast-forward 38 years, and I am beyond proud to share that we granted a record-breaking 430 wishes — shattering our previous record of 389 wishes in 2019.

Because of your support, Make-A-Wish® Central and Western North Carolina is breaking records and spreading joy like never before. In 2023, 430 local children with critical illnesses experienced their wishes coming true. 258 wish kids within our community were able to go on their dream vacation. 146 critically-ill children were gifted the items their hearts truly desired. 22 local wish kids met the heroes they look up to. And 4 of our wish kids even got 'to be' what they truly wanted to be, whether it was a marine biologist or helicopter pilot. Every wish granted is a testament to the hope that is found within our community.

But we're not done yet.

While we celebrate this landmark achievement in our chapter's history, we also recognize that our work isn't done. Not until every eligible child in Central and Western North Carolina is granted the transformational power of a wish. Our chapter is fully committed to bringing hope, strength, and joy to the wish families we serve.

A wish forever transforms the lives of not only our wish kids, but their families and entire communities — and **you** can help create the hope that wish kids need in their treatment and recovery by joining our lifechanging mission.

Thank you for supporting us along our journey; we hope we can count on you to help us break even more records when it comes to helping create joy for critically-ill children in Central and Western North Carolina. Here's to spreading more joy in 2024 and beyond!

Kathy

From the Board Chair

What a year! Our chapter broke our wish granting record in 2023, but most importantly, we delivered joy to 430 wish kids in our community.

This milestone is the result of the collective efforts of our hard-working staff, the leadership of our Board, our dedicated volunteers and — most importantly loyal supporters like you.



Terri Zandhuis **Board Chair**

While we couldn't be prouder of the success we've had in 2023, we remain focused on continuing to grant wishes, change lives, and bring hope to as many wish children and families as possible. But we cannot do it alone — Wishes aren't possible without your support.

Thank you for playing such an integral role in our chapter's groundbreaking year. When it comes to breaking records, our work has just begun; it is our hope that the best is yet to come!



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MEET WISH KID JEREMIAH: MESSENGER OF

Hope

hile most 18-year-olds when asked, 'What is your dream wish?' might respond with the idea of an exotic vacation, a lavish shopping spree — a new gaming system, perhaps — wish kid Jeremiah is not your typical 18-year-old. Hailing from Huntersville, NC, this incredibly ambitious and highly-intelligent wish kid enjoys playing basketball and all things anime — that is, when he's not working. That's right: At the tender age of 18-years-old, Jeremiah currently juggles his studies and various hobbies with performing such work as developing websites, advising clients on marketing strategy, and developing SEO strategies on behalf of brands as a self-professed Digital Marketing Expert. The most awe-inspiring part? Jeremiah juggles all of this while also suffering from cystic fibrosis (CF). However, Jeremiah's medical diagnosis is clearly no match when it comes to his ambitions.

Jeremiah is an extremely unique and impressive individual, so it's no surprise that his wish was just that: Unique and impressive. His wish? To meet Robert F. Smith, one of the wealthiest African-American billionaires in the United States, who also happens to serve as the current Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners. As Jeremiah relayed to us before granting his wish, he chose to meet Mr. Smith — over every other long-held dream and desire of his — because Mr. Smith inspired him. "I chose to meet Robert F. Smith because I just saw his interviews and his podcasts and looked at him, and I thought, 'Well, I can truly learn something from him that can actually make well — what some would call a short life really worthwhile"."

SCAN or click QR code to see Jeremiah's's surprise wish reveal.

As a budding entrepreneur, Jeremiah, too, dreams of becoming one of the most successful businessmen in America. And what better way to do that than by learning, first-hand, from one of the best? So, Jeremiah's wish was officially granted: He and his family were heading to New York City to meet Jeremiah's role model, Robert F. Smith. But, first, Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina — with the help of Belk and Maggiano's Little Italy — had a few surprises in store for Jeremiah ahead of his wish trip. After all, when you're meeting one of the most successful entrepreneurs in America, it's important that you do so in style. In a surprise gathering held at Maggiano's Little Italy at Southpark Mall, Jeremiah's family, friends, and loved ones — along with Make-A-Wish staff and volunteers all came together to reveal to Jeremiah that his wish was being granted. In fact, he was leaving for New York City next week! Belk Southpark joined in on the fun, gifting Jeremiah a new suit and dress shoes for his upcoming meeting with Mr. Smith, along with a travel outfit and several other goodies.

Now officially dressed for the part, and armed with a new wardrobe and an added spring in his step, it was time for Jeremiah's wish to come true. He was off to the Big Apple to experience a dream day with Mr. Robert F. Smith, with his family in tow. The day began with Jeremiah 'shadowing' Mr. Smith in his New York City office headquarters, even accompanying Mr. Smith to a Board meeting, before spending some quality time with his mentor over lunch and in a private, one-on-one meeting. Jeremiah's dreams and aspirations were further solidified after experiencing a day in the life of a highly-successful entrepreneur. And, apparently, Jeremiah's wish inspired Mr. Smith, too, with the business tycoon publicly sharing that he was "honored" to meet Jeremiah and that "it was truly [his] privilege to be a part of granting [Jeremiah's] wish."

During his wish trip, Jeremiah took in the sights and sounds of New York City with his parents, siblings and extended family — in turn — making long-lasting memories that they will cherish forever. You see, Jeremiah is not the only wish kid in his family; in fact, two of Jeremiah's siblings are fellow wish kids who also have critical illnesses, and both had their wishes granted by Make-A-Wish in the past. So, it was extra-special for Jeremiah's family and siblings to share in the magic and joy that is a wish being granted.

Reflecting on Jeremiah's wish, wish mom Kim told The Charlotte Post: "I want to thank Make-A-Wish, and I





Jeremiah Jacobs of Huntersville (second from right) and his family met financier Robert Smith through the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

"I chose to meet Robert F. Smith because I just saw his interviews and his podcasts and looked at him, and I thought, 'Well, I can truly learn something from him that can actually make — well — what some would call a short life really worthwhile'."

Jeremiah Jacobs

definitely want to thank Robert F. Smith, and anyone associated with Make-A-Wish who made this possible for my children because of all of them have had a wish come true." She continued: "I'm just grateful as a mother to be able to birth these wonderful children. I consider them messengers of hope."

We couldn't agree more. Jeremiah, his siblings, and **all** of our wish kids are just that: Messengers of hope.

Wish kid Jeremiah personifies that perfectly. So, what are Jeremiah's dreams for the future now that his wish has been granted and he's met his role model? Unsurprisingly, it will inspire you: "I hope that my mark on this world can be something that goes way beyond me and can affect everyone that has CF," he recently shared. "Everyone that is African-American, everyone that is even Caucasian, or anything, not just minorities. I want everyone to be able to have a better life based off my life. No matter how long or short it is." *

LIFE-CHANGING

Wishes



"The anticipation leading up to the game motivated me to get out of my wheelchair and work on walking with assistance. The ability to walk helped me get back on my high school campus and attend classes. I was so encouraged by my progress, I applied to UNC-Charlotte and am proud to report that I have been accepted."

Adin, wish kid

Enjoy a glimpse of some of the recent wishes we granted thanks to your generous support!

MEET WISH KID ADIN

Meet wish kid Adin, a 19-year-old boy from Charlotte who loves watching sports, listening to music, and all things computers. Before a needed brain surgery resulted in the loss of his walking motor skills, Adin could be found helping around the house with yard work and washing the family cars. He also had plans to attend college in California, having already been accepted. A formerly independent teen was now totally dependent on others.

A passionate Pittsburg Steelers fan, Adin's wish was to go to the Super Bowl. In a moving act of selflessness, our chapter was able to grant Adin's wish because of fellow wish kid TJ, who has congenital heart disease. TJ's wish? To "wish it forward" and help grant a fellow wish kid's wish. Thanks to TJ's special request and with the help of corporate sponsor, Truist, and NFL great (and wish dad), Greg Olsen, both wish kids would see their wishes come true. They all participated in an epic surprise wish reveal for Adin, chock full of powerful moments.

Adin and his parents flew to Arizona to see Super Bowl LVII, the Kansas City Chiefs vs. the Philadelphia Eagles, live and in-person. The entire wish trip, filled with many once-in-a-lifetime activities built-in, was an unforgettable experience for the entire family, but the real magic was happening inside Adin. The wish experience inspired Adin to work hard and gain enough strength to get out of his wheelchair and to begin walking with assistance by the time his trip rolled around. TJ's wish did more than just provide an unforgettable experience for another child. "The anticipation leading up to the game motivated me to get out of my wheelchair and work on walking with assistance. The ability to walk helped me get back on my high school campus and attend classes," said Adin. "I was so encouraged by my progress, I applied to UNC-Charlotte and am proud to report that I have been accepted."



SCAN or click QR code to see Adin's surprise wish reveal.

MEET WISH KID CAMERON

Wish kid Cameron is a creative, fun-loving 9-year-old from Charlotte, who — when he's not playing the drums or painting — loves to climb trees and catch salamanders in the creek in his backyard. He is also obsessed with all things "Home Alone," "Home Alone 2" and actor Macaulay Culkin.

Cameron has a brain tumor and, when asked what his wish was, he responded with an answer that many of us can appreciate: "I wish to go to New York City." His mission: To re-create the movie "Home Alone 2" with his family (minus the robbers)!

Cameron and his family experienced a fun-filled adventure in New York (Kevin McCallister style), as their trip included staying at The Plaza Hotel, ordering an ice cream sundae bar via room service, taking a limo trip around the city (with a cheese pizza included, of course), perusing the American Museum of Natural History, strolling around Central Park, and visiting Top of the Rock NYC, the observation deck at 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

Suffice to say, Cameron and his family had a blast in the Big Apple, as their experience was a welcome reprieve from constant doctor's appointments and medical treatments. The memories made will last a lifetime, and we know that this was an experience that Cameron will never forget!





SCAN or click QR code to learn more about Cameron's wish.

"Best gift ever. And TODAY is the 1 year anniversary of coming home from St. Jude."

- Clary, wish parent

MEET WISH KID CALIANA

Meet wish kid Caliana: A bright, bubbly 7-year-old from Thomasville with epilepsy. She loves McDonalds, board games, swimming, scootering, and JoJo Siwa, but — above all — Caliana loves gymnastics!

Despite being diagnosed with epilepsy when she was just four months old, Caliana has never let that stop her from doing what she loves, including gymnastics. Wish mom Maria even says, "She's been doing gymnastics by herself at home, by watching YouTube videos, for three or four years now."

So, Caliana knew exactly what to wish for - A membership to a gymnastics facility! Now, she will not only be able to learn more skills and meet new friends, but her head will be protected by the mats, while also being under instructors' thoughtful supervision. This will help prevent her from experiencing another seizure.

"Caliana was full of joy over her wish! For me as a mother, this is something parents look forward to with their children. The classes, the practices, I even look forward to the competitions later!"



SCAN or click QR code to learn more about Caliana's amazing gymnas ics skills (and wish!) in a WFMY News 2 feature. - Maria, wish parent

"Powerfulness" of a wish

Meet wish kid Katlin, a college student from Lewisville, NC, whose wish to go to Hawaii was granted by our chapter in March 2023. Since then, Katlin continues to be involved with Make-A-Wish (MAW) as a wish alum, featured speaker, and dedicated volunteer. We enjoyed the opportunity to learn about all things Katlin and her incredible drive to move forward and share the power of a wish with others.

Q&A WITH WISH ALUM KATLIN

Thanks for chatting with us, Katlin! You had a wish granted and you currently volunteer with Make-A-Wish — So, which came first?

My wish being granted. I was approved for my wish the day before my 18th birthday. My wish was to go to Hawaii, and it was granted when I was 19. I went in March, two weeks after knee surgery. I was in a wheelchair and on crutches, but I made the best of the trip and had a great time.

Could you please share your medical journey with us, which led to your being eligible for a wish?

I was 13-years-old when I found out I had a medical condition after I woke up with swollen ankles. I came home from school, and my knees were swollen so much that, I couldn't even walk. I was eventually diagnosed with Stage 3 kidney failure and put on medicine right away. I couldn't go to school for a while, underwent chemo, lost my hair, and gained 50 pounds from the treatment — All while attending middle school and doing school work. After years of treatment — the first 4 years constantly spent in and out of hospitals — I am proud to say that I completed my course work and graduated with my class on time!

Wow, that's incredible! Did this motivation lead you to begin volunteering with Make-A-Wish?

I like to help out in the community. I really like to

volunteer — It's kind of my thing. My senior year, I volunteered 200 total hours and even earned a scholarship for volunteering! Because why not pay it back to the community in ways I can? I've done many things — Picked up trash, fostered dogs and cats... I've been volunteering my whole life. I even volunteered when I was sick and staying in the hospital.

Besides serving as a MAW volunteer and a wish kid alum, you also lend your support to Make-A-Wish in several other ways. What else do you do for MAW?

Currently, I am a Wish Granter, so I get to help grant wishes. I do a lot of different things to help with wishes — for example, I just helped with a room makeover. I also serve as a Wish Ambassador. Recently, I was a keynote speaker at a golf tournament benefiting our Make-A-Wish chapter. Thankfully, I'm not a shy person!

How does helping grant wishes for other kids with critical illnesses impact you personally?

It makes me feel great. Because I know how I felt - I was excited to dream, plan and experience a wish. I really like to see the joy on children's faces when I deliver wish boosters. I get to see how excited they're getting for what is to come.

We know that your wish journey is far from over. Do you still feel the power of a wish today?

Yes, I was already healthy by the time I went on my wish trip, except my knee problems from long-time steroid use. When my wish was first accepted, I was actually on dialysis. A week after finding out my wish was being



Would you recommend that other kids volunteer with MAW?

sunrises each day.

YES! For people to get to see and hear from a wish kid, to hear how impactful their wish was... they can see. You can share the "powerfulness" of a wish.

And helping with wish granting is great. I picked out and mailed a wish booster recently. The wish mom sent me a video of her little girl opening the gift, and it was precious. She was so super excited. The wish kid even said, "Thank you so much, Make-A-Wish lady!" ★



Physician Spotlight



Dr. Bolen at the completion of the 28.3 mile Trailblaze Challenge

Q&A WITH DR. CHRISTINE BOLEN

How long have you been involved with Make-A-Wish (MAW)? Can you share a little bit about your history?

My first exposure to Make-A-Wish was during medical school. I was involved in a volunteer group that helped fundraise for MAW and spread awareness. I was touched by the unique wishes that were chosen and the sincere dedication of the MAW team to make it happen.

You embarked on the Trailblaze Challenge, hiking 28.3 miles in one day for wish kids — What motivated you to take the Challenge?

The Trailblaze Challenge was a phenomenal experience. The children I care for are challenged on so many levels every single day. Committing to training for and completing the 28.3 miles served as a personal challenge. This time of solitude in nature ultimately was a gift, allowing for meditation and reflection. I recounted memories of courageous children who had lost their lives. On one particularly long and hot hike, I had not seen anyone for hours and then — suddenly — I ran into a mother of one of my young patients who had died 14 years ago. We hugged and cried a few tears before moving on — It was a true moment of affirmation of why I was on that trail.

As a doctor working with children with cancer, what do you think your patients need in addition to medical treatment?

Providing medical treatment is only part of patient care. There is an art to healing, and it involves the mind, body and soul. The emotional well-being of the child and family is a critical component of care.

How does having a critically-ill child impact the family? Does a wish impact the family, as well as the child?

Families are often dividing and conquering to get through the day. For many families, finding time away from illness and together as a family is difficult to achieve. Wish opportunities create a much-needed pause from medicine and unite families to experience joy. Wishes ignite hope and rekindle the soul, which transforms into improved medical well-being. When these children recount their wish experiences, their faces light up and the smiles become contagious.

Why is a wish important for a child facing a lifethreatening illness?

Make A-Wish provides this incredible light of hope that is needed during times of great adversity. A wish experience is empowering — It fuels the child with strength and courage to keep moving forward in their battle. The healing power of a wish is surreal.

How has being involved with Make-A-Wish influenced you?

My involvement with MAW has helped me to better serve children beyond the doors of the hospital.

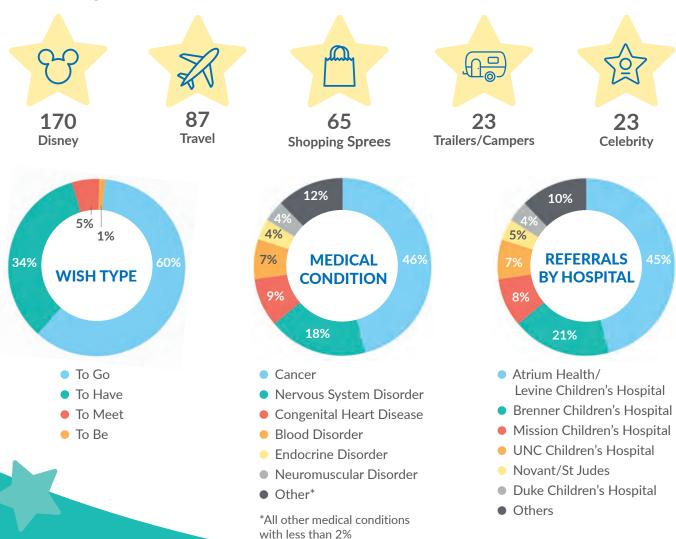
Our Make-A-Wish chapter served a record number of children this year. What do you think are important points for serving critically-ill children going forward?

Moving forward, we need to continue to create awareness and raise funds for wishes. No child should be left behind in fulfilling their wish. I am resolved to seeing that every eligible child experiences their truest wish. *

OUR Record-Breaking YEAR

YOU contributed more than ever before in the history of our organization! Thanks to you, we had our most successful fundraising year to date. This is a testament to the ongoing commitment each of you demonstrates to granting every eligible wish in Central and Western North Carolina. Your support enables us to be creative in fundraising efforts, engage across our chapter, and positions us for continued success in the years to come.

Most Popular Wishes Based on data from August 31, 2023







- Wish Program \$6,337,595 \$ 950,135 Fundraising Management & General \$ 767,879

*Revenue and expense estimates based on preliminary unaudited financials.

Wishes Granted by Region

Based on data from August 31, 2023 *number of wishes over FY22

Western Region 57 (+17*)

Charlotte Region

Triad Region 135 (+43*)

Wishes Granted by County

Based on data from August 31, 2023

Western Region

Buncombe	.11
Burke	4
Caldwell	5
Cherokee	2
Cleveland	1
Haywood	4
Henderson	5
Jackson	3
Macon	5
Madison	1
McDowell	4
Mitchell	1
Rutherford	5
Scotland	1
Swain	1
Transylvania	2
Watauga	1

Yancey.....**1**

Charlotte Region

_	
Alexander	2
Anson	2
Cabarrus	.31
Catawba	8
Cleveland	4
Gaston	.18
Iredell	.10
Lincoln	5
Mecklenburg1	L 07
Moore	2
Rowan	9
Stanly	
Surry	
Union	

Triad Region

Alamance	7
Ashe	3
Caswell	2
Chatham	1
Davidson	.10
Davie	4
Forsyth	.23
Guilford	.30
Hoke	3
Moore	.11
Randolph	.12

Richmond	4
Rockingham	9
Scotland	2
Surry	7
Wilkes	5
Yadkin	2

2022-2023

Events

Working with local sponsors on events is a wonderful opportunity for brands and companies to come together to impact local communities. Together, we can engage with the public and highlight how corporate support transforms lives.

\$1,800,000 raised. 240 wishes granted.

> I wish to meet Muggsy Bogues

Xander, 10

heart condition



Wish Ball is our annual signature 'blue tie' gala. The event brings donors, volunteers, and wish families together for an awe-inspiring evening of making wishes come true for children with critical illnesses in Central and Western North Carolina. Wish Ball guests can expect a memorable night featuring silent and live auctions, raffles, Fund-A-Wish opportunities, a sit-down dinner, drinks, and dancing. Of course, the evening wouldn't be complete without a few special wishes being shared,

too. For those who couldn't attend in-person, we shared the magic with our supporters at home via a live stream of our program. This year, we made chapter history by raising \$1.8 million for local wish families. The impact generated by our generous supporters guarantees that 240 critically-ill children will experience the healing power that a wish experience provides. We look forward to the 2024 event and hope to see you there! Learn more at ncwishball.org. *

TRAILBLAZE CHALLENGE \$534,374 raised. 71 wishes granted.



Over the course of two hike weekends, we had 170 total hikers complete 28.3 miles in ONE life changing day - raising \$534,374 for our Make-A-Wish chapter! These funds will assist in granting 71 wishes for local children with critical illnesses. The challenge in our Trailblaze Challenge is two-fold: physical and philanthropic. While hikers train to take on the full 28.3 miles, they are also tasked with raising vital funds to help us create life-changing experiences for critically-ill children in Central and Western North Carolina.

Ready to take on the Challenge? Visit trailblazechallenge.org for more information. *

KENTUCKY DERBY CLASSIC \$351,000 raised. 47 wishes granted.

The Kentucky Derby Classic is a memorable and inspiring afternoon that encompasses all things Derby, while raising much-needed funds to make lifechanging wishes possible! Our signature event in the Triad includes a live and silent auction, Sports Book style bidding on your favorite horse, inspiring stories from local wish families, wine & spirits pull, Best Hat and Attire prizes, and watching the Kentucky Derby live-streamed during the event. This year, we raised \$351,000 at Derby! That means that 47 wish kids who are currently waiting will be able to experience the power of a wish in the upcoming year. Learn more about the 2024 event by visiting kentuckyderbyclassic.org. ★





CHOOSE JOY! GOLF TOURNAMENT \$50,000 raised. 7 wishes granted.

In keeping a promise to former wish kid Brady, we held the inaugural Choose Joy! Golf Tournament in April to help grant wishes for local wish kids. Brady's favorite number was 13, so our goal for 2024 is to raise enough money to grant 13 wishes in his memory! You can honor Brady by supporting the 2nd Annual Choose Joy! Golf Tournament. Learn more at ChooseJoyGolf.org. *

2022-2023

Events



Every year on April 29th, we remember the wish that inspired the creation of Make-A-Wish. In 2023, our chapter celebrated in a big way, with an adventure-packed event at Carowinds, Make-A-Wish® Blue Milkshakes, and a live concert featuring Elon University acapella group, Vital Signs. A local supporter family even issued a gift challenge, offering to match up to \$15,000 in World Wish Day donations.

WORLD WISH DAY CELEBRATION AT CAROWINDS

Our 2023 World Wish Day event at Carowinds was a huge success, due in part to Capital Automotive Group being out there in full force. Not only did the Capital Auto team man the official Capital Auto Group table, giving away complimentary goodies to all attending wish families, but they also featured some of their very own cars and trucks on-site to promote Make-A-Wish inside Carowinds Amusement Park.





Our chapter raised over \$23,000 during our World Wish Day campaign in April to fund wishes for waiting wish kids in the coming year! Thank you to all who helped support local wish kids in waiting and helped celebrate the magic and hope of a wish.

BECOME A

Volunteer

Your time and talents are critical to bringing strength and hope to wish kids.

Make-A-Wish volunteers consider their work extremely impactful and meaningful. By helping us get closer to granting the wish of every eligible child in Central and Western North Carolina, our volunteers are at the heart of every wish experience. Volunteers even have the freedom to choose when and how they would like to transform lives in their communities.



WISH GRANTER

Wish Granters partner with a Make-A-Wish staff member to meet with the wish family and help determine a child's wish.



WISH BOOSTER

Wish Boosters help increase the anticipation and excitement of the wish for the wish kid and his or her family by creating meaningful experiences, such as countdown calenders, car parades, special gifts, signs, etc.



BILINGUAL VOLUNTEER

Bilingual volunteers help us ensure that we are reaching all qualifying families within our region and that we are able to grant as many wishes as possible.



SPECIAL EVENTS VOLUNTEER

Special Events Volunteers help with our signature events throughout the year. Event volunteers help day-of, help solicit auction items, and help increase event participation.



FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEER

Fundraising Volunteers help Make-A-Wish make lasting and meaningful connections with companies, individuals, foundations, and the community.



SKILL-BASED VOLUNTEER

Skill-Based Volunteers use their professional skills to help grant wishes. Skills include: photography, videography, landscaping, interior design, and more.

Scan to learn more about volunteering for Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina.



www.wish.org/nc/volunteer

INSPIRE HOPE, TRANSFORM LIVES.





Make-A-Wish (MAW) is better able to fulfill our mission with the help of multilingual and Spanish-speaking volunteers like Rebeca Thomas who, in 2014, attended a Make-A-Wish presentation at work. While listening to the MAW speaker share the need for volunteers, Rebeca immediately felt a calling that it was a good fit for her and something she wanted to do. She admired the Make-A-Wish mission, and it was the perfect opportunity for her to utilize her Spanish language skills. Her decision made, she promptly got involved with our chapter. Rebeca has been actively volunteering with Make-A-Wish ever since, serving primarily our Spanish-speaking families for nearly 10 years.

WISHES THAT CHANGE

Vidas (Lives)

Q&A WITH VOLUNTEER REBECA

What's compelled you to volunteer with Make-A-Wish for close to 10 years?

I keep volunteering with MAW because it is so rewarding and fulfilling — Seeing the smiles on the wish kids' faces, planning wishes, seeing how happy they all are. I'm really excited to work with the Hispanic community. They are so humble, and they appreciate all that we do so much. Sometimes, it's difficult if there is a language barrier and an absence of technology. It's not always easy, but the wish parents continuously express their deep gratitude. I'm touched by how humble and grateful the families are that I work with.

Can you share an especially memorable experience working with a Spanish-speaking wish family?

My favorite wish type to volunteer with are shopping sprees because I get to spend time with the wish kid and his or her family. One particularly memorable shopping spree wish was with a little girl named Perla. She was four years and so adorable — I thought of her for weeks following. We conducted her shopping spree wish at Concord Mills, and I had arranged a surprise "Build-A-Bear" experience for her. After we visited all the places and did the things that Perla wanted, I told her that we had one more surprise for her: The Build-A-Bear Workshop tov store. Perla had never been there and she absolutely loved it. Her eyes were so big! Perla specifically wanted skate shoes on her personalized stuffed animal. The store staff were so supportive, and the time spent there was very special. She also got clothes, shoes, and even a hat for her new stuffed

friend. The whole family said that it was a special experience and even Perla's older brother exclaimed, "This is the best day!"

Have you seen or experienced firsthand the power of a wish to help a family?

A wish is amazing for a child's morale. "Their dreams" is what I hear all the time. A wish gives a child with a critical illness hope. It's not just doctors and hospital visits — A wish is something good coming. The power of the wish is not only for the wish kid - It's for the whole family, who may feel forgotten and are quietly suffering with all they are going through. Wishes are just magical to them.

Another wish that is very memorable for me was a young girl named Jadyn. Her wish was to go to Argentina. Jadyn wanted no other wish. She would not even provide me a second wish option during her Wish Discovery visit. Her dad is from Argentina, and Jadyn wanted to visit her grandparents and cousins in-person for the first time.

Doctors initially said "no" to travel for Jadyn, but she was **so** motivated to go. She really wanted to get well to gain the approval to travel by doctors and Make-A-Wish. Following treatment, Jadyn's medical team finally

Wish kid Perla on her shopping spree.







Wish kid Jadyn pictured above with family in Argentina.

gave her approval to go; however, the Wish Review Board needed convincing. I advocated for Jadyn and put the Review Team doctors in touch with her doctors. They were eventually convinced by Jadyn's progress and the wish trip was approved! Jadyn was so happy. She and her family made the trip and promptly sent me pictures of Jadyn meeting her grandparents and cousins for the first time. Her wish trip was all that she hoped it would be.

How can we better serve the Hispanic community and our Spanish-speaking and multilingual wish families?

I think producing more communications in Spanish would serve the Spanish-speaking community. Short, easy, concise: Something simple and to the point. A document in Spanish that explains what Make-A-Wish is all about would be helpful. Families who are non-English speakers can be apprehensive because they don't know what Make-A-Wish does and how wishes can impact a critically-ill child. The majority of families I work with don't have computers and some don't use email, either. For Spanish-speaking families, if they could be provided information about Make-A-Wish and the power of a wish, that would be useful.

What do you want others to know about volunteering with Make-A-Wish?

I want others to know how rewarding, inspirational, and fulfilling it is. There are many ways to volunteer helping with the understanding and the importance of the Make-A-Wish mission, the steps to granting a wish, making contact with the wish family — Those are all important pieces of the overall wish process: Helping a family understand how important a wish can be in the life of a critically-ill child. *



LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING Forward with Jerry Clark

Everyone recognizes the legendary actor, Mr. T. Luckily, our chapter founder Dr. Jerry Clark happened to tune into the evening news one night in 1985 — and that's precisely when inspiration struck.

Jerry Clark and his late wife Charlotte were watching the evening news, when a story about Mr. T granting a wish for a critically-ill child appeared on television. There was a child from Texas who was receiving a wish, all thanks to an organization called Make-A-Wish (MAW) Foundation. As Jerry recalls, Mr. T spent the entire day with the child and, even through the TV screen, you could clearly see the impact the wish had on the family and the child.

Inspired by the MAW mission, Jerry took the idea of getting involved with the cause to his Nathaniel Greene Kiwanis Club, believing that it could be a wonderful project for their club. The group enthusiastically agreed, suggesting that Jerry take the helm. After first introducing the idea in February 1985, under Jerry's leadership, the Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina chapter was born with our official founding in November 1985.

That first year, the new Make-A-Wish chapter granted 12 wishes total, equating to about one wish per month. During the first 10 years of our existence, Nathanial Greene Kiawanis covered all administrative costs for the operation, before chapter headquarters moved to Charlotte in 1998.

We recently sat down with Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina founder Jerry Clark for a wide-ranging conversation, touching on our chapter's history, some of his fondest memories with the MAW organization, and why he continues to remain extremely involved with Make-A-Wish to this day.

Our theme for this year's Year in Wishes is "Transformational Growth: Then & Now." What are your thoughts on Make-A-Wish, then and now, and our chapter's record-breaking growth this year?

It's unbelievable. To go from granting 12 wishes in our first year to granting **430** this year alone is absolutely incredible. And it wouldn't be possible without our amazing community of donors, volunteers, supporters, and staffers. That's one thing that hasn't changed over the years: The impact of this powerful community and the Make-A-Wish family.

What was your vision when founding Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina?

My vision and hope for our chapter was the same then as it is today: That the wish of every eligible child can be granted.

Will you share some of your favorite granted wishes and any other fond MAW memories from over the years?

I have countless memories from my time with Make-A-Wish, but one especially memorable time was when tennis greats Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert played an exhibition at the Greensboro Coliseum to raise funds for MAW. As for wishes, one that comes to mind was a when a local wish kid got to sit on the bench with Michael Jordan during the NBA Playoffs. There was also a wish granted out of San Francisco in 2013, where a little boy with a critical illness — now famously known as 'Batkid' — wished to be Batman. The whole city became involved — They closed down the streets, and everybody worked together to grant this child's wish. *That* is the power of a wish!



What is your wish today?

My wish is for people in the community to get in touch with our MAW team if they feel compelled to help. Anyone can help, and we can't grant transformational wishes - and change lives - without you.

For people who maybe aren't familiar with the organization, why should they consider getting involved with Make-A-Wish?

There are so many things that divide us in society right now, but when people have a vision — especially when it centers around a child — we're going to try to help. These kids were dealt a bad hand when it comes to their health, and it's our job to support not just the child, but the whole family.

Looking forward, where do you see Make-A-Wish and our chapter, and what would you like to see in the future?

Looking forward, I'd like to see every corner of our chapter territory being served. In particular, I'd like to

Dr. Jerry Clark

Chapter Founder, Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina

see the underserved children in the more rural areas with smaller hospitals reached. Those children and their families are going through the same hard times, medically as the children in the big cities.

Any last thoughts on the community of wish kids, donors, staffers, and supporters that make up **Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina?**

It's not about me as our chapter founder. It's about the mission of this organization. The dedicated staff, volunteers, and kids.

Do you want to do something that brings meaning to your life? Get involved with a Make-A-Wish: It will change your life! *

LOOKING

Ahead

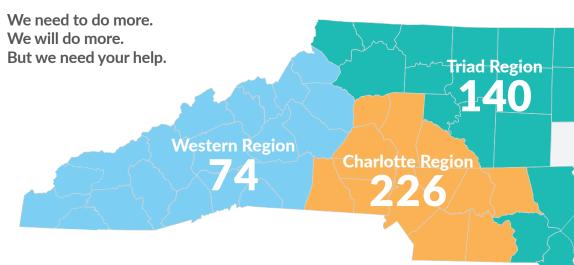


Our chapter's main focus for 2024 is to reach every eligible child, regardless of geography, socioeconomic status. race, or illness especially those who might have been missed during the **COVID** pandemic.

In 2023, one of our chapter's main goals was to find new and nontraditional referral sources outside traditional hospital settings and to continue providing education on the referral process as part of our efforts to reach every eligible child. We made significant headway in achieving this goal by bringing in a Medical Outreach and Intake Manager, whose role is to educate the medical community throughout our territory on current national eligibility criteria. Through education and increased communication with medical providers in clinics and more remote medical offices, we were able to further solidify relationships with local medical providers, ultimately increasing and diversifying our referral sources. We are proud to share that our efforts in 2023 helped increase equitability when it comes to wish granting, from the initial referral to the completion of the wish.

So, what's our goal for 2024 and beyond? Our chapter's main focus for 2024 is to reach every eligible child, regardless of geography, socioeconomic status, race, or illness - especially those who might have been missed during the COVID pandemic. Looking towards the future, our number one goal is to continue to break our own records every day through the transformational work we do. That's precisely why, as a non-profit organization, we rely on the generous donations of supporters like you across North Carolina. While the future looks bright for our chapter and mission, we still need your help creating life-changing wishes for local children with critical illnesses.

Wishes Waiting by Region



2024 EVENTS



WISH BALL

March 1, 2024 | The Revelry | 701 Keswick Ave., Charlotte

Wish Ball is Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina's signature blue-tie gala, where we celebrate the life-changing impact of a wish. This year, Make-A-Wish supporters will have the ability to support the Wish Ball in-person at The Revelry in Charlotte by purchasing a sponsorship or by choosing the opportunity to participate virtually from home.

The special evening will include:

- Silent and live auctions
- Raffle and wine pull
- Inspiring stories from our local wish families
- Seated dinner and dancing
- Opportunities to make life-changing wishes possible

Visit newishball.org to learn more.

CHOOSE JOY! GOLF TOURNAMENT April 9, 2024

The Challenge Golf Club | 1179 Challenge Dr., Graham

In keeping a promise to wish kid Brady, we held the inaugural Choose Joy! Golf Tournament in April to help grant wishes for local wish kids. Brady's favorite number was 13, so our goal for 2024 is to raise enough money to grant 13 wishes to carry on his legacy. You can honor Brady by supporting the 2nd Annual Choose Joy! Golf Tournament. Visit ChooseJoyGolf.org or email Jennifer Lawson at ilawson@nc.wish.org to get started.

KENTUCKY DERBY CLASSIC

May 4, 2024

Summerfield Farms | 3203 Pleasant Ridge Road, Summerfield

Save the date for our 10th Annual event!

Our chapter's signature fundraising event in the Triad, the Kentucky Derby Classic traditionally brings together over 300 guests from across Greensboro and surrounding communities to celebrate the Power of a Wish®.

A fun, memorable, and inspiring afternoon, the event encompasses all things Kentucky Derby, complete with: live and silent auctions; "betting" at the Sportsbook;

delicious tasting stations; a bourbon bar featuring classic mint juleps; a riveting hat contest; live streaming the 150th Run for the Roses; and unique wish surprises!

For more information about our 2024 event, visit kentuckyderbyclassic.org or email jlawson@nc.wish.org if interested in getting involved.

TRAILBLAZE CHALLENGE

Spring Hikes will take place May 17-19 & June 7-19

The Trailblaze Challenge is a peer-to-peer, 28.3 mile fundraising and endurance hike along the stunning Foothills Trail, bridging the beauty of North and South Carolina.

The Trailblaze Challenge is not a race; it is a hike for everyone, from beginners and novices to seasoned outdoor enthusiasts. The real challenge lies in our mission: To raise vital funds that will help us grant the wishes of children with critical illnesses in Central and Western North Carolina.

Don't miss your chance to become part of something truly incredible! To sign up for the Spring Trailblaze Challenge and to learn more, please visit trailblazechallenge.org.

PITCHIN' FOR WISHES (pitchinforwishes.com) November 2024 (Exact date to come) Freedom Park, Charlotte, NC, 28203

Join the Roby Family of Companies and Harris Teeter for the 16th Annual Pitchin' for Wishes Cornhole Tournament.

Since 2008, the Roby Family of Companies has been building a better community through the success of this tournament: A two-time Guinness World Record setting event. Over the last 15 years, thanks to generous sponsors, donors and players, the event has raised over \$2.455.000 for Make-A-Wish® Central and Western North Carolina and other local charities.

The tournament features an NCAA bracket style cornhole competition, as well as food, drinks, music, appearances by local mascots, kids' activities, and more!

INDIVIDUAL & CORPORATE

Thank You, Donors

INDIVIDUAL DONORS *donations of \$2,500 or more, as of August 31, 2023

Alexandra and Hunter Bachman Allison Howie Amanda Engstrom Amy and Christopher Sutherland Amy and Phil Colaco Amy Parker **Andy Collins** Ann and Hao Dang Annabel and Dean Norman, Jr. April and Tilden Reed April Helgeson Ashley and Mark Hinson Ashlvnn Roth Audra and Jonathan Smith Becky and David Morgan Belinda Pike Bonita Simpson **Brad Hicks Brian Greig** Britt and Rick Ruby Brooke and Mike Modlin Carla and Don Wenner Carol Budko Caroline and Adam McTish Caroline and Jerry Schroeder Caroline and Patrick Rush Casey and Trent Johnston Catharine and Michael Fortney Celia Nowicki Charisse and Phil Kleinman Chris and Graham Andres Christi and Carl Armato Christine and Charlie Katziff Christine and Rich Bolen

David Haufler David Scarvev Donna and Al De Molina Donna and Bob Price Donna Goins Doug Lebda Edith Baltazar Elizabeth and Bram Hall Elizabeth and Richard Crenshaw Ellen Bertuccelli Erica and Brandon Adcock **Erin Santos** Frankie and John Olmsted Gail Buchanan Kiser and **Greg Kiser** Ghazale and Andy Johnston Gina and George Jurch Glenn Zimmerman Helen and Kirk Hollifield Hugh McColl Jr. James Cochran James Maus Jared Walton Jason Hodgin Jeff Arnold Jen and Jerry Schroeder Jennifer and Nate Boozer Jennifer and Trov Budenhagen Jessica and Jamie Forrest Jessica Shanks Jimmy Brumley John Evans John Roscoe John Underwood Joseph Tallent Julie and Joshua Lyerly **Justin Smith Justin Ward** Karen Jensen-Tynan and Glenn Tynan Karen Murphy Kathy and Greg Dunn

Kathy Jetton

Katie and Kevin Rayment

Katie and Matthew Heald Kevin Kiernan Kim Henderson Kristina and Tom Hoops Lee and Haynes Peery Leigha and David Smith Leslie and Joseph Marus Leslie and Robert Rhinehart Libby and Jim Kelligrew Lisa and Jay Biehl Lisa and Tim Michael Lvnn and Randy Buchanan Mark Whitesell Mary Dowd Matthew Cox Matthew Mcgrory Melinda and Zach Tillitski Melissa and Andv Reed Meredith and Brent Walser Meredith and Jav Harris Michael Dockery Michael McVicker Michelle and Bob Bruggeworth Michelle Haaf-Seifert Miguel Vargas Mike Krakauskas Nancy and Charles Beemer Nicole and John Wells Pamela Lane Patrick Passarelle Patty and Mike Brothers Paula Payne and Sherlon Coiner **Peter Browning** Peter Evenson Rachel and John Daly Randy Mason Rebecca and Damion Pirolli Rene and Daniel Hellams

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> I wish to go to Disney World

Quincy, 6 cancer

Waxhaw, NC

Danielle and Jeff

Witherspoon

Darren Myers

Corby and Joe Smith

Court and Andy Young

Cristin and John Gizdic

Danielle and Chris Russo



YOU ARE A HERO TO WISH KIDS

Because of your generous donation and continuous support, 25 local wish kids were able to experience the life-changing impact of a wish.

Capital Auto hosted a wish reveal in April for wish kid Quincy, who learned that she would be soon going to Disney World! Capital Ford Charlotte went above and beyond to make this wish reveal extra-special for the 6-year-old from Waxhaw fighting cancer.





Scan or click QR code to watch Quincy's wish reveal!







QUILITY®



The Quility team always puts clients and community first. The Asheville-based insurance company held its third annual virtual fundraising event, "Storybook of Wishes," benefiting Make-A-Wish Central and Western North Carolina on November 16, 2022. In just one hour, the virtual auction raised over \$180,000 for Make-A-Wish, granting more than 24 or local children with critical illnesses.



On April 19th, Chick-fil-A presented a whopping \$100,000 donation to benefit Make-A-Wish CWNC, all thanks to their 'Share the Love' campaign. We are immensely grateful to Chick-fil-A and everyone who participated in 'Share the Love'.

FOUNDATIONS

Alamance Community Foundation Ashe County Community Foundation Broyhill Family Foundation, Inc.

Cemala Foundation

Community Foundation of Richmond County David and Nicole Tepper Charitable Foundation

Davie County Community Foundation

Fund for Mitchell County

Gates Foundation

Giving with Grace Foundation

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Montgomery County Fund

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The Cole Foundation

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The Dickson Foundation, Inc.

The Forrest and Frances Lattner Foundation

The Fund for Mitchell County

The Isabella Santos Foundation

The Jack Runnion Foundation

The Jay and Maxann Collins Fund

The Krumdieck Family Foundation

The Leon Levine Foundation

The Levine-Sklut Family Foundation

The Lyon Foundation, Inc.

The Peninsula Community Foundation

The Philip L. Van Every Foundation

Transylvania Endowment

True Homes Foundation

Yadkin County Community Foundation

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Backyard Leisure Pools & Spas Foothill Marine Center Sylvan Sport Blue Compass RV **Bent Wrench Carts** The Shed Depot **Elford Construction NAWIC** Black Diamond Limousine Arc Electric

CORPORATE DONORS *donations of \$7,500 or more, as of August 31, 2023

AAA Self Storage ABBA Design

Albemarle Corporation

Ally Financial

American Retirement Counselors

Andrew Roby Construction Aspen Dental / Golds Gym

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist

Brenner Children's Hospital Autobell Car Wash, Inc.

B&W Fiberglass Household

Bank of America Beacon Insurance Befesa Zinc

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Biesse America. Inc. Brothers Metal Fab, Inc. Capital Auto Group Carolina Panthers

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Circle K Stores CoBank, ACB

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DLP Capital

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Dressler's Six, LLC C/O Fin and Fino **Duke Energy Business Services LLC**

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Toyota of Greensboro

Truist

United Health Care

Universal Distribution Group, LLC

UPS Foundation, Inc.

US Bank Verigent, LLC Visit.org

Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center - Brenners Children's

Wells Fargo

World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.



DLP Capital, a thriving real estate investment firm, abides by select core values: Drive, Determination, and Grit – striving for excellence every step of the way. These values align perfectly with our signature Trailblaze Challenge (TBC) endurance event. DLP Capital came on board for their first TBC in the Spring of 2022. Using their core values as motivation, these DLP'ers were able to not only complete the hike, but raise over \$100,000! DLP's experience with Make-A-Wish and the Trailblaze Challenge was truly a life-changing journey. DLP's partnership with Make-A-Wish flourished even beyond 2022, as the DLP team made a return to TBC in the Spring of 2023, growing from a team of 25 to 40 hikers and, once again, surpassing the \$100,000 goal. DLP stands for Dream, Live, Prosper, and thanks to their support, we are able to inspire this in the wish kids we serve every day. It was a pleasure to host DLP Capital on the trails once again, and we look forward to granting even more wishes together in 2024!

THERE ARE SO MANY

Ways to Give



DONATE

When you donate, you're giving children a renewed strength to fight their illnesses. We accept gifts: online, by check, by credit card, and through donor-advised funds. You can also make a stock gift. wish.org/nc/give



MONTHLY GIVING

By enrolling in monthly giving, you can become a Shooting Star, creating a trail of hope and joy for wish kids every month of the year. You can conveniently enroll online or by mail wish.org/nc/monthly



PLANNED GIVING

Planned giving ensures your legacy lives on through wishes. By including a gift to Make-A-Wish in your estate plan, you help bring hope, strength, and joy to future generations of children with criticial illnesses.

giving@nc.wish.org



CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

Your company can grant wishes through innovative campaigns, cause marketing programs, customized sponsorship opportunities, generous financial contributions, and in-kind support. corporategiving@nc.wish.org



W.I.S.H. SOCIETY

Join an elite group transforming the lives of local kids battling critical illnesses. As a W.I.S.H. Society Member, you can donate. volunteer, and network with others who are passionate about our mission year-round. ncwishsociety.org



WISH YOUR WAY

Each year, Make-A-Wish supporters raise thousands of dollars through fundraisers that match their passions. We provide the website and tools to help you succeed. site.wish.org/yourway047



www.wish.org/nc/give

Scan and donate to help us give more children the confidence, strength and hope that comes with a wish.



GIFT CARD DRIVE

We are always in need of gift cards to boost the wish experience and help offset wish costs. corporategiving@nc.wish.org





DONATE STOCK

A gift of appreciated stock can benefit you in two ways: you receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value, and at the same time, avoid capital gains taxes.

wish.org/nc/donate-stock

At a Glance

MAKE-A-WISH® MISSION

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





MORE THAN

of every dollar spent was allocated towards granting wishes

We serve

51 counties

in North Carolina and are 100% local.

Let's Connect!

@ncwish Followers 8,500

@makeawish_cwnc Followers 3,235

@makeawish_cwnc Followers 1,466

@makeawish_cwnc (NEW 3/2023) Followers 28

@makeawishcwnc Followers 192

info@ncwish

VISHES GRANTED SINCE 1985







www.nc.wish.org

Want to know more? Scan OR code above.



OFFICE LOCATIONS

CHAPTER HO

6324 Fairview Road Suite 500 Charlotte, NC 28210

TRIAD OFFICE

6522 Airport Center Drive Greensboro, NC 27409

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



We have moved!

OUR NEW ADDRESS

CHAPTER HQ

6324 Fairview Road Suite 500 Charlotte, NC 28210

TRIAD OFFICE

6522 Airport Center Drive Greensboro, NC 27409



