



Make-A-Wish[®]
ILLINOIS

A Celebration of Wishes

Fiscal Year 2023
Annual Report



A Letter from Our Chairman and CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect upon the past year and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead, we are humbled and inspired by the incredible work that has taken place at Make-A-Wish Illinois. Fiscal Year 2023 (September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023) was marked by both challenges and triumphs, and it is with great pride and gratitude that we share these with you.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the past year has been the fulfillment of 729 wishes. This accomplishment is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters who work tirelessly to make wishes come true for children facing critical illnesses. Each wish granted represents a source of hope and strength for brave wish kids and their families.

Innovation has always been at the heart of Make-A-Wish Illinois, and this year was no exception. We continued to harness the power of our dedicated volunteers and community supporters to bring creativity and fresh ideas to our wish-granting process. Their enthusiasm and commitment have enabled us to enhance the wish experience and bring smiles to the faces of wish kids.

As we continued to overcome challenges caused by the pandemic, our team executed a series of successful fundraising events, which raised crucial funds to grant wishes, and fostered a sense of unity and purpose within our community. These events serve as a reminder that when we come together, we can achieve extraordinary things.

In all that we have accomplished and plan to do, our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) remains a foundational value. Our mission to create life-changing wishes for children is only fully realized when it is accessible to everyone. We continue to prioritize DEI in all aspects of our work, and specifically, through the Inclusive Engagement Initiative, we remain steadfast in our expansion to reach underserved children and remove the barriers to accessing an equitable wish experience for every wish child and their family.

In an increasingly digital world, we recognize the importance of enhancing our technological capabilities. In fiscal year 2023, we made significant strides in leveraging technology to streamline our operations, connect with supporters, and provide a seamless wish experience for our wish kids and their families.

Every one of you have played a critical part in making these accomplishments possible, and as we move into the next fiscal year, we want to express our deepest gratitude for your dedication and support. Our journey is far from over, and we are excited to see what we can achieve together in the year ahead. Together, we will continue to make wishes come true for children battling critical illnesses and discover the impact and life-changing power of a wish.

Best Wishes,



Mike Warmuth
Chair, Board of Directors



Stephanie Springs
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Michele Booth
Corporate Documents Officer
FTI Consulting

Jessi Corcoran
JBT Corporation

Jerry Darko
William Blair

Matt Hertko
Jones Day

Aaron Martell
Logistics Property Company, LLC

Paul Martino
VillageMD

Jason Maslan
Protiviti Inc.

Linda McGovern
Knauf Insulation

Jeff Murphy
DNP, RN, CEN, NEA-BC
University of Chicago Medicine
Comer Children's Hospital

Patrick Nash
Kirkland & Ellis

Jean Niemi

Aletha Noonan
CDW

Andy Pasternak

Todd Richards
Treasurer

Jen Sampson
The Marmon Group

John Sbragia
GATX

Thomas South
Vice Chair
Northern Trust Corporation

Christine Torres
Crowe LLP

Mike Warmuth
Chair

Matt Westerlund
Boston Consulting Group

Amanda Worthington
Vice Chair
Heidrick & Struggles

Director Emeriti

Peter Anthony
UGN, Inc.

Michael J. Berkery

Patricia W. Bruder

Diane MacWilliams

Chris Rother

Staff Executives

Stephanie Springs
Chief Executive Officer

Ryan Blackburn
Vice President of Mission Delivery

Vicki Guster-Hines
Chief Operating Officer

Laurie Honza
Vice President of Marketing

Heather Simpson
Chief Development Officer



The Power of a Wish

729
WISHES
GRANTED



870

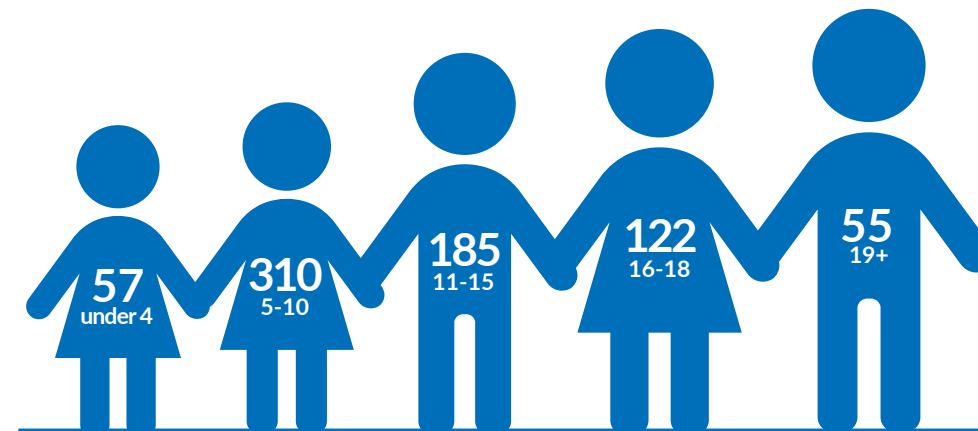
Qualified Referrals

*I wish to visit
Disney World*

Avery, 6
congenital heart condition



1,500 wishes
in process



Wishes Distributed By Age

A Year of Wishes

18,000
wishes granted
since 1985

Thanks to our community of supporters, Make-A-Wish Illinois has granted thousands of wishes since our founding in 1985 – each with the ability to create hope and renew energy for the wish kids, their families and everyone involved. Creating a life-changing wish journey for every Illinois child who has been diagnosed with a critical illness continues to be our vision, and we are so grateful that you are joining us in this important work.



*I wish to be a
marine biologist*

Emily, 15
cystic fibrosis



*I wish to meet
an astronaut*
Fionnuala, 7
cancer



*I wish to visit
Lowell Observatory*
Becher, 13
leukemia



*I wish to see
a volcano*
Randall, 9
nervous system disorder



*I wish to be
a zookeeper*
Daniel, 9
endocrine disorder



*I wish to
visit Hawaii*
Lorelei, 6
kidney transplant



I wish to be a doctor

Melanie, 12
kidney disease

Melanie's life was turned upside down two years ago when she was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. It was a scary time for her and her family as they navigated this new world full of uncertainties.

For as long as Melanie could remember, she wanted to be a doctor, and her experience in the hospital further solidified her aspiration. It gave her focus toward the transplant, specifically, kidney field, and she wanted to learn more through her own treatments.

Melanie's care team made such an impression on her that when her physicians referred Melanie to Make-A-Wish, she shared her heartfelt wish to be a doctor with Make-A-Wish Illinois volunteers.

Make-A-Wish partnered with Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, Northwestern Medical Center and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine to create a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Melanie.

Melanie's wish became a crucial moment, fueling her aspiration to become a pediatric nephrologist and marking a significant turning point in her treatment and recovery. Her resilience and experience will be with her as she is committed more firmly than ever to being like the skilled, pediatric physician that helped her through the hardest challenges of her life.



Make-A-Wish Illinois Financials

FISCAL YEAR 2023

Year ended August 31, 2023

Total Revenue	\$14,053,780
Total Expenses	\$16,255,298
Total Net Assets	\$18,320,254

*Expenses were funded by both annual fundraising revenue and an intentional spend down of the Wish Kids Need Us Now campaign fund for wishes paused during COVID-19.

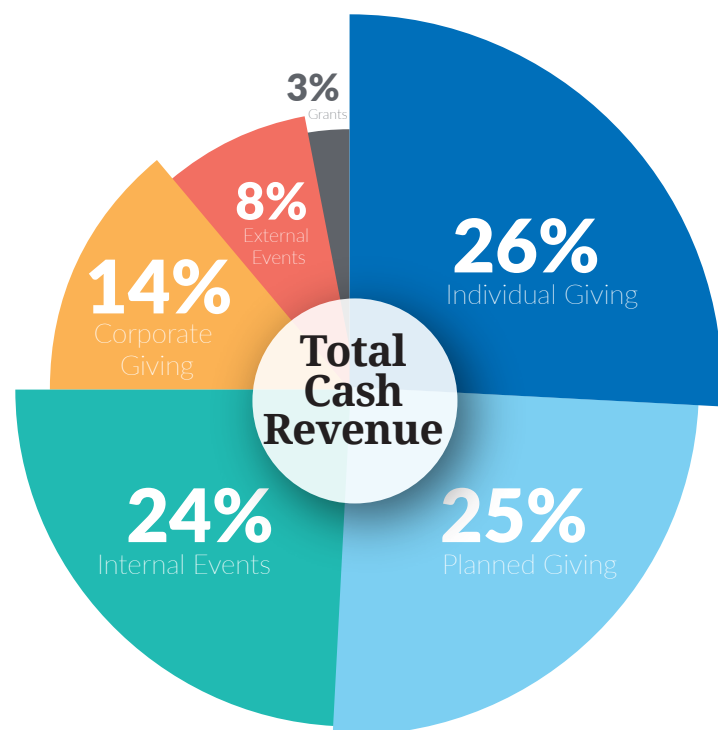


Your Gift Matters

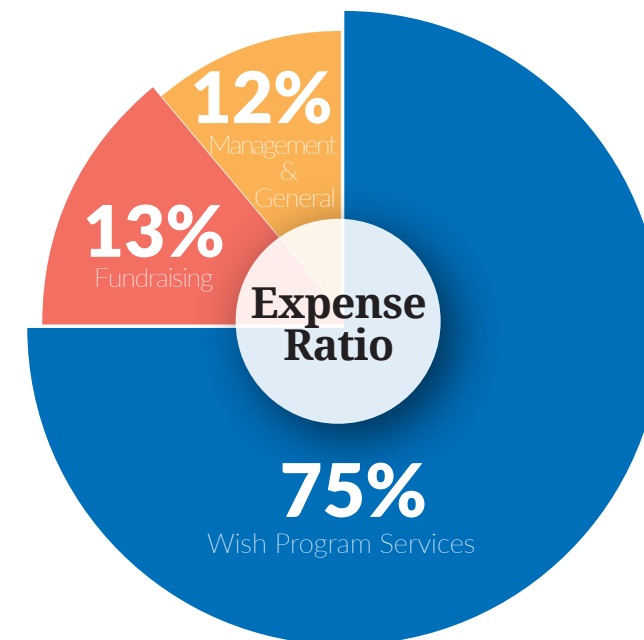
Generous donors ensured that Make-A-Wish Illinois had the resources needed to provide hope through a life-changing wish journey when children needed it most.



I wish to visit Disneyland
Jillian, 12
 nervous system disorder



\$2,714,017	Individual Giving
\$2,580,731	Planned Giving
\$2,496,062	Internal Events
\$1,445,989	Corporate Giving
\$811,747	External Events
\$277,800	Grants
\$10,326,346	TOTAL CASH REVENUE



\$12,161,683	Wish Program Services
\$2,209,772	Fundraising
\$1,883,843	Management & General
\$16,255,298	TOTAL EXPENSES



Hospital Spotlight

La Rabida Children's Hospital

The Referral Outreach team has been steadfast in its focus on reaching every child with an eligible condition treated out of La Rabida by establishing, maintaining, and increasing visibility over the past 10 years. Based on the population La Rabida serves, the majority of patients whose condition would meet eligibility criteria are those with Sickle Cell disease, and for many years those referrals had been lagging. Specifically over the last five years, the team has cultivated new relationships, stewarded existing ones, and identified opportunities for enhanced touchpoints across La Rabida, but in particular with the Hematology team. These intentional, strategic efforts yielded a 28% increase in Sickle Cell referrals out of La Rabida between 2017-2019. This amount of unprecedented growth captured a significant portion of La Rabida's Sickle Cell patient population who had been previously diagnosed, but yet to be referred; the number of referrals each year has slowed considerably, because now the referrals reflect the current number of patients whose condition meets eligibility criteria.

impact referrals with a Women Impacting Wishes Award; connecting with the Marketing/Communications team to establish a story-sharing partnership for staff and families; and creating wish send-offs for several wish kids.

Overall referrals increased by 10% between 2022 & 2023 in underserved areas of Chicago.

Much of the work to increase awareness about Make-A-Wish extends beyond the hospital setting into the community. Local events like the Vive tu Vida Health Fair and Roses for Roseland Peace March; partnering with the 9th ward Alderman, Anthony Beale's office to grant a wish from their area; and establishing a Chicago Neighborhood Council all have contributed to directly engaging with the community to build our presence.

There is still much work to be done to reach families and equitably grant impactful wishes; therefore, the Referral Outreach and Community Engagement teams continue to collaborate on identifying what the "right" opportunities are to engage La Rabida staff and the surrounding communities for broader reach.

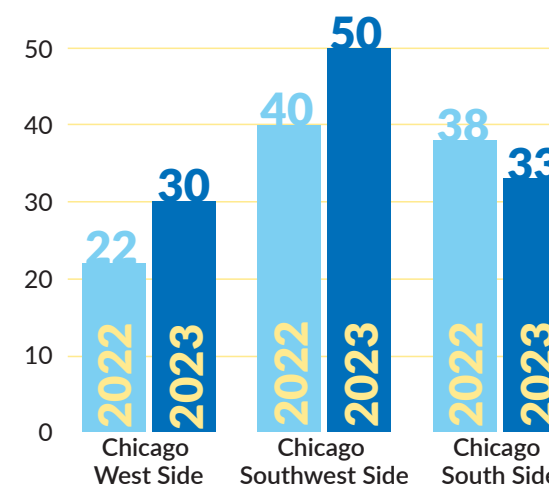
Reaching the Underserved

- Expanded our reach to underserved families in 31 zip codes in West, Southwest and South regions of Chicago
- Referred 113 children in FY23 vs. 100 in FY22; 10% increase across 6 hospitals
- Deeper engagement and new volunteers recruited
- Attended community events including Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition and Comer Safety Fair

In the focal communities that comprise the Inclusive Engagement Initiative (IEI), Make-A-Wish Illinois worked diligently to increase referrals this fiscal year. This accomplishment not only signifies our organization's commitment to deepening relationships with the dedicated medical professionals, but also underscores the increased engagement of our dedicated staff and volunteers in local community events. These efforts have been instrumental in building trust and disseminating knowledge about the transformative power of a wish.

In reviewing current population residing in these areas in comparison to expected incidence of pediatric critical illnesses, which would qualify for Make-A-Wish, children in these communities would benefit greatly from a wish experience. With the program well established and making considerable progress, Make-A-Wish Illinois expanded the geographical area of the IEI initiative to encompass a total of 31 zip codes located in the western, southwestern, and southern regions of the City of Chicago.

Our future plans include the sustained growth of the Chicago Neighborhood Council, which will play a pivotal role in furthering our meaningful presence. We approach this expansion with confidence, fully expecting that more children will have the opportunity to experience the life-changing power of a wish. We are steadfast in our commitment to making dreams come true for every child diagnosed with a critical illness in all communities.



I wish to visit Disney World
Prentissee, 18
 nervous system disorder



Communities Unite, Wishes Ignite

From the very first wish until now, Make-A-Wish has been built and shaped by everyday people raising their hands to help make wishes come true as volunteers, fundraisers, donors, wish alumni, advocates and more. Working together, everyone can bring their energy and expertise to help wish children while finding their own lives enriched in ways they might not have imagined.

The child makes the wish, but the community makes the difference. There are so many ways to make a difference, and here are just some of the ways community members came together this fiscal year to make an impact on our organization.

Corporate

Our valued corporate partners at GATX have consistently demonstrated their unwavering commitment to our mission. Over the course of a 27-year partnership with Make-A-Wish Illinois, GATX and its dedicated employees have generously donated more than \$5.5 million, significantly contributing to and directly impacting our revenue needed to grant wishes. Their support extends far beyond financial contributions, as GATX employees actively lend their expertise as dedicated board members, offer their time as enthusiastic corporate volunteers, and, most importantly, embody the spirit of wish granting by personally connecting with our wish families. GATX's enduring commitment to our cause sets a shining example of what true partnership looks like, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps.



Community & Signature Events— Over the Edge

Several signature events and dozens of third-party events bring the community together in support of wishes. One of them, Over the Edge, welcomed 80 brave rappellers, including several wish alumni and their family members, to test their courage and strength by rappelling down the 36 stories of the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Raising more than \$200,000, Over the Edge was an incredible day when board members, donors, fundraisers, volunteers and wish alumni came together in support of local children with critical illnesses.



The Impact of Volunteering

At every level of the organization, volunteers are critical to the mission. More than 1,500+ trained volunteers generously give their time and energy in support of the Make-A-Wish mission. Our diverse group of volunteers across the state ensure that every wish kid feels supported and finds the hope, resilience and joy a wish can bring.



Maria Ramos of Chicago was immediately captivated by the powerful mission of Make-A-Wish when she learned about it and knew she could make a difference for Illinois wish kids.

In 2020, Maria embarked on a mission to help more families in her neighborhood share the power of wishes by bringing awareness to volunteer initiatives and fostering community engagement. Having granted eight wishes, she is a beacon of hope, spreading joy, and making dreams come true for wish children and their families.

“It’s getting to know the families and the children, and learning what makes them happy.”

Maria recognized her unique ability to make a difference in the lives of wish kids and families whose first language is Spanish, and as a true ambassador, she has advocated for our mission and has inspired others to join our cause. Her personal and professional life both have pivoted as she continues to dedicate more time to the families. “It’s not just volunteering. It’s someone’s life. It’s getting to know the families and the children, and learning what makes them happy and figuring out how to support the parents while the wish is being created and built into reality,” says Maria. She continues, “I’ve learned that self-love is not just pouring into yourself but to be of service.”

In April 2023, Maria’s extraordinary dedication was acknowledged with the Wish Volunteer Impact Award from Make-A-Wish Illinois. This recognition highlights her significant contributions in positively impacting families, wish children, and the Chicago communities she has touched.



*I wish to have
a Quinceañera*

Kiara, 15
rare disease



WISH
IT FORWARD®

Alumni

The Make-A-Wish Alumni Community is a diverse group of 360,000+ wish kids and their families nationally who connect with one another through the incredible impact of a wish experience. Make-A-Wish is here to be a part of a wish kid and family's life forever to invite them to 'wish it forward' by sharing the impact of their wish. Illinois alumni families like the McGriffs attend events to offer firsthand testimony to the power of wishes, helping to raise awareness and funds for future wishes.



Wish kids Oliver, Ruby and Nadya with parents Jillian and Lynden McGriff.