

# Legacy of Wishes

FALL 2023 [wish.org/akwa](http://wish.org/akwa)

## 10X the Impact

Make-A-Wish Staff Member Makes  
Legacy Gift to Make Even Bigger  
Difference in the Future

When Make-A-Wish Alaska and Washington staff member, Bre Brennan, got the phone call that her nephew had leukemia, her stomach dropped. A deep, familiar ache rose from within—a feeling she knew firsthand from being the mother to a child with a critical illness.

Bre's son, Kieran, had also battled a life-threatening condition; however, unlike his cousin, he did not receive a wish, because at the time, he didn't meet the eligibility criteria. That didn't stop Bre from pursuing a career at Make-A-Wish and for later suggesting to her family that they refer her nephew for a wish.

**"I saw that impact from 2,000 miles away," she said when reflecting upon her**

**nephew's wish to go to his favorite theme park. "My brother and his entire family continue to talk about his wish 10 years later. In fact, at his senior graduation, there was an entire section of photos dedicated to it. Make-A-Wish really changes lives."**

*Writing down your wishes is the best way to ensure that you leave the legacy that you want.*

That's why she has chosen to include Make-A-Wish in her estate plans.

As a single mom, nearly every dollar Bre earns supports her children. She directs what's left to the

causes that are important to her, including Make-A-Wish. She knows that her donations today help, but leaving a gift to Make-A-Wish upon her passing will allow her to make the sort of significant gift she knows will have greater impact.

**"Today, I can give an annual gift that is 1/10th of the cost of one wish, but upon my passing, I will be able to leave a gift that will grant 10 wishes," she said.**

The process of creating a will couldn't have been easier according to Bre.

**"Freewill was amazing. I'm truly a convert," she said. "It was free. It was easy. And it literally took me 20 minutes to complete."**

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# Making Good on Your Investment

## *How Make-A-Wish Ensures Your Support is Put to Good Work*

Did you know that Make-A-Wish has been named the most-trusted nonprofit operating in all 50 states by Morning Consult! And, we are ranked the #2 most beloved charity by the Harris Poll.

We work hard to deliver exceptional experiences to everyone who is involved with our mission — from wish kids to families to donors to volunteers, everyone is a valued member of our organization, and that philosophy is what has helped us to earn these incredible accolades.

**So you might be thinking, “With such a great reputation, does Make-A-Wish really need my money?”** And the answer is yes!

Make-A-Wish has a large national presence, but our local chapter is likely not as big as you



think! **Our annual operating budget is under \$10M, making us a modest-sized nonprofit, supported almost exclusively by local donors.** Truly, every gift makes a difference and estate gifts have the potential to make the largest impact on our future success.

You might be wondering why estate gifts are important and how we use them. All estate gifts left to our chapter are put to use for wishes in Washington and Alaska. **When we are meeting our budget goals and receive an estate gift greater than \$100,000, we put 50 percent of the estate gift toward our investment fund for it to grow while we meet current needs with current funds.** This allows us to plan for growth and grant more wishes the next year, because we know we have additional funds waiting for those additional wishes!

## Make Wishes Take Flight by Bequeathing Your Airline Miles

On average, airline tickets are our chapter's single largest wish expense. **Currently, about 70 percent of local wishes involve travel.** Annually we could use 80M miles to send wish kids and their families to the destination of their dreams.

That's where you can help! You can donate your airline miles today or you can add the following language to your estate plans to transfer unused miles to Make-A-Wish Alaska and Washington.

*I give the balance of my [Alaska Airlines, Delta Air Lines or United Airlines] frequent flier miles, Account # \_\_\_\_\_ to the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Alaska and Washington, 811 1st Ave #620, Seattle, WA 98104 (tax id: 91-1329433) to be used or disposed of as its Board of Trustees deems appropriate in its sole discretion.*

**Turn your miles into smiles with your donations of frequent flier miles.**

### Leadership

Jen Faley, Board Chair  
Melissa Arias, President & CEO

For a complete board and staff listing, visit [wish.org/akwa](http://wish.org/akwa).



Official Airline Sponsor



# Why Wishes Matter

The water has always been a special place for wish alum Kenzie. It's where she can feel free as the weight of the world is quite literally lifted off her mind and her body.

**Born at just 30 weeks, Kenzie was diagnosed with a congenital neuromuscular disorder that impacts every muscle in her body.** She has low muscle tone, so everyday activities can be an incredible challenge for her. But being in the water is therapeutic.

From a young age, she loved mermaids and was drawn to them. **So she wished to go to Hawaii and be transformed into a mermaid for a day.**

Sunscreen? Check!  
Swimsuit? Check! Mermaid tail? Check!

With her mom and dad by her side, she donned a blue mermaid tail fit for Ariel herself. **But she wasn't the only one undergoing a transformation. Her dad, Shawn, joined in the fun.** He slipped into a matching mermaid tail – his pink to her blue. The moment, forever captured in this photo is one that Kenzie and her mom, Theresa, now treasure for different reasons.

**Just three months after their wish trip of a lifetime, Shawn unexpectedly passed away.** The memories from this trip continue to provide special meaning



*I wish to go to Hawaii*

Kenzie, 18  
neuromuscular disorder

and comfort to Kenzie and Theresa as they hold onto them in their minds and their hearts.

**Thanks to our generous donors for providing gifts of hope, healing, restoration and comfort to our wish families.**

## ***THIS is what you make possible!***

*Your gifts make wishes possible for kids in every corner of Alaska and Washington. Here are just a few!*



*I wish to give furry friends to kids at Seattle Children's*

Krystin, 18, Alaska  
leukemia



*I wish to go to my favorite theme park*

Emerson, 6, Eastern Washington  
cancer



*I wish to have a puppy*

Ace, 12, Western Washington  
cancer

# Your Support is Our Best Rate of Return



**Would you consider a 114% increase in five years a good rate of return on your investment?** We sure would and we have you to thank for it!

For the past five years, our Make-A-Wish staff have prioritized legacy giving as one of the best ways to secure our financial future, ensuring we are here in perpetuity for wish kids and families. That's why we decided to spend our time and effort in building our legacy giving program.

**We are proud to say that since 2018 we have grown our planned giving donor base from 95 people to 204.** That's a 114% increase and it's all thanks to the support and commitment of our individuals – like you! – who see the value in leaving a gift to fund future wishes via their estate plans.

More people than ever are making wishes possible through their estate plans. **We can't thank you enough for thinking of our mission today so you can fund future wishes tomorrow.**

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Since that time, she has told four people about the site and encouraged them to make their wills. "Everyone should have a will."

**Writing down your wishes is the best way to ensure that you leave the legacy that you want and not the one that your executor thinks you may have wanted.**

Bre said having her will on paper was a great way to have this important conversation with her kids and her executor. "I want to make sure the causes most important to me are provided for and are able to continue their work to benefit other kids and families like my own."

**Lauren Martin**  
Vice President of Advancement



## Are we in your plans? We would like to know!

Most retirement plans assume no obligation to notify your beneficiaries of your election, whether you've named a nonprofit or a person as your beneficiary.

If you've named Make-A-Wish Alaska and Washington as a beneficiary in your plan, **contact Lauren Martin at 206.623.5314 or at [Immartin@akwa.wish.org](mailto:Immartin@akwa.wish.org), or send back the enclosed postcard.**

It would be our honor to thank you for your generosity and welcome you into the *Legacy of Wishes Society*.

