



**POSITION
SPECIFICATION**

Chief Executive Officer



SNAPSHOT

Position Title: Chief Executive Officer

Reporting To: Board of Directors

Location: New York, NY

Website: <https://wish.org/newyork>



ABOUT MAKE-A-WISH

“A wish experience can be a game-changer for a child with critical illness.”

For children diagnosed with critical illnesses, a wish come true can be a crucial turning point in their lives. A wish can be the spark that helps these children believe that anything is possible and gives them the strength to fight harder against their illness. This impact is why Make-A-Wish Metro and Western New York is driven to make every one of these wishes come true.

In the spring of 1980, a young boy in Phoenix, AZ with leukemia realized his heartfelt wish to become a police officer. His dream served as the inspiration for what is now the largest wish-granting organization in the world, the Make-A-Wish Foundation. There is nothing more powerful than making a wish come true.

Make-A-Wish is one united family, but it’s also a collection of independently chartered nonprofit organizations that stand committed to a shared vision and mission. Beginning in 1983, the Make-A-Wish Metro NY chapter granted its first wish, closely followed by the Western NY chapter which granted its first wish in 1992. In 2011, these two hardworking chapters joined forces and now serve a total of 24 counties in New York - a combined market of over 14.3 million people.

MISSION

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

VISION

To grant the wish of every eligible child.

VALUES

Our values are the basis for how we behave and operate as an organization.

- Child Focus – We always put wish kids first.
- Integrity – We are honest, transparent and respectful.
- Impact – We deliver life-changing work.
- Innovation – We are bold, imaginative and creative.
- Community – We are a diverse group of people working together towards a common goal.



The chapter has been awarded 4 stars by Charity Navigator and named one of the 50 Best Nonprofits to Work For by The Non-Profit Times. The chapter has won the prestigious Power of One Award, presented annually by Make-A-Wish America to the chapter that contributes significantly to the greater good of Make-A-Wish beyond their own territory, the only chapter to win the award twice. The Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York and Western New York knows the impact of a wish is invaluable and works every day towards the noble goal of granting the wish of every eligible child.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment

We recognize and support the fact that diversity comes in many different forms (age, religious, gender, racial/ethnic, disability for examples). We embrace and include diversity in all forms. Without excluding others, our focus will be on the racial/ethnic, gender, and language diversity within our staff.

WHY WISHES MATTER

Research shows children who have wishes granted can build the physical and emotional strength needed to fight a critical illness. This can help improve their quality of life and produce better health outcomes.

WISH IMPACT SURVEY FINDINGS: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2022)

On average, a large majority of Make-A-Wish alumni, parents, and medical professionals agree the wish experience:

- Increased hope, strength, joy, confidence, self-esteem, quality of life, and physical and emotional well-being.
- Served as a coping mechanism and a turning point during treatment.
- Brought their family closer together and strengthened their relationship with loved ones.
- Helped overcome traumatic stress, hopelessness, depression, and loneliness.
- Was a necessary part of the medical treatment journey, improved the odds, provided a support system and better health outcomes, and gave the child a better chance of recovering from and surviving their critical illness.

MAKE-A-WISH METRO NEW YORK AND WESTERN NEW YORK FAST FACTS:

- MAW Metro New York and Western NY serves the most culturally diverse communities in the country with wish kids and families who speak over 30 different languages
- Founded in 1983 - granting wishes for 41 years!
- Over 18,000 wishes granted since our inception.
- We granted 839 wishes last year for children in our communities and for those who come from around the country to have their wish granted in New York City.
- We serve children and families in New York City, Long Island and 17 counties in the Buffalo and Rochester areas – a combined market of 14.3 million people.
- Wishes are granted with the help of 600+ volunteers.
- Our headquarters are in mid-town Manhattan.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Make-A-Wish Metro and Western New York is offering an extraordinary opportunity for a dynamic and innovative Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead one of the most recognized and impactful nonprofit organizations in the country. This chapter, with its dedicated team of 62 professionals, committed volunteer base, and strong Board of Directors, successfully grants over 650 life-changing wishes each year, bringing hope, joy, and transformation to the lives of children facing critical illnesses.

The CEO will be tasked with elevating the chapter to new heights by developing a sustainable funding model, expanding outreach, and deepening the chapter's impact across the region. This role is ideal for a highly relational, mission-driven leader with a passion for creating meaningful change. With the chapter's solid foundation, strong local relationships, and close collaboration with the national office, the CEO will be uniquely positioned to convert local successes into national partnerships, amplify the chapter's visibility, and ensure the continuation of its legacy of delivering hope to Wish Kids and their families.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Leadership & Strategy:** Provide visionary leadership to a high-performing organization with a large operational footprint, ensuring continued success while identifying areas for sustainable growth and improvement. Challenge and inspire the chapter to focus on mission-critical initiatives, balancing short- and long-term objectives to maximize impact.
- **Fundraising & Brand Elevation:** In partnership with the Chief Development Officer, lead fundraising efforts, executing a robust development plan to diversify revenue sources. Cultivate relationships with major donors, corporate sponsors, and community partners, ensuring sustained growth and financial stability.
- **Operational & Fiscal Management:** Oversee the chapter's complex financial and operational structure, ensuring efficient, effective operations while managing a significant budget and staff. Design and execute an optimal staffing and organizational structure that fosters a culture of accountability, trust, and cohesiveness. Play an active role in succession planning and board recruitment to support long-term sustainability.
- **Team Leadership & Development:** Recruit, train, and motivate a high-performing team capable of meeting or exceeding the chapter's goals. Foster an environment where staff can grow, thrive, and contribute meaningfully to the mission.
- **Board Collaboration:** Work closely with the Board of Directors, engaging their strengths to advance the organization's mission. Collaborate in the creation and monitoring of strategic plans and establish metrics to evaluate progress. Ensure transparency in governance and decision-making processes.
- **Volunteer and Community Engagement:** Ensure that volunteer programs are effectively developed and leveraged to meet the annual wish granting goals. Strengthen relationships with key stakeholders



through intentional outreach, branding, and community partnerships to enhance the chapter's visibility and engagement.

- **Mission Delivery:** Serve as the primary ambassador of the chapter's mission, embodying the organization's values and ethos. Inspire staff, volunteers, donors, and the community to actively support and advance the Make-A-Wish mission.

Mission Critical Objectives | Year 1

- **Master the Make-A-Wish Model:** Quickly become well-versed in the intricacies, regulations, and best practices of delivering life-changing wishes to children, ensuring every wish is executed with excellence and care.
- **Strategic Planning & Sustainability:** Collaborate closely with the Board, the Make-A-Wish National team, and local staff to develop and implement a long-term strategic plan that secures a sustainable funding model, positioning the chapter for continued growth and success.
- **Fundraising Excellence:** Drive the chapter's fundraising efforts to new heights by securing major gifts, expanding legacy giving, and forging strong corporate partnerships, ensuring a robust and diversified revenue stream.
- **Brand Amplification:** Work in tandem with Make-A-Wish National to enhance the chapter's brand presence, leveraging media and public relations to share the powerful impact of the organization's work and inspire greater community engagement.
- **Wish Program Expansion:** Strengthen and grow the wish program by actively engaging volunteers, increasing language accessibility, and ensuring that every child touched by Make-A-Wish feels supported and uplifted throughout their journey.

THE INDIVIDUAL

The ideal candidate is a seasoned and dynamic leader with significant executive experience in managing complex organizations. They will bring a deep understanding of strategic leadership and relationship-building, with a proven track record of operational excellence and business acumen, gained in either the nonprofit or corporate sector. This individual must possess exceptional communication skills, a demonstrated ability to drive organizational growth, and a history of working closely with boards to set and achieve ambitious goals. With a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a deep connection to the local community, this leader will inspire and empower staff, volunteers, and supporters to advance Make-A-Wish Metro and Western New York's mission.



Professional Qualifications & Attributes

- Executive or management experience at a respected nonprofit or corporation, or significant nonprofit experience developed through voluntary service in the sector. While previous nonprofit CEO



experience is highly desirable, individuals with a strong record of performance are encouraged to apply

- Fundamental understanding or experience in major gift cultivation, solicitation, and fundraising principles as they impact an organization
- Exceptional leadership and communication skills, including a proven track record in leading and growing organizations
- Has worked closely and positively with governing/fundraising boards and effectively developed and strengthened those boards
- Is a consensus builder, team builder, and a coach when working with staff and volunteers
- Attracts and retains top talent and builds strong and enduring relationships
- Possesses working knowledge of the legal, fiscal, and regulatory environment in which a nonprofit operates
- Strong business and budget management skills
- Passion for, and commitment to, the Make-A-Wish Metro and Western New York Mission
- Strategic thinker who can also plan and execute short-term objectives in pursuit of a long-term vision and create action plans that yield results
- Has personal ethics and integrity that reflect positively on the mission and the organization, is a passionate and convincing champion for the mission, and is involved and respected in the community
- Able to work collegially within the federated model of Make-A-Wish America
- Committed to championing diversity, equity and inclusion, fostering an organization that is accessible and welcoming to all
- Relationships and knowledge of communities across the region is strongly preferred
- Bachelor's degree required, with an advanced degree preferred

Travel - This position requires you to travel several times to the National office in Arizona as well as chapter locations in Rochester & Buffalo.



YOUR SEARCH TEAM

Leveraging deep vertical experience, innovative thinking, and proven time-saving methodologies, McDermott + Bull challenges the norm and thrives in the recruitment of difficult-to-find VP to C-Suite executive talent. We value a personalized service model while having the resources and capabilities of the world's largest search firms. With experienced partners in the United States, Canada, and Europe, we are the trusted retained search advisor for empowering change on behalf of private and public companies, nonprofit organizations, private equity firms, and their operating companies.

Serving as your brand ambassador and an extension of your team, we guide you through the entire search, selection, and hiring process with care and the utmost attention to detail.



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