



The Impact of Make-A-Wish

2022 Wish Impact Survey Results

Executive Summary:

In 2010, Make-A-Wish® led a study that defined for the first time the impact of wishes on the children and families that are part of the wish journey. This research provided quantitative measures of the breadth and depth of the impact of the Make-A-Wish mission – previously supported by anecdotal knowledge and assumptions – that wish impact is not limited to the immediate emotional effects on wish children. Rather, Make-A-Wish broadly enhances the quality of life for children and their families by promoting resilience and increasing well-being.

Now in 2022, this research has been expanded to include a much larger population of Make-A-Wish children and parents, in addition to medical professionals. Over a decade later, **a large majority of Make-A-Wish alumni, parents, and medical providers overwhelmingly agree that the wish experience contributes substantially to physical, mental, and emotional health; and:**

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

Methodology

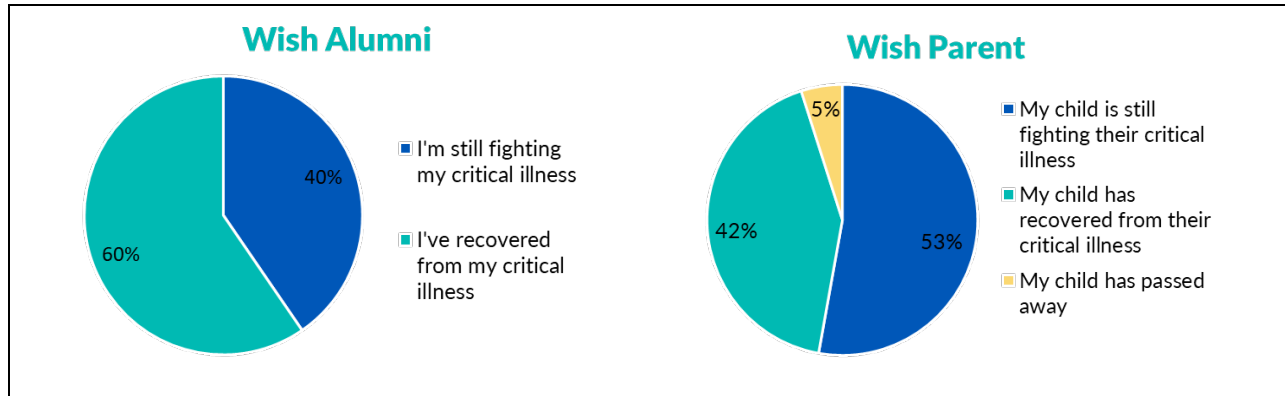
Between October-November 2021, Make-A-Wish conducted an online survey of 3,369 children and adults 18+ composed of 348 wish alumni, and 3,021 wish parents. Respondents were representative of wishes granted between 2009-2019. In addition, a companion survey of 42 medical professionals was also conducted. Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error for 348 respondents is +/- 5.3, the margin of error for 3,021 respondents is +/- 1.8 percentage points, and the margin of error for 42 respondents is +/- 10.5 percentage points. This means that all other things being equal, the identical survey repeated will have results within the margin of error 95 times out of 100.



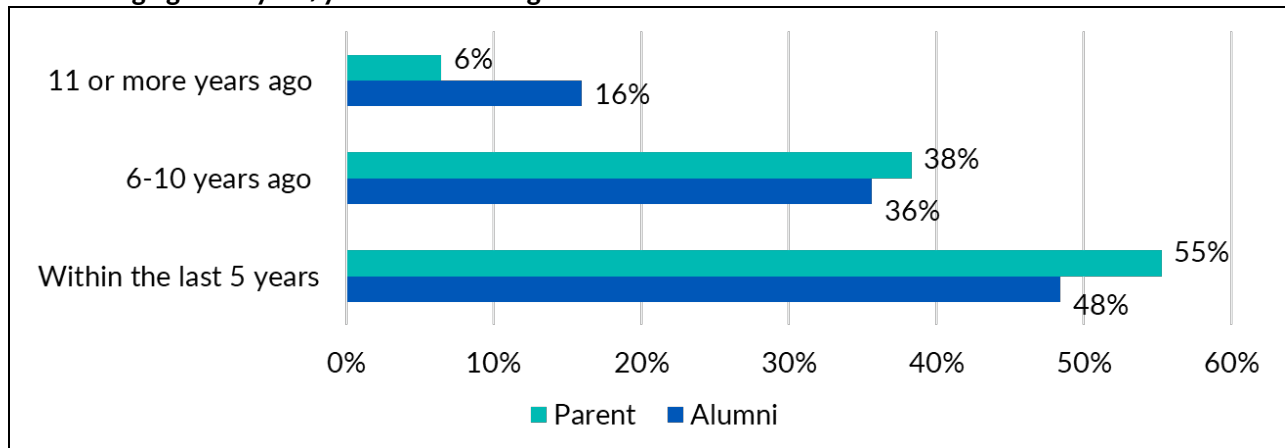


Background Information Gathered:

Current Health Status:



How long ago was your/your child's wish granted?



Notable Findings:

Wish Parents:

93% of wish parents say they experienced traumatic stress as a result of their child's critical illness. (While the prevalence of mental and emotional distress in children with a critical illness depends upon the specific diagnosis, research shows that a critical illness can negatively affect the emotional health of patients, families and caregivers.)

91% believe the wish experience is a necessary part of a child's treatment journey.

91% believe the wish experience gave their child a better chance of surviving their critical illness.

94% saw their child's emotional well-being improve through the wish experience.

95% of wish parents said their wish improved their family's well-being.

95% of wish parents said their wish brought their family closer together.

97% of wish parents said their child's wish made their child feel more joyful.

72% of wish parents said the wish experience helped improve their child's physical well-being.

65% of wish parents said the wish experience helped their family connect more with their community.

51% of wish parents said they observed their child increasing their compliance with treatment after learning they would receive a wish.





Wish Alumni:

- 87%** of wish alumni say their family experienced traumatic stress as a result of their critical illness. (While the prevalence of mental and emotional distress in children with a critical illness depends upon the specific diagnosis, research shows that a **critical illness** can negatively affect the emotional health of patients, families and caregivers.)
- 95%** of wish alumni said their wish improved their well-being.
- 91%** of wish alumni said their wish improved their overall quality of life.
- 92%** of wish alumni said their wish brought their family closer together.
- 90%** of wish alumni said their wish gave them more confidence and boosted their self-esteem.
- 95%** of wish alumni said the wish helped them overcome feelings of sadness.
- 95%** of wish alumni felt more hopeful for their future after their wish.
- 99%** of wish alumni said their wish made them feel more joyful.
- 85%+** of wish alumni said their wish helped them overcome feelings of hopelessness, depression and loneliness.
- 73%** of wish alumni said the wish experience helped improve their physical well-being.
- 73%** of wish alumni said the wish experience made them more willing to make choices that positively affected their health, such as healthy eating.
- 67%** of wish alumni said they increased their compliance with treatment after learning they would receive a wish.

Medical Providers:

Effect of a wish on children and families:

- 98%** observed that families experience traumatic stress as a result of their child's critical illness.
- 98%** said they observed the wish experience helped relieve a family from any amount of traumatic stress related to their child's critical illness.
- 100%** said the wish experience improves a child's emotional well-being.
- 98%** said the wish experience has a positive impact on a child's physical well-being.
- 90%+** of medical providers said a wish experience helps a child overcome feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, depression and loneliness.
- 95%** said the wish experience helps a child feel more hopeful for the future.
- 100%** said the wish experience helps a child feel more joyful.
- 90%** said they have observed children increasing their compliance with treatment after learning they would receive a wish.
- 75%** said a wish improves a child's medical outcomes.
- 65%** said a wish improves a child's chance for survival.

Effect of a wish on Medical Providers:

- 100%** said the wish experience helps them feel more hopeful and joyful.
- 93%** said the wish experience strengthens their relationship with their patients who are fighting pediatric critical illness.





Top-Used Verbatim Themes:

- 2,333: **“Experience”** was the most used word to describe their wish.
- 2,072: Wish experience provided **“memories that last a lifetime”**
- 1,157: Wishes **“helped in the medical journey”** in one way or another
- 921: **“Happiness”** was experienced during their wish
- 741: Helped **“bring wish families together”**
- 730: Wish experience brought **“joy”**
- 684: Wish experience brought **“hope”**
- 195: Wish experience gave **“strength”**

Wish Impact Verbatims:

- The Wish Impact Survey included five open-ended questions
- Quotes gathered: 10K +

“Before I received my wish, my quality of life was horrible, and I had no desire to keep going. When I learned I would be getting a wish, I had something that made me want to fight for my life. Now, instead of having 100 seizures a day, I have less than 10 a day.” —Anonymous

It has been 10 years since receiving my wish and it is still one of the best experiences I have had in my life. I often think back to how special I felt and how lucky I was to get an experience like that. —Anonymous, wish alumni

My wish of a college scholarship gave me long term purpose and continues to remind me of what I am capable of achieving despite my disease. —James, wish dad

I think in looking back on my son's cancer/treatment/recovery, the Wish trip is in many ways more memorable than his sickness...even 8 years later we have more memories of his wish trip and the fun we had together as a family than we do of the illness. —Anonymous, wish parent

Make-A-Wish was a great incentive during my child's very difficult cancer journey. Knowing he was going to be granted a wish improved his overall wellbeing (very importantly including his mental, emotional & psychological state of mind). —Sherri, wish mom

My daughter never talked to anyone besides family before her wish. After her wish she talked to her doctor for the first time ever! —Sarah, wish mom

My child is now 25 and we still constantly talk about [his wish]. When he is hurting, he imagines being on the island. It's his happy place. —Marian, wish mom

