



# WishMakers Wanted

*I wish to go  
to Hawaii*

**Julia, 7**  
blood disorder

— Make-A-Wish® —  
NEBRASKA

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



*I wish to go  
to Hawaii*

**Julia, 7  
blood disorder**

Dear Friend of Make-A-Wish Nebraska,

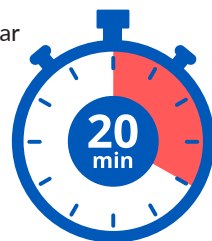
It started with a single wish on April 29, 1980: 7-year-old Chris, struggling with leukemia, wanted to be a police officer for a day. Six people answered the call, rallied the entire community, and granted a wish that lifted Chris up during his darkest days. These original WishMakers were so inspired by the impact of Chris's wish that they vowed to do more. A global movement was born.

Today, over 500,000 children throughout the world have received wishes that replace fear with confidence, sadness with joy and anxiety with hope. The Make-A-Wish Nebraska Chapter, established in 1983, has granted the wishes of over 3,200+ children across the state, including Julia's wish to go to Hawaii.

Julia (pictured on the front cover) was diagnosed with a rare bone marrow disorder at the age of 5. Once her diagnosis was determined, she was tethered to the hospital, dependent on weekly transfusions, scheduled for a life-altering transplant, and placed in an immunocompromised bubble for months to come. Doing typical family activities was out of reach, especially a trip.

During Julia's life-saving treatments, her family learned she would be eligible for a wish. This created a spark that ignited the hope to look beyond her treatments. Julia's one true wish was "to play in the sand on a beach with umbrellas in Hawaii with my family." Julia and her family's minds began to fill with thoughts of tropical beaches, sunshine and playing in the sand – a very welcome distraction from the situation they were experiencing. Because of WishMakers, Julia and her family enjoyed the most special week together making memories, celebrating her recovery, and finally taking a moment to exhale and relax in the sun and sand, soaking up every single second of Julia's dream come true!

Although we have granted numerous wishes like Julia's, our work is far from done. In the next 20 minutes, another child will learn that they have a critical illness. And 20 minutes later, another. Wishes don't come true by luck or chance. As long as children face this devastating reality, it's WishMakers – donors, volunteers, and the community – that help give them a piece of their childhood back.



Thank you for helping us create wishes that have the power to spark hope and launch a child onto a journey filled with exciting possibilities, creating a turning point in their treatment and recovery.

A child makes a wish. WishMakers, like YOU, make the difference.

Sincerely,

*Brigette Young* *Kelly Hillman*  
Brigette Young      Kelly Hillman  
President/CEO      Board Chair

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

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**Nina Targy**  
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**LINCOLN OFFICE**  
 8033 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite B  
 Lincoln, NE 68512  
 Phone (402) 475-9474

**Melissa Davis-Schmit**  
 Vice President - Lincoln Region

**Mindy Lubeck**  
 Wish & Development Manager -  
 Lincoln Region

**KEARNEY OFFICE**  
 412 East 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite D  
 Kearney, NE 68847  
 Phone (308) 234-6612

**Courtney Hughbanks**  
 Development Director  
 - Greater Nebraska

**Chloe Wise**  
 Wish & Development Coordinator  
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## Refer A Child!

At Make-A-Wish Nebraska, we grant wishes to children throughout Nebraska who have been diagnosed with a critical illness and are between the ages of 2-1/2 and 18 years old.

To refer a child you think might qualify for a wish, please contact us at 800-760-WISH (9474).



# WishMakers Wanted

DONOR



## Amirah's Story

For 10 years, Morgan Stanley has been an unwavering supporter of Make-A-Wish Nebraska. After an employee's daughter received a wish in 2015 to travel to NYC, Morgan Stanley knew they would be involved with our organization long-term. Each year, their employees come together to grant the wish of a child diagnosed with a critical illness. A child just like Amirah.

Eight-year-old Amirah has sickle cell disease, a blood disorder that causes her pain, discomfort, and the inability to fight infections on her

own. Amirah's mom, India, tries to maintain a sense of normality and stability for her amongst the constant hospital stays.

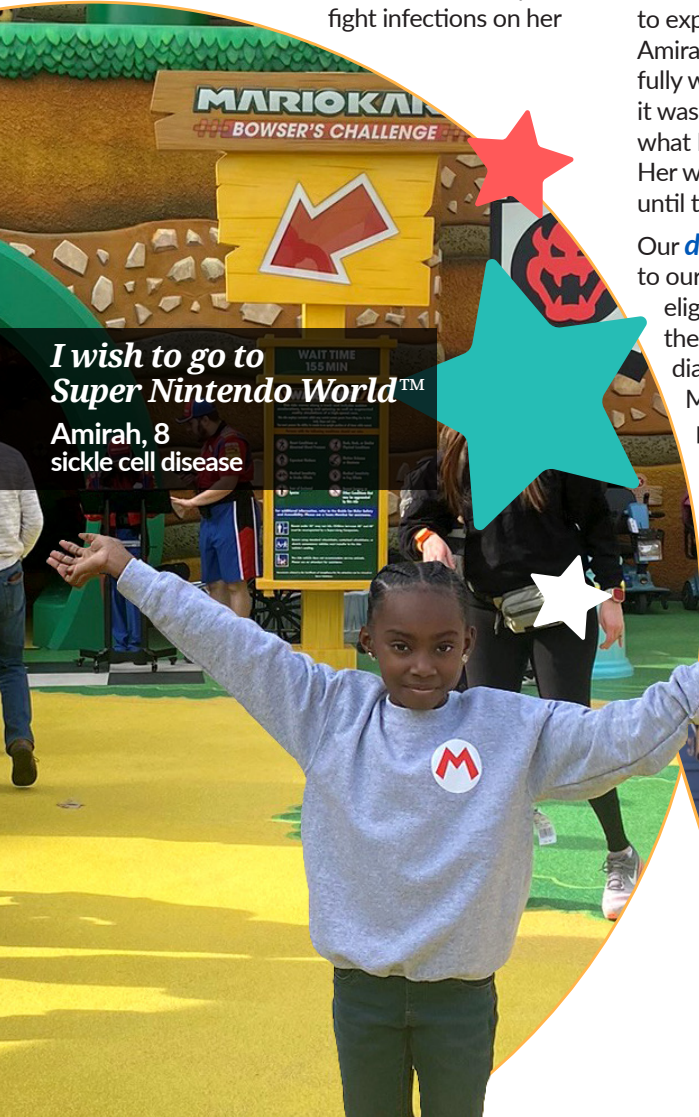
For Amirah's wish, she chose to visit Super Nintendo World™ at Universal Studios® Hollywood. She chose this wish because she likes to watch YouTube videos and one of her favorite YouTubers, Salish, visited Super Nintendo World™.

"Her wish was really important to her because not only was it something she REALLY wanted to experience, but it also gave her hope," said Amirah's mom. "She really didn't understand fully what Make-A-Wish was about, but once it was explained to her, she cried knowing what Make-A-Wish does for children like her. Her wish was a recurring topic in our house until the morning we left!"

Our **donors'** loyal support helps us get closer to our vision of granting the wish of every eligible child! As long as children face the devastating reality of a critical illness diagnosis, we need **WishMakers**, like Morgan Stanley, to help give these kids a piece of their childhood back.

*I wish to go to  
Super Nintendo World™*

Amirah, 8  
sickle cell disease



# WishMakers Wanted

## VOLUNTEER

### Isaiah's Story

In December 2021, Isaiah, 15 years old, began having severe pain in the bone of his foot. The pain became persistent and lasted for a couple of weeks. His parents knew something wasn't right, so they took him to the doctor where he had bloodwork done, followed by an x-ray. Diagnosis: B cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, a type of blood cancer.

This diagnosis resulted in a lengthy stay at Children's Nebraska which included intense, NONSTOP treatment as a part of his daily regime for 9 straight months. About halfway through treatment, he learned he was eligible for a wish. This was exciting news and a nice distraction from the harsh realities of his daily treatments. It allowed him to keep his mind off everything he was going through and focus on something positive.

He thought long and hard about his wish before first meeting with his wish granters. He wanted something that would last a very long time and could be used for the rest of his life. With that in mind, he decided he wanted a music studio in his bedroom because of his love for music and producing songs.

"The day my wish was granted was a surprise! No one told me when it was going to happen. I don't particularly like the unexpected because I prefer to be prepared, but my wish was a welcome surprise and I loved every minute. There was a LOT of thought put into the day — from the baked potato bar (a favorite of mine) to the unveiling of the music production studio. My wish was absolutely life changing. I have always loved music, and this wish will allow me to continue doing what I love," said Isaiah.

According to Isaiah's wish granter, Dawn, "I have been a part of Make-A-Wish for many years on different

levels. Isaiah is truly a unique & caring person.

From the slideshow at our first meeting to seeing his studio and hearing some of his music; being part of granting Isaiah's wish has been an extremely rewarding experience. I can't wait to see (& hear) what comes out of his studio."

A wish can be a turning point in a child's medical journey that opens the door to exciting possibilities. The time and talent of over 350 **volunteers** throughout the state of Nebraska allow us to restore hope for children in need of a wish come true. When a wish is granted, these **WishMakers** are instrumental in restoring hope for that child when they need it most.



*I wish to have  
a Music Studio  
in my home*  
Isaiah, 15  
leukemia

# WishMakers Wanted

## COMMUNITY

### Lucas's Story

Wish kid Lucas, diagnosed with a respiratory disorder, was born at 24-weeks gestation along with his twin sister. His first 289 days after birth were spent in the NICU between a total of three hospitals. Now 3 ½ years old, Lucas continues to have lung problems, slow growth and is nonverbal. He also has a trach and is fed primarily through a g-tube.

As a single mother, Lucas's mom, Samantha, spent the months they were in the hospital preparing for the twins to come home. Lucas' diagnosis requires life-saving medical equipment, the storage needed for it all and the people to help when needed. Along with preparing for their needs, Samantha was also

preparing to create some normalcy for her oldest child when they came home.

Lucas is a go-getter and loves to be on the move. He is obsessed with Mickey Mouse. He loves being outside and exploring, seeing what kind of things are lurking in the dirt. He particularly loves to watch sports, mainly hockey. His aunt started the obsession with hockey, and he just took to it. He has always been so excited to watch it in person and on the TV.

Unfortunately, a wish to go somewhere wasn't even a possibility due to Lucas' health needs. After some thoughtful consideration about what would be meaningful to him, Lucas and his family landed on a wish to be a Lincoln Stars Hockey Teammate due to his love for hockey.

"This wish gave all of us a chance to have a fun night and celebrate the things he has accomplished. Things that may be small accomplishments to most people are large milestones for us. It also gave us all a night to not think about tomorrow and all the hospitals and the doctors," said Samantha.

Lucas was beyond excited to be that close to all the players and participate in the puck drop. Each and every player went above and beyond to make Lucas feel extra special and make him feel like he was a part of the team — a team or community he would never have had the opportunity to be a part of normally.

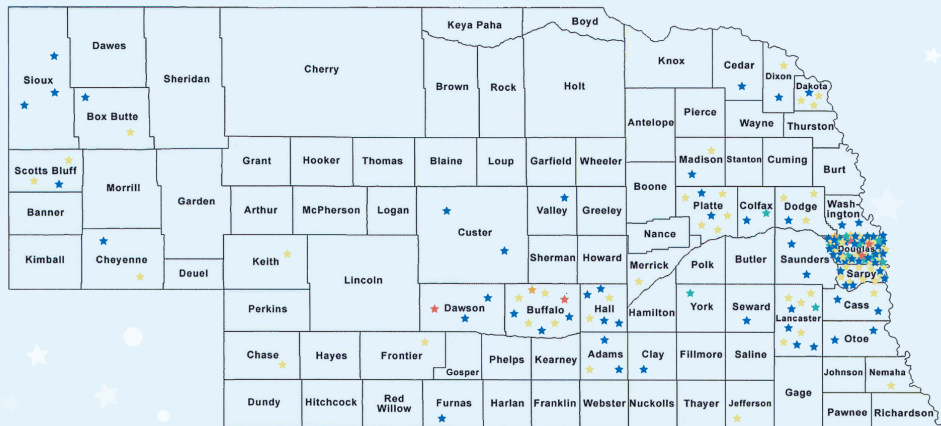
**WishMakers**, like the Lincoln Stars Hockey Team, are vital to our mission and an instrumental part of a wish come true! A wish doesn't just involve a singular person, it involves the **community** doing their part to make it an experience to remember in the days, months and years ahead for these kids and their families.



*I wish to meet  
the Lincoln  
Stars*

Lucas, 3  
respiratory disorder

# Your Support Has Statewide Impact



★ I wish to be    
 ★ I wish to meet    
 ★ I wish to have    
 ★ I wish to go    
 ★ Deciding on wish

Make-A-Wish has the power to spark hope and launch a child onto a journey filled with exciting possibilities; creating a turning point in their treatment and recovery. This type of impact can only be found in a wish. Last fiscal year, we were able to grant 118 wishes due to the generous support of our loyal **WishMakers**.

Our work doesn't end there. At this time, we have 160+ wish kids waiting for their wishes to come true. Along with the large number

of children being referred and/or waiting for their wish, we have also seen an increase of 25% in the cost to grant wishes since COVID. We have been fortunate to never turn down a child who deserved a wish or place them on a waiting list until funds are available, and we hope we can continue this into the future. To fulfill our vision of granting the wish of every eligible child, we must continue to meet the capacity needed to grant the wishes of all critically ill children who are now able and ready to go on their wish.

A special thank you to those who gave to Make-A-Wish in recognition of loved ones

## In Honor of

Mike Abramson  
 Nicholas Foxworthy  
 Hadley Hueftle  
 Paul Klinker  
 Carter Wagner  
 Lexie & Andy Zessin

## In Memory of

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 Morgan Wees  
 Joann Wilke  
 Ivy Zoucha

This Annual Report is dedicated to our Wish Kids who passed away during the fiscal year.  
*Forever in Our Hearts.*

# Thank you to our generous Donors & Supporters

Make-A-Wish Nebraska is funded entirely by private contributions. Every gift is important to the Foundation and our ability to carry out our mission to grant wishes. Due to space limitations, only gifts of \$1,000 or more are listed in this report. This report is also available on [wish.org/nebraska](http://wish.org/nebraska). For more information or to report an error, please contact Make-A-Wish at 800-760-9474. The following generous donors contributed monetary or in-kind gifts during our fiscal year, Sept. 1, 2023 to Aug. 31, 2024.

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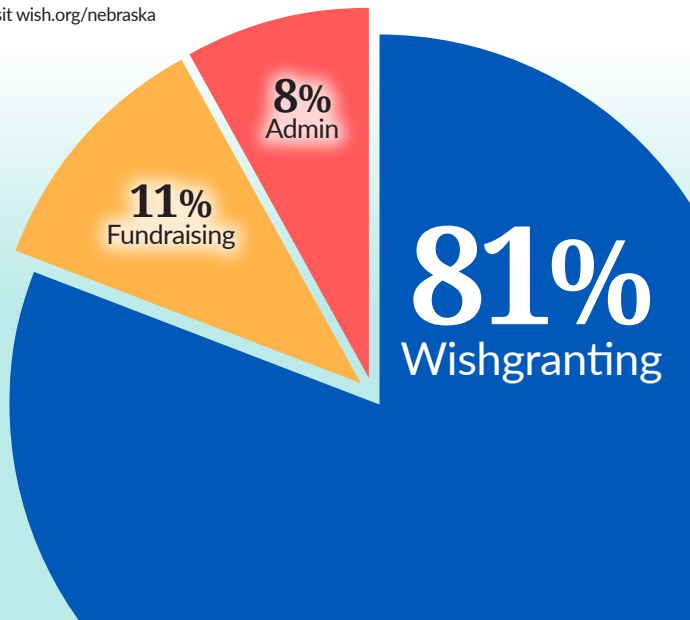
*Certain donors prefer to maintain their anonymity and, thus, are not included in this list. If you or your organization contributed within the last year and find your name absent, we sincerely apologize for any unintentional omission.*

# Financial Statement

Audited financial statement for Fiscal Year 2024 (September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024)

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Revenues, gains, and other support	
Public Support	
Contributions, Cash	1,954,166
Contributions, Donated Goods & Services	2,290,416
Grants	445,639
Total public support	<u>4,690,221</u>
Internal special events, Cash	1,096,123
Internal special events, Donated Goods & Services	6,764
Less costs of direct benefits to donors	(226,684)
Total internal special events	<u>876,203</u>
Investment income (Loss), net	1,438,047
Other income	600
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>0</u>
Total revenues, gains, and other support	<u>7,005,071</u>
Expenses	
Program services	
Wishgranting	<u>4,557,040</u>
Support services	
Fundraising	61,0224
Management and general	428,650
Total support services	<u>1,038,874</u>
Total expenses	<u>5,595,914</u>
Change in net assets	1,409,157
Net assets, beginning of the year, as adjusted	<u>12,452,493</u>
Net assets, end of the year	<u>13,861,650</u>

If you would like a copy of the full CliftonLarsonAllen audit, please contact the Make-A-Wish Nebraska office or visit [wish.org/nebraska](http://wish.org/nebraska)



# wishmakers needed

Wishes don't come true by luck or chance. They come true because of WishMakers. From small donors to big corporations, from caring, everyday individuals who just want to get involved. We grant wishes because of their commitment and support to a cause bigger and more important than themselves. It's as easy as sharing your unique talents or giving some of your precious time or treasure. Every little bit makes a difference.

## Donate

It is as simple as making a gift through the donation of cash, check or online at [wish.org/Nebraska/donate](http://wish.org/Nebraska/donate) or with the donation of goods and services. Nearly 40 percent of our wish items come in the form of an in-kind donation including such things as frequent flyer miles, hotel loyalty points, building materials, new electronics, and more. To learn more, please contact our office at [info@nebraska.wish.org](mailto:info@nebraska.wish.org).

## Volunteer

Volunteers are the backbone of the Make-A-Wish mission. From wish granters to hotel decorators, over 350 volunteers throughout the state help make a wish come true. Sharing of time and talents is an integral part of the wish journey and a necessity to our success. Please visit [wish.org/nebraska/volunteer](http://wish.org/nebraska/volunteer) to learn more and get involved.

## Community Advocate

Whether it's helping at a wish reveal, attending a fundraiser, or coordinating a workplace give back day, passionate supporters rally their networks to help grant wishes in their communities. To learn how your community can get involved, please contact our office at [info@nebraska.wish.org](mailto:info@nebraska.wish.org).



To keep up to date on all the ways you can support local wish kids, sign up for our monthly newsletter! You can sign up by visiting [wish.org/nebraska](http://wish.org/nebraska) and clicking "Sign up for our newsletter" toward the bottom of the web page.



**Fiscal Year 2024** was an outstanding year for granting wishes throughout the state of Nebraska. We were able to grant the heartfelt wishes of 118 children with critical illnesses

**Name, Age, Hometown, Illness**

**Wish**

Orion, 8, Lincoln, cancer	I wish to meet the Unspeakables
Harper, 8, Bellevue, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet princesses
Alexis, 14, Kearney, leukemia	I wish to go to Universal Studios® and see Jurassic Park
Alexandria, 5, Harrison, nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet princesses
Krayton, 5, Crofton, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and see alligators
Oliver, 11, Gretna, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and ride all the rides
Caiden, 7, Lincoln, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Gavin, 10, Omaha, congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Caleb, 15, Columbus, nervous system disorder	I wish to have an online shopping spree to buy gaming stuff
James, 4, Lincoln, cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Amirah, 8, Omaha, sickle cell disease	I wish to go to Super Nintendo World™
Riley, 17, Bennington, bone marrow transplant	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Tyler, 9, Bennington, neuromuscular disorder	I wish to go to Super Nintendo World™
Bryson, 11, Aurora, chronic kidney disease	I wish to go on the Jurassic Park Tours where the movie was made
Chloe, 11, Lincoln, cancer	I wish to have the zoo brought to me
Henry, 10, Omaha, neuromuscular disorder	I wish to go to Legoland®
Jade, 18, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to meet The Rock
Andrew, 6, West Point, nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Hawaii before I lose my eyesight
Keely, 7, Arcadia, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and ride all the rides
Caleb, 17, Bellevue, kidney transplant	I wish to go to Mall of America
Brianah, 9, Hastings, nervous system disorder	I wish to have a camper
Ethan, 11, Omaha, blood disorder	I wish to have a shopping spree
Justys, 16, Dannebrog, leukemia	I wish to have an online shopping spree to buy electronics
Miles, 15, Lincoln, neuromuscular disorder	I wish to go whale watching in Hawaii
Timothy, 18, Omaha, cancer	I wish to go to Bethesda Studios
Kynzlee, 3, Lincoln, congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet the princesses
David, 18, Omaha, chronic kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Ella, 16, Holdrege, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Hawaii
Aaron, 14, Bennington, brain tumor	I wish to have an online shopping spree
Collin, 18, Doniphan, bone marrow transplant	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and Sea World®
Quinn, 13, Fremont, lymphoma	I wish to go to Maui to zipline and snorkel
Oliver, 13, Blair, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Turks & Caicos
Brody, 11, Omaha, congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and ride all the rides
Archer, 4, Lincoln, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Lewis, 5, Gretna, congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet the Marvel characters
Elle, 4, Omaha, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet the princesses
Aariyah, 5, Omaha, heart condition	I wish to have a camper
Azalea, 8, Omaha, nervous system disorder	I wish to have a hot tub with a lift
Lucas, 16, Bristow, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a gaming and coding computer
Hayden, 9, Omaha, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet Elsa
Lexand, 17, Wilber, leukemia	I wish to go to Hawaii
Miles, 5, Bellevue, wilms tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
AnaLee, 11, Grand Island, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Ethan, 13, Omaha, brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Matthew, 6, Holdrege, respiratory failure	I wish to have two couches
Jaden, 4, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Jessa, 11, Omaha, rare genetic condition	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Trystyn, 13, Beatrice, nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and ride all the rides
Zaine, 10, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Brooklyn, 10, Lincoln, nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Zion National Park
Joseph, 16, Wayne, heart failure	I wish to have an online shopping spree
Aurora, 5, Bellevue, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a play structure
Kirra, 4, Gretna, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to see Anna and Elsa
Macy, 18, Grand Island, brain tumor	I wish to have a camper

this year. Wishes ranged from the ever-popular trip to Walt Disney World® Resorts, Hawaii, to going on a shopping spree, to meeting their favorite celebrity.



**Name, Age, Hometown, Illness**

**Wish**

Isaiah, 15, Axtell, leukemia	I wish to have a recording studio in my home
Jensen, 5, Central City, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Olivia, 14, Peru, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Hawaii and swim with dolphins
Lila, 10, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Samuel, 7, Scottsbluff, leukemia	I wish to have a shopping spree in Denver
Brantley, 8, Lincoln, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and Universal Studios®
Vanesa, 6, Omaha, cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet Stitch and Ariel
Elliott, 8, Omaha, blood disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet the princesses
Brady, 10, Papillion, chronic kidney disease	I wish to go to Discovery Cove and swim with dolphins
Elija, 18, Omaha, genetic disorder	I wish to go to the US Virgin Islands and snorkel
Mya, 9, Lincoln, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet Stitch
Ellis, 18, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Zain, 5, Omaha, brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and ride all the rides
Jack, 12, Papillion, cancer	I wish to go to NYC and see a soccer game
Ryleigh, 5, Bellevue, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet Mickey Mouse
Kevin, 9, Omaha, cancer	I wish to go to Discovery Cove
Braxton, 14, Gibbon, leukemia	I wish to have a shopping spree in Denver
Baylor, 3, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a travel trailer
Brogan, 8, Harrisburg, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a camper
Karsyn, 7, Phillips, nervous system disorder	I wish to have a lift to help me get from the deck to the pool
Paxtonn, 11, Columbus, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Ryder, 3, Blue Hill, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Gracie, 17, North Platte, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a girls weekend with my mom at Mall of America and a spa
Brixten, 8, Harlan, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a play structure
Lily, 14, Bennington, brain tumor	I wish to go to Oahu, Hawaii
Briaja, 7, Kearney, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to see Mickey Mouse
Greyan, 12, Grand Island, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and ride all the rides
Annabelle, 13, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a swimming pool
Broolynn, 12, Omaha, nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Sea World® and to a Turtle Rescue
Elizabeth, 12, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Kona to go deep sea fishing
Bailey, 3, Aurora, leukemia	I wish to have a play structure
Charlotte, 5, Omaha, brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet Cinderella and Snow White
Helena, 6, Omaha, heart transplant	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet the princesses
Kaleb, 14, Bellevue, lymphoma	I wish to go to Hawaii
Elias, 5, Plattsmouth, wilms tumor	I wish to have a treehouse
Jaxyn, 5, Omaha, cystic fibrosis	I wish to have an online shopping spree
Brennden, 17, Omaha, brain tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii
Joel, 5, Columbus, leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Hunter, 15, Omaha, autoimmune disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Jose, 5, Omaha, congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Branson, Missouri to see the Titanic Museum
Anastasia, 5, Papillion, leukemia	I wish to go camping in a cabin in Branson, Missouri
Brexton, 8, Ogallala, congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Jaziel, 4, Lincoln, leukemia	I wish to be a zoo keeper

# 118 Wishes Granted!

118 Wishes were granted across the State of Nebraska in fiscal year 2024

Walt Disney World® Resort/Land.....	51
Domestic Travel .....	16
Hawaii .....	13
Shopping Spree .....	10
Camper .....	6
Playstructure.....	5
Celebrity.....	3
Gaming System .....	3
Hot Tub/Pool.....	3
Other.....	8
<b>Total Wishes in FY24.....</b>	<b>118</b>

# Make-A-Wish®

NEBRASKA

[wish.org/nebraska](https://wish.org/nebraska)

800-760-WISH (9474)

**Headquarters**

1005 South 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 102  
Omaha, NE 68114

**Lincoln satellite office**

8033 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite B  
Lincoln, NE 68512

**Kearney satellite office**

412 East 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite D  
Kearney, NE 68847

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Visit [wish.org/nebraska](https://wish.org/nebraska) and click "Sign up for our newsletter" toward the bottom of the web page.

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