

*I wish to be a
superhero*

Kaheem, 5
cancer



**DON'T WAIT
FOR HOPE.**
Create it.

In-Home Gathering Participation Guide

Welcome, Host!

Now more than ever, the world needs the hope of a wish come true. This is where we need YOU!

Thank you for hosting an in-home gathering with the goal of raising funds to support Iowa wish children. This is an opportunity to share your passion for and commitment to Make-A-Wish and to invite those in your inner circle to join you in fulfilling our vision of granting every eligible child's wish.

This toolkit includes information about hosting an in-home gathering and available support. Our goal with this toolkit is to ensure you have all the resources and details at your fingertips to make your experience enjoyable and meaningful. With your support, many more people will discover the life-changing power of a wish and, together, we can make even more wishes come true for children with critical illnesses in our community.

On behalf of Make-A-Wish and the families we serve, thank you!

Your Friends at Make-A-Wish



TOOLKIT CONTENT

- ✓ In-Home Gathering Overview
- ✓ Suggested Planning Timeline
- ✓ Who to Invite
- ✓ Sample Invitation Language
- ✓ Event Program Opportunities

"Emma spent over 14 months living in the hospital, 5 hours from home. She would stare out the window everyday dreaming of playing outside. Now that she has completed treatment and finally living at home- she can play outside everyday thanks to you! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"

- Brandi, Wish Mom

In -Home Gathering Overview

WHAT IS AN IN-HOME GATHERING?

An in-home gathering is an opportunity for a person or people passionate about Make-A-Wish to invite others in their inner circle to join them in supporting Iowa wish kids. The host(s) welcomes guests of their choosing into their home for a casual social that includes an introduction to Make-A-Wish Iowa and an ask to support our organization.

WHAT DOES A HOST DO?

As a host, you personally invite the guest list of your choosing to your home for a casual social (refreshments and timing at your discretion). At the event, you share why you support Make-A-Wish and what your guests can do to make a difference in the lives of Iowa wish kids.

WHO SHOULD BE INVITED?

We recommend you thoughtfully consider inviting those people in your life who may have a connection to the mission of Make-A-Wish, those who have a philanthropic or community support mindset, and those who would be likely to donate at least \$500. You may invite as many/few people as you are comfortable.

WHEN SHOULD I HOST A GATHERING?

A gathering may be hosted whenever it makes sense for you and those you plan to invite. Whether on a weekday or weekend, for brunch or at cocktail hour, the timing is up to you.

WHAT WILL MAKE-A-WISH DO TO ENHANCE THE GATHERING?

We can provide short but impactful videos of wishes come true in our state. Also, our President and CEO, Development Staff Member and/or Board member could also attend to help share the magic of Make-A-Wish. We are also happy to discuss all details of the event with you as you go and answer any questions you might have.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO HOST A GATHERING?

As a host, we are asking you to fund the cost of your gathering, however, we do not wish for this to be a burden. You control the guest list, what you serve and the gathering's duration, so you control the financial commitment.

TIMELINE	RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY
PREPARE	Select a date and time for your event. Create your guest list.
4-6 Weeks Before Event	Email your invitation to your guest list. Remember to request an RSVP.
3 Weeks Before Event	Determine where you want your guests to be in your home/yard and what you plan to serve for refreshments. Request for a wish child/family or Make-A-Wish staff member to participate.
2 Weeks Before Event	Send follow-up messages or make phone calls/texts. Everyone needs reminders!
1 Week Before Event	Prep your gathering area and secure refreshments.
HOST YOUR GATHERING	Welcome your guests and share the magic of Make-A-Wish!
Post Gathering	Thank your guests for attending and supporting Make-A-Wish.

Sample Invitation Messages

Use these invitation templates or create your own. **PRO TIP: Always ask for an RSVP.**

EMAIL INVITATION – SAMPLE 1

Dear Friends,

We warmly invite you to a social gathering at our home on DATE at TIME so we can share with you something pretty special to us: Make-A-Wish Iowa. We have been involved with Make-A-Wish and believe in the impact wishes have on a child with a critical illness. In fact, there are few things more powerful than experiencing the joy of a wish come true.

The need for support is greater now more than ever with over 300 children waiting for their wish to be granted, XXX wishes waiting right here in our city.

Please RSVP to NAME at PHONE/EMAIL by DATE.

Thank you for your friendship and consideration to join us!

EMAIL INVITATION – SAMPLE 2

Dear Friends,

If we haven't let you know before, we have been active supporters of Iowa wish kids through Make-A-Wish and would be honored to host you at our house on DATE at TIME to share little bit more about that. Wishes give back the magic of childhood that's stripped away by illness. They allow kids to be kids, to relax, to laugh, to savor -- and most importantly, to hope. I think we can all agree that hope is a really powerful, necessary thing.

We hope you will be able to join us for a casual party with some great food and drinks, while we share with you a little more about the important mission of Make-A-Wish Iowa. And we hope you will feel empowered to help.

Please RSVP to NAME at PHONE/EMAIL by DATE.

Thank you for your friendship!

EMAIL REMINDER – SAMPLE 1

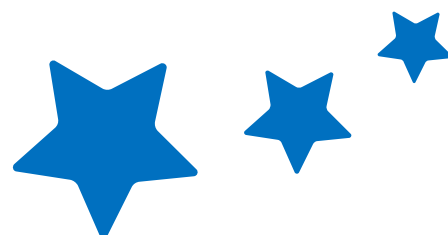
We're excited to host you at our home on DATE at TIME! If you haven't let us know whether you are coming, please take a minute to respond to this message so we can finish planning. If you have any questions you want to ask in advance, let us know any time. We're look forward to seeing you!

Thank you!

EMAIL REMINDER – SAMPLE 2

Hello! We're just following up to see if you can join us for the party at our house on DATE at TIME. We're excited to host you and to share our enthusiasm for Make-A-Wish Iowa. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Thank you!



Tips for Success

Help your guests feel comfortable and inspired with these easy tactics that can apply to any gathering.

Telling Your Story

- ✓ **Tell People What You Are Doing** – “We believe in the power of a granted wish and what it can mean for a child with a critical illness. And we want you all to know what a difference you can make in a child’s life by joining us to support Make-A-Wish.”
- ✓ **Share Why It Matters to You** – “We’ve been supporters of Make-A-Wish since our friend’s daughter received her wish two years ago. We saw what an uplifting experience it was for their whole family.”
- ✓ **Include How They Can Help** – “If you can, please help by donating today. Every dollar matters.”
- ✓ **Keep It Short and Sweet** – Less can be more in making your case for support. Tell your story in a concise and compelling way.

Setting a Goal

- ✓ **Fund-A-Wish** – Challenge guests to collectively donate \$15,000 to grant wishes in Iowa.
- ✓ **100% Participation** – Share how meaningful it would be if every single guest (or couple) makes a donation.
- ✓ **Match Donation** – Offer to match all donations up to a certain total dollar amount.
- ✓ **Personalize It** – Create your own unique goal that makes sense for you and your guests.

Making It Fun

- ✓ **No Pressure** – The more relaxed you are, the more your guests will have a great time. Many may not have been to a gathering like this before and may be unsure of what to expect. There’s no need to put pressure on anyone – most importantly, yourself!
- ✓ **Great Food and Drinks** – Everything is more fun when the food tastes great! Don’t be afraid to try something new, go all in on a theme, or show off a special recipe you’ve perfected. We even have recipes from wish children we can share!
- ✓ **From the Heart** – Honest, heartfelt comments about your experience with Make-A-Wish will make more of an impact than any fancy speech. Share the from the heart and the rest will take care of itself.
- ✓ **Show the Joy** – Oftentimes people think it may be hard to be involved with Make-A-Wish because of the seriousness of each child’s illness. We invite you to show that the opposite is true -- that the JOY and HOPE a granted wish brings is the bright spot and the reason many children keep fighting.

Next Steps

Now you're ready ... Fundraising helps ensure wishes will be granted when wish kids need them most. Here are next steps for your gathering to help ensure those who wish to give have an easy path.

DONATIONS AT THE DOOR

Some guests may wish to make an immediate donation. We encourage you to have a basket and donation envelopes available.

ONLINE

Some guests may prefer to give online and may do so any time at <https://donate.stripe.com/eVa3cvgyRcGqic8www>.

PERSONAL THANK YOUS

We invite you to send a thank you card or email to your guests, both in appreciation of their attendance and for considering/making a donation. We can provide a packet of notecards.

MAKE-A-WISH THANK YOUS

We will follow up with each of your guests by phone, email or mail to thank them for learning more about our mission and offer to answer any questions they might have. We will warmly welcome them to the Make-A-Wish Iowa family!

STAY OPTIMISTIC

Make-A-Wish is incredibly grateful for your support regardless of the amount raised. We are honored you are advocating for wish children in this very personal way. Every message you share, every \$1 you raise is meaningful.



I wish to be a firefighter

Tyren, 3
heart transplant



THANK YOU

We hope, through this toolkit, that you have all the resources and details at your fingertips to host an in-person gathering that is enjoyable and meaningful. With your support, many more people will discover the life-changing power of a wish and, together, we can make even more wishes come true for children with critical illnesses in our community. Thanks to you, we can fulfill our vision of granting every eligible child's wish. Thank you for your time, energy, and enthusiasm!



Contact

We are happy to discuss any aspect of your gathering as you need assistance. Please reach out any time.

Natalie Brecht

Director of Revenue
515.314.2150 (cell)
nbrecht@iowa.wish.org

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

To grant every eligible child's wish.

Our Values

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.