

WISHES

Make-A-Wish[®]
NEBRASKA

Official Newsletter of
Make-A-Wish Nebraska

Spring 2025



*I wish to go
to Walt Disney
World[®]*

Lewis, 5 | Gretna
congenital heart
disease

Make-A-Wish[®]
NEBRASKA
WISH KID

wish.org/nebraska

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



Brigette Young, President and CEO
of Make-A-Wish Nebraska,
with wish kid Hope, whose wish
to go to Harry Potter World®
was granted in 2011.

Dear Friends,

As we begin a new calendar year, we want to pause and celebrate the 118 remarkable wishes we were able to grant last fiscal year. Incredible wishes like trips to Hawaii, a wish to Zion National Park, a zookeeper wish and so many more! As we look ahead to 2025, we know our work is far from over. Currently in Nebraska, we have over 160 wishes waiting to be granted. Wishes that need a caring community of supporters, like YOU, to help them come true.

Every 20 minutes, a child in the U.S. will be diagnosed with a critical illness. Children who are fighting critical illnesses experience extreme emotional challenges every day. All of a sudden, their lives become filled with doctors' visits, harsh treatments and surgeries. Such mental distress can impair a child's long-term healing and leave them feeling hopeless.

However, a wish come true can provide a spark of hope that changes everything. Hope allows a child with a critical illness to find light in the darkness of their current challenges. It transforms their perspective, replacing feelings of trauma with hope for tomorrow. They have a renewed motivation to persevere and envision a brighter future ahead.

When you help grant a wish, you replenish hope for a child to improve their mental well-being. A wish can open the door to exciting possibilities, as it is a turning point in a child's medical journey. Your generosity empowers them to reclaim their childhood, and experience joy in their life that they so desperately deserve.

By having a dedicated community of supporters like you, the unknown feels less scary for a child and their family. Thank you, for providing hope, strength and joy to wish kids in need.

Sincerely,

Brigette Young
President/CEO



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2025 FISCAL YEAR - WISHES SINCE SEPT. 1, 2024

Liam, 12, Papillion	brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Alex, 18, Omaha	endocrine disorder	I wish to go to Costa Rica
Trenton, 15, Omaha	brain tumor	I wish to see sea animals at the zoo	Madeline, 9, Blair	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Aulani® Resort
Lucas, 13, Ashland	lymphoma	I wish to go to Disneyland®	Briar, 5, Omaha	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Savana, 4, Omaha	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Sophia, 17, Lincoln	cancer	I wish to go to Japan
Creighton, 11, Omaha	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Hawaii	Paola, 18, Omaha	cancer	I wish to have a shopping spree
Sawyer, 12, Lincoln	chronic kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and Universal Studios®	Josephine, 4, Omaha	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Jimai, 7, Lincoln	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Lucas, 3, Lincoln	chronic respiratory failure	I wish to meet the Lincoln Stars
Brady, 11, Omaha	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Ryker, 8, Panama	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Wyatt, 9, Ericson	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go deep sea fishing	Viviana, 8, South Sioux City	respiratory failure	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Ariah, 14, Grand Island	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Hawaii	Hayden, 4, Omaha	nervous system disorder	I wish to have a wheelchair accessible travel trailer
Emily, 16, Franklin	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Oahu	Shaeden, 18, Garland	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Cage, 8, Bellevue	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to have a playset	Gabriel, 17, Bellevue	heart transplant	I wish to meet Dak Prescott
Lela, 15, Lincoln	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Everest, 7, Adams	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Emily, 9, Omaha	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Samantha, 15, Bennington	cancer	I wish to go to Maui
Breklyn, 6, Harrisburg	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Discovery Cove®	Grayson, 5, Bellevue	heart failure	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Rianna, 18, Omaha	congenital heart disease	I wish to go to a Taylor Swift concert	Emma, 12, Omaha	intestine	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Blake, 13, Omaha	brain tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii	Luna, 4, Lincoln	lymphoproliferative disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Skylar, 17, Omaha	end stage renal failure	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and dress like Rapunzel	Frederick, 2.5, Omaha	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Paul, 7, Omaha	leukemia	I wish to meet an astronaut and go to Kennedy Space Center	Yermando, 14, Omaha	cancer	I wish to have a shopping spree
Emerson, 4, Lincoln	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Carter, 12, Kearney	lymphoma	I wish to be a St. Louis Blues Hockey Player
Tate, 5, Omaha	congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet Mickey Mouse	Colton, 18, Union	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to New York City
Benjamin, 14, Falls City	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Kase, 8, Cambridge	brain tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii
Troy, 9, Walton	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go on the "Icon of the Seas" cruise	Zoe, 9, Papillion	chronic kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®



*I wish to go to
Walt Disney World®*

Jaden, 4 | Omaha
cystic fibrosis

Jaden's Wish Story

Jaden is a fun, energetic 4-year-old! He loves staying active by playing sports, swimming, camping, and participating in KID STRONG. He also loves Marvel Super Heroes, reading books, and going to school!

As a newborn baby, Jaden was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis. This illness effects his lungs and his digestive system. It is hard for Jaden to process nutrients and fats from foods so he has to take enzymes to help provide his body with necessary vitamins and minerals.

Cystic Fibrosis also causes a sticky mucus to form around his lungs, which can cause coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Jaden uses a vest machine daily to help improve his airways. He also stays active to help clear his lungs and takes a variety of medications to help ease symptoms.

For Jaden's wish, he and his family decided to go to Walt Disney World® Resorts. Jaden's parents wanted him to have a getaway that gave him the space to be a kid, explore, and have fun!

"Jaden's wish was truly a blessing. He got us out of our home to go explore the wonderful world of Disney®! He was pampered and loved," said Jaden's mom, Jordan. "For a young boy, he needed to go out and meet characters and be free! We were able to semi-forget about the hard times and just be us!"

On his wish trip, Jaden met all his favorite characters, he was able to check out the rides at the different Disney® parks, and he was treated like a prince at Give Kids the World®. For Jaden and his family, they appreciated being treated like royalty throughout the wish trip.

"If you're thinking about supporting Make-A-Wish, please know, you really make a difference. Wish kids have the most unforgettable memories because of YOU," said Jordan. "By supporting families, it lifts our spirits and it gives our kids memories for a lifetime! Just thinking about Make-A-Wish brings tears to my eyes. We thank you!"



Sophia's Wish Story

Sophia, 17, is finishing up her Junior year of high school. After high school, she plans to go to college and study interior design. Sophia is bright, joyful and quick witted. She loves hanging out with her friends, working with children, listening to music and taking care of animals – especially her 3 dogs!

Sophia has spent a lot of time in and out of hospitals, receiving grueling treatments and keeping away from the general public due to her weakened immune system. Two weeks before she began high school, Sophia was diagnosed with Orbital Rhabdomyosarcoma in the muscle of her left eye. One week later, she received her first dose of chemo. Suddenly, the fear of starting a new school was pushed to the side and a new fear and feelings of uncertainty took center stage.

While undergoing treatment and being stuck in bed for prolonged periods of time, Sophia would scroll through reels about Japan on her phone. After learning more about Japan, she fell in love with the culture, beauty and dining – especially ramen. She LOVES ramen! When Sophia found out she would be receiving a wish, a new spark of hope was ignited. She knew immediately that she wanted to go to Japan for her wish.

"The rigors of chemo, lab draws, being sick and being kept away from the general public in order to protect her fragile immune system doesn't lend to much joy or much to look forward to," said Sophia's mom, Jessica. "Dreaming about going to Japan gave her something to focus on during the not so fun days, and it gave us as a family an adventure to look forward to together! We got to see that little sparkle of light in her eyes again, when she'd dream about her wish."

I wish to go to Japan

Sophia, 17 | Lincoln cancer

On her wish, Sophia was able to immerse herself in the Japanese culture, see all the natural beauty Japan has to offer and go shopping. And of course, Sophia got to eat really good ramen! More than anything though, Sophia's wish to go to Japan was a chance to spend time with her family and just focus on making beautiful memories.

"Sophia's wish... and even the dream of the wish, gave light to Sophia in a dark situation that had no other purpose than to bring joy, and there isn't much of that in the process of chemo and radiation. Sophia's siblings were included in the wish too, and that meant the world to us as parents," said Jessica. "Their life was flipped upside down, we were all separated, and their struggle was real too. Through the wish though, they were seen and considered too. The trip to Japan brought us full circle as a family, which we are so thankful for!"



Lucas's Wish Story



I wish to meet the Lincoln Stars Hockey Team
Lucas, 3 | Lincoln respiratory disorder

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's 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.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Give Nebraska

Since 2009, Make-A-Wish Nebraska has worked closely with Give Nebraska, as one of the many organizations they collaborate with. Over the last 16 years, Give Nebraska has donated \$242,000 to Make-A-Wish Nebraska through workplace giving campaigns.

Give Nebraska was originally formed in Lincoln in 1981 as a response to donors seeking a greater variety of giving options and for nonprofits looking to expand their sources of funding. Give Nebraska partners with over 75+ local nonprofits across the state to provide fundraising, educational opportunities, public relations, marketing, and networking opportunities for their nonprofit partners.

At Give Nebraska, workplace giving is used to connect generous donors with the charities they care about. Businesses and employees are the driving force. They can participate through becoming "Worksites" and providing the opportunity for employees to donate a portion of their paycheck to local nonprofits. These tax-deductible donations go directly to the nonprofit partners, such as Make-A-Wish Nebraska.

Thanks to their support, Give Nebraska and its donors have helped grant 2-3 wishes per year across the state of Nebraska since 2009. We are so grateful for their steadfast support of our mission and our wish kids. We look forward to continuing this partnership to grant even more wishes in the future!



GIVE NEBRASKA

**This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of our wish kids
who have passed away since our last publication**

DJ, 7
nervous system disorder
I wish to have a gazebo
(Wish Year 2023)

Vanasse, 7
cancer
I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2024)

Jack, 21
brain tumor
I wish to have a golden retriever puppy
(Wish Year 2013)

Lela, 16
seizure disorder
I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2024)

Fidel, 23
brain tumor
I wish to have a room re-do
(Wish Year 2014)

Antonio, 11
uncategorized diagnosis
I wish to have a mobile sensory station
(Wish Year 2015)

Listed are wish kids we have been made aware of, we apologize for any unintentional omissions.

Make-A-Wish®

NEBRASKA

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If you know someone who would like to receive our mailings, or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact our office by email info@nebraska.wish.org or call 800-760-9474.

To refer a child:

Visit wish.org/nebraska
Call 800-760-WISH (9474)

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

Events

Blue Jean Ball

April 12, 2025 | Omaha

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes

May 8, 2025 | Omaha

Norfolk Golf Tournament

May 30, 2025 | Norfolk

Crawl for Cancer

June 7, 2025 | Omaha

Truck Center Companies Concert and Golf Tournament

June 12-13, 2025 | Omaha

Evening of Wishes Gala

August 15, 2025 | Kearney

Duncan Aviation Car Show

August 24, 2025 | Lincoln

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes

September 25, 2025 | Lincoln

Learn more at wish.org/nebraska



Join us April 12th for our annual **Blue Jean Ball: A Night Under the Stars!**

The fun-filled evening will include some very special wish stories, highlighting the life-changing impact of a wish, as well as silent and live auctions raising funds to grant even more wishes for children battling critical illnesses in Nebraska. Get your tickets today at

BlueJeanBallOmaha.org or scan the QR code above. Hope to see you there!