

# WishMaker

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

PAGE 4

## Wishes That Last a Lifetime

Alumni revisit the wishes that helped them heal.

### In This Issue

- 2 Leadership Letter
- 3 Event Recap
- 4 Featured Wish
- 6 Wishes Granted
- 8 Featured Volunteers

**Make-A-Wish®**  
NORTH DAKOTA

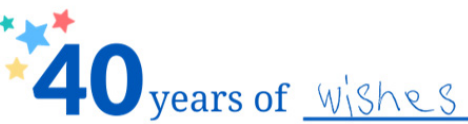
★ CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF WISHES ★



At left: Ellen and Rosebud in 2021;  
Middle: Ellen and Rosebud celebrating  
Christmas in 2011; At right: Ellen, age 5, and  
Rosebud on the set of *Santa Buddies* in 2008.



# Leadership Letter



## DEAR FRIENDS OF MAKE-A-WISH,

Greetings. We hope this finds you happy and well.

40 years! What vision our founders in North Dakota had to imagine communities coming together, helping complete strangers and healing through hope. From our very first wish to today, we are truly grateful to the families who graciously welcome wish granters, staff, donors, and sometimes whole communities into their lives at very vulnerable times in their journey. Thank you also to the donors and volunteers who donate their treasures and time to making wish experiences possible.

As we look to the future, we endeavor to grant every eligible child's wish and recommit to **transforming lives**, one wish at a time. Our focus is clearer now with the 2025 John Dawson Incidence and Prevalence Directional Study highlighted on page 3. This comprehensive research initiative provides new, data-driven insights into the number of children each year diagnosed with critical illnesses in North Dakota who may be eligible for a wish.



Adaptability is imperative as we continue to advance as a chapter. Since 1985, we have evolved and changed with the times. Our mission has expanded as medicine has improved and certainly the wish types have changed over the years with the advent of the Internet. But we have always stayed true to our values, especially the one of being child-focused.

On pages 6 and 7, you will find photos of our recent wish kids. Just as it was in the early days of our chapter, a wish come true is essential to those we serve. We look forward to imagining together what the next 40 years hold for Make-A-Wish North Dakota and designing a joyful future for the children we serve.

Thanks again.

**ONWARD AND UPWARD,**  
**BILLI JO AND JOSH**

## MAKE-A-WISH® NORTH DAKOTA

4143 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 104  
Fargo, ND 58104  
Phone: 701.280.9474  
Fax: 701.280.2684  
Toll-Free: 800.362.9474  
Website: [wish.org/northdakota](http://wish.org/northdakota)

## FOLLOW US

Facebook:  
[Facebook.com/makeawishnd](https://www.facebook.com/makeawishnd)  
YouTube:  
[Youtube.com/MakeAWishND](https://www.youtube.com/MakeAWishND)  
Instagram:  
[@makeawishnd](https://www.instagram.com/makeawishnd)  
LinkedIn:  
Make-A-Wish North Dakota

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Josh Herbold, Chair  
Tanya Cox, Chair-Elect/Vice Chair  
Anthony Dudas, Treasurer  
Weston Dressler, Secretary  
Jenifer Jones-Dees, MD,  
Chapter Medical Advisor  
Erin Beitelspacher  
DJ Campbell  
Cassie Gerhardt  
Bonnie Goldsberry  
Jason Hicks  
Kristen Hintermeyer  
Cody Johnson  
Don Morgan  
KrisAnn Norby-Jahner  
Stacy Roers Irmen  
Kira Stenehjem Noll  
Pastor Bruce Vold

## STAFF

Billi Jo Zielinski  
President and CEO  
Amanda Godfread  
Regional Director - Bismarck  
Kayla Pederson  
Database Manager  
Angie Leier  
Volunteer and Operations Director  
Lindsey Wagner  
Mission Delivery Senior Manager  
Abby Crowley  
Finance and Development  
Coordinator  
Jazzy Lara  
Communication Coordinator  
Melissa Lehr  
Wish Coordinator  
Kelli Just  
Medical Affairs Coordinator - Berlin  
  
Editor: Jazzy Lara  
Design and Layout: Red River Valley Design



# Program Spotlight

New research could mean more referrals! Make-A-Wish now has locally relevant, nationally consistent data that serves a mission-critical purpose of reaching the estimated **66 children diagnosed with a critical illness in North Dakota each year** who could be eligible to have a wish.

Our team's Medical Affairs Coordinator, Kelli Just, is busy utilizing this data to educate medical professionals and helping others in the general public understand who can refer a child, what the referral process is, and who is eligible for a wish. To respect the privacy of families, we only work with these approved referral sources: medical professionals, parents or legal guardians, and family members with detailed knowledge of the child's current medical condition. However, if you are not an approved source, you can play a role by sharing the referral inquiry form with the family or asking them to visit our website. Each wish begins with a referral, and our vision is to reach every eligible child in North Dakota! Learn more about who can refer a child by scanning here. ➡



# Keep Transforming Lives

We invite you to be part of making wishes come true across North Dakota with your donation today! Giving comes in all shapes and sizes with each donation making a difference. Here are ways you can make an impact right now and into the future.

1. **Cash donations** of any amount can be made online by scanning this QR code or by mail to Make-A-Wish North Dakota, 4143 26th Ave S, Ste 104, Fargo, ND 58104.
2. **Monthly giving** allows you to spread your donation over time, while making a significant impact. It also helps us count on your support throughout the year whenever a wish needs to be granted. Scan the QR code and select Monthly Gift to start your donation.
3. **Group donations** can be made by co-workers, peer groups, student organizations, and more through independent fundraisers like a chili cook-off, silent auctions, lemonade stands, bake sales, and other creative ideas. Contact us today so we can help you get started.
4. **In-kind gifts** like unused airline miles, gift cards, concrete services, veterinary services, and the like are always helpful for granting wishes. Contact us today and let us know how you want to donate.
5. **Planned giving** lets you leave your legacy long into the future. You can grant wishes through gifts of stock, your IRA Required Minimum Distribution, naming Make-A-Wish North Dakota in your will, or through a Donor Advised Fund. Contact us today to start your planned gift.



**Let us know how you want to give by calling 701.280.9474 or emailing [agodfread@northdakota.wish.org](mailto:agodfread@northdakota.wish.org).**

# Event Recap

## World of Wishes and Wine & Wishes

World of Wishes was held in Bismarck in late January. Guests heard from wish families from across the decades and saw some of our youngest supporters, the Sweet & Salty Sisters, present the \$7,500 they raised in honor of their aunt, Melanie, whose wish was granted in 1989.

Wine & Wishes was held in early May at the Delta Hotel in Fargo. Linda Pauling, co-founder of Make-A-Wish and mom to Chris Greicius, shared her story on the Wine & Wishes stage, along with wish alumnae Kayla Rosenkranz, Alka Singh, and Emily Gard. Wish mom Pat Pobst also shared how her son, Matthew, received a wish in the 80s.

Wish kid Lucas had the opportunity to showcase his talent on the saxophone and played a jazz rendition of happy birthday on stage. When he was done playing, his wish granters surprised him on stage with the instruments he will need to help further his career. We are sending him best wishes for the upcoming semester!

Both events were such great successes. Thanks to those who donated, attended and promoted both events **we raised the funds to guarantee 27 more wishes will come true for children with critical illnesses.** Thank you all for your support!

## Giving Hearts Day

Giving Hearts Day was celebrated on February 13th this year, and it was inspiring to see our communities come together to support nonprofits throughout the state. **This year, we raised more than \$146,000 - enough to grant 20 more wishes!**

# Save the Date

Support our wish kids at a local event and through online fundraisers!



- JULY** Summer Wish Hero Campaign (Online)
- AUGUST 11** Tommy's Car Wash Fundraiser (Fargo-Moorhead/West Fargo)
- AUGUST 16** Plane Pull & Fly-In Movie Night (Williston)
- SEPTEMBER 6-14** Sunflower Shindig (Emerado)

Keep an eye out for event updates by visiting our website at [wish.org/northdakota/our-events](http://wish.org/northdakota/our-events), or by scanning the QR above!





ELLEN



ELI



LANGLEY

# WISHES THAT LAST A LIFETIME

## ALUMNI REVISIT THE WISHES THAT HELPED THEM HEAL

Over the years we've shared how, statistically, wishes are medicine. For example, 9 out of 10 medical providers observe how the wish experience helps relieve a family from traumatic stress, and 8 out of 10 wish parents see their child feel a stronger sense of empowerment after experiencing a wish. When asked, 8 out of 10 wish kids stated that their wish gave them more courage to fight through their treatments, and 9 out of 10 reported they felt more confident and hopeful for their future.

Numbers and figures are a fantastic way to quickly communicate the impact of the wishes we as a community come together to grant. The true magic of a wish, though, is rooted in the memories wish kids go on to share, and the lives their wishes helped shape. In honor of our 40th anniversary, we reminisced with three wish alumni to see where their lives have taken them. Their stories are a reminder that joy can be found even in the toughest chapters of our lives – all you need is a little bit of magic!



### ELLEN

***I wish to meet the Air Buddies puppies***

Ellen was 5 years old when she was diagnosed with leukemia. In December of 2008, her wish to meet the puppies who starred in the lovable Air Buddies movies brought her to Vancouver, Canada. Though she was young, her love of animals was strong, and she knew right away that meeting the celebrities behind her favorite movies would be a dream come true. Now 22 years old, Ellen is one semester away from graduating with a degree in Communication from the University of North Dakota.

**Q: What do you remember about your wish journey?**

**A:** I will never forget the amazing people I met while on set of the *Santa Buddies* movie, among them Anna McRoberts, the producer, with whom I still keep in contact 17 years later. I will never forget the “movie star treatment” my family and I received throughout my wish trip. Most of all, I will never forget the sense of normalcy and hope my wish gave me and my family as we navigated the scary and challenging journey that came with my cancer diagnosis and treatment.

**Q: Did receiving your wish have any lasting impact on your life outside of your health?**

**A:** Absolutely! My wish gave my family and me the opportunity to spend quality time together during an especially challenging period, drawing us closer, and it allowed me to make connections that will last a lifetime. Beyond that, Anna McRoberts gifted Rosebud, the only female puppy of the bunch, to me after filming was finished. Rosebud, then 4 months old, joined our family a couple of weeks after we returned from my wish trip, and she immediately became my best friend. She was by my side throughout

the rest of my cancer treatment journey, as I celebrated with family and friends at my “End of Chemo Party” two years later, and for 13 more years after that. She saw me through every joy, every heartbreak, every success, and every failure until I was 20 years old. Although we had to say goodbye to Rosebud in July 2023, only a month before she turned 15, her legacy lives on in the hearts of those she touched through volunteer activities with Make-A-Wish North Dakota, meet and greets with local elementary students, and all who visited my family’s farm. I can’t imagine a better, more long-lasting gift from Make-A-Wish North Dakota than Rosebud was.

**Q: You’re graduating soon! Do you have an idea of what’s next?**

**A:** I have accepted a position as Sales & Marketing Coordinator with a running apparel brand called ChicknLegs, and I will move to Cary, North Carolina to pursue the role this July while finishing up my last semester of college via online courses. I’m also training for my second half marathon that will take place in June, loving every minute I get to spend with my beautiful

baby niece, and soaking up all that this wonderful life has to offer!

**Q: If there was only one thing people should know about Make-A-Wish, what would it be?**

**A:** I want people to know Make-A-Wish doesn’t just grant wishes, although that would be spectacular on its own. Make-A-Wish brightens lives and provides hope.



### ELI

***I wish to have my 1974 Pontiac Trans Am restored***

Eli’s wish journey was jump started by an unexpected swollen lymph node that led to a diagnosis of Hodgkin’s Lymphoma when he was 14 years old. Just two weeks before his diagnosis, Eli had been gifted a 1974 Pontiac Trans Am by his late great uncle. Though in his possession for a short time, the car was packed full of memories thanks to the cross-country road trip he and his father took to acquire it. When Eli discovered he could receive his wish come true, he knew he would eventually want to take his driver’s license test in the vehicle that was near and dear to him, but it needed much restoration before being able to get back on the road permanently.

**Q: What do you remember about your wish journey?**

**A:** I remember my wish granters were really nice and helped me feel at ease with the process. I really had a hard time deciding on my wish - it’s really a tough question when somebody asks you to dream big and reach for the stars. I had many ideas pop into my head, but the one thing that kept coming back up was being able to take my driver’s license test in the Trans Am. I was actually hesitant to even bring it up to my wish granters because I knew it was a really big ask, but they

embraced it made it a reality and went above and beyond my wildest dreams.

**Q: Did receiving your wish have any lasting impact on your life outside of your health?**

**A:** I have been able to meet so many interesting people and had many wonderful experiences that would not have been possible without my wish or Make-A-Wish ND. Everyone involved in the process of granting my wish went so far above my dreams - since my wish was granted I have been able to participate in many car shows, and have driven the car across the country in different car events - making many friendships that I probably wouldn’t have without Make-A-Wish.

**Q: What are you up to now?**

**A:** My wife and I live in Sioux Falls, S.D., where I work as a broadcast engineer, maintaining TV and radio stations.

**Q: If there was only one thing people should know about Make-A-Wish, what would it be?**

**A:** One thing that people should know about Make-A-Wish is that they are a truly life-changing organization for so many children and families. Looking back, I am humbled by how many people dedicated so much time to granting my wish. I am so grateful to Make-A-Wish for the impact they have had on my life, and thankful that they continue to make such a large positive impact in the community.



### LANGLEY

***I wish to go to Egypt***

Langley, who was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect at birth, loved mythology and all things history related when they were referred to Make-A-Wish at 15 years old. Their trip to Egypt was the first international trip granted by

Make-A-Wish North Dakota and further bolstered Langley’s love of archaeology and other cultures.

**Q: What do you remember about your wish journey?**

**A:** I remember my granters being very diligent about exactly what I wanted for my wish, making sure that I wrote down what I wanted. I also remember being able to just relax and enjoy my time on my trip without having to worry about going to the doctor’s office or any of the travel bookings.

**Q: Did receiving your wish have any lasting impact on your life outside of your health?**

**A:** My wish absolutely had a lasting impact; I went to college and got my Bachelor’s in Archaeology and have worked in both North Dakota and Minnesota doing field work. I have now changed career paths and am in my second year of mortuary science school, and that choice was also impacted by my experience with Make-A-Wish. I want to be able to serve families and decedents in the ways they want to be treated and make their grief an easier process for them.

**Q: What do you remember about your wish?**

**A:** The museum at the pyramids, it was absolutely my favorite part of the trip. I could have spent multiple days just looking at all the artifacts and mummies that are housed there. Seeing King Tut’s burial mask was one of the most memorable parts for me, pictures do not do it justice on how beautiful it is in person.

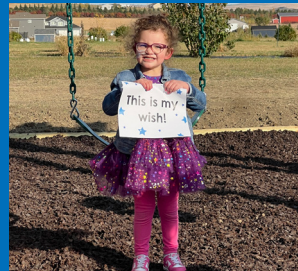
**Q: If there was only one thing people should know about Make-A-Wish, what would it be?**

**A:** Even if your child, or you, don’t think you qualify for a Make-A-Wish, please ask! I did not know I qualified for it until one of my cardiology nurses mentioned it to me and my mom and I’m so glad that she did because I may have never gotten the chance to make and get my wish granted if it weren’t for her.



# Wishes

Wishes granted between October 1, 2024–April 30, 2025



## Jules, 4

*kidney disease | Mandan*

**"I wish to have an adaptable outdoor playset"**

Wish Granter: Amy Keller

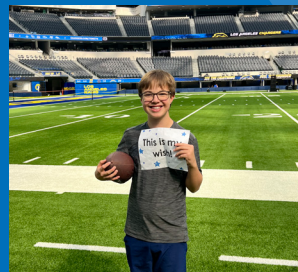


## Daeman, 15

*kidney disease | West Fargo*

**"I wish to go on a shopping spree in the Twin Cities"**

Wish Granter: Angie Leier and Lindsey Wagner



## Jacob, 15

*congenital heart disease*

*West Fargo*

**"I wish to go to a Vikings game at SoFi Stadium"**

Wish Granter: Erick and Lisa Grafstrom



## Kyleigh, 18

*cancer | Dickinson*

**"I wish to go to a Taylor Swift concert"**

Wish Granter: Bonnie Goldsberry and Jen Murray



## Aubry, 13

*cancer | Mandan*

**"I wish to go to Disney World®"**

Wish Granter: Whitney Deterding, Sophia Janssen, and Julia Vanwynsberghe



## Jessly, 6

*brain tumor | Devils Lake*

**"I wish to have an adaptive play room"**

Wish Granter: Lana Nicholas and Kathy Miller



## Chloe, 18

*brain tumor | Bismarck*

**"I wish to go to Hawaii"**

Wish Granter: Maran Blair and Amanda Godfread



## Dawson, 18

*cancer | Grand Forks*

**"I wish to have a fish house"**

Wish Granter: Sara Hennemann and Christy Mehus



## Cassius, 9

*vascular disorder | Fargo*

**"I wish to have a magic treehouse"**

Wish Granter: Emily Flanagan and Adrienne Swick



## Thea, 6

*cancer | Beulah*

**"I wish to go on a cruise and see turtles"**

Wish Granter: Patrick Ahman, Heather Kontz, and Tiffany Ahman



## Jocelyn, 15

*congenital heart disease*

*Bismarck*

**"I wish to have a fish house"**

Wish Granter: Amber and Joe Aldred



## Quwaden, 13

*kidney disease | Dunseith*

**"I wish to go to Legoland®"**

Wish Granter: Sophia Janssen and Lindsey Martens



## Eric, 13

*kidney disease | Tolna*

**"I wish to go to Disney World®"**

Wish Granter: Lana Nicholas and Cassie Ulyott



## Piper, 11

*neuromuscular disorder |*

*Lakota*

**"I wish to go to Universal Studios®"**

Wish Granter: Karen Anderson and Katie Miller



## Bria, 15

*nervous system disorder*

*Jamestown*

**"I wish to have a wheelchair with tracks"**

Wish Granter: Kelli Just and Ava Wille



## Jimmy, 16

*lymphoma | Fargo*

**"I wish to have a new gaming setup"**

Wish Granter: Josh Herbold and Josh Moen



## Blake, 12

*gastrointestinal disorder | Fargo*

**"I wish to go to a Minnesota Timberwolves game and meet the team"**

Wish Granter: Mary King, Jennifer Schuldheisz, and Cherie Moody



## Clark, 4

*leukemia | McClusky*

**"I wish to go to Diggerland"**

Wish Granter: Monica Hieb and Toni Wegenast



## Jameson, 5

*genetic disorder | Stanley*

**"I wish to go on a Disney® Cruise"**

Wish Granter: Paige Argent and Dawn Roness

## We Remember

**Brittin**

3/29/2006 – 10/9/2024

**Miles**

8/28/2017 – 11/24/2024

**Cooper**

10/21/2013 – 12/13/2024

**Ryker**

1/3/2019 – 3/1/2025

**Darrin**

6/30/1975 – 2/27/2025

**Charlie**

2/3/2021 – 4/4/2025

**Zane**

10/16/1994 – 4/13/2025

## Additional Wishes

**WILLOW, 7 — leukemia**

**"I wish to go to Disney World®"**

**MAX, 10 — congenital heart disease**

**"I wish to go to Disney World®"**

Wish Granter: Carrie Baer

**BOY, 16\* — cancer | Bismarck**

**"I wish to go on a cruise"**

Wish Granter: Alisha Blackshear, Ashley Belcourt, and Deb Stoltman

**BOY, 15\* — liver transplant | West Fargo**

**"I wish to have a fish house"**

Wish Granter: Rebecca Collins and Olivia Wagendorf

**BOY, 6\* — leukemia | Bismarck**

**"I wish to go to Disney World®"**

Wish Granter: Nikki Hill and Maran Blair

**BOY, 12\* — autoimmune disorder | Minot**

**"I wish to see orcas"**

Wish Granter: Paige Argent and Dawn Roness





**MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION®  
OF NORTH DAKOTA**

**4143 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 104  
Fargo, ND 58104**

Find us on:



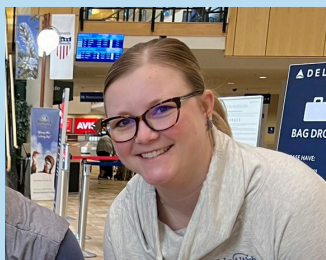
Help us keep our mailing list updated!  
Send updates to the address above or  
email [info@northdakota.wish.org](mailto:info@northdakota.wish.org).

Non-Profit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Mailed from  
58501  
Permit #419

## Volunteer of the Month

A heartfelt thank you to these volunteers for giving their time and talents to our mission. They make such a difference!

### DECEMBER



**ALLISON TAYLOR**

### JANUARY



**EMILY FLANAGAN**

### FEBRUARY



**AMBER AND JOE ALDRED**

### MARCH



**IVY POKORNY**

### APRIL



**LANDON VOGEL**

### MAY



**TARA HART**