

*I wish to
be a pilot*

Judah, 10
brain tumor

Best Wishes

FALL 2025

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Make-A-Wish
MID-SOUTH

wishful GIVING



Every wish begins with generosity. Whether it's a gift of time, talent, or treasure, it's the selfless acts of our community that make wishes possible for children facing critical illnesses.

One powerful way many families are fueling hope is through donor advised funds (DAFs). A DAF is like a charitable giving account—it allows you to set aside funds for giving, receive immediate tax benefits, and then recommend grants to the causes closest to your heart, like Make-A-Wish Mid-South.

We've seen firsthand how impactful DAF giving can be. Some of our most transformative wishes have been made possible because donors used their DAFs to act quickly and generously. In moments when children and families are waiting for hope, those gifts are the spark that turns a wish into reality.

That's why we're excited to celebrate **DAF Day on October 9**. It's a day dedicated to raising awareness about the difference donor advised funds can make. If you already have a DAF, you can recommend a grant to Make-A-Wish Mid-South with just a few clicks. If you don't, perhaps this is the perfect time to learn more about how a DAF might align with your giving goals.

DAF Day also kicks off a season of generosity...from Giving Tuesday on December 2 to holiday giving and year-end gifts. We hope you'll consider joining with Make-A-Wish Mid-South to make more wishes a reality for kids in our community.

Together, we can ensure that every child waiting for a wish experiences the joy, strength, and hope that only a wish can bring. Thank you for considering this meaningful way to deepen your impact.

Because every wish needs a WishMaker. And that WishMaker could be you.

With gratitude,
Casey Tansey, President & CEO

**Casey with
wish kid Abigail**



Hope Funded Here

Sparking a lifetime of impact

• WORKPLACE GIVING •

At Make-A-Wish Mid-South, every wish begins with hope, and sometimes, that hope is powered by the generosity of a workplace giving campaign. This year, the Mid-South team came together to grant Hayli's wish, and the impact of her wish will ripple for years to come.

On the day of her wish celebration, Hayli, a bright and determined young woman, arrived at the Make-A-Wish Mid-South office and was met with cheers, balloons, and a celebration tailored just for her. **That day, she learned our staff was granting her wish – to go to college and pursue her nursing degree!**

Her reason is deeply personal.

"I just want to be able to do for other kids what my nurses did for me. Support them and just be by their side," Hayli said.

During her medical journey, the care and compassion she received from her nurses made all the difference. Now, Hayli wants to be the same source of comfort and strength for future wish kids.

"As a wish coordinator, we grant so many special wishes, but it's easy to get caught up in the planning," Kelly Cowan, Hayli's Wish Coordinator, shared. **"However, it's always special to not only get to see the 'why' during a wish celebration but to also be the reason why a child's wish is coming true."**

Hayli's dream is a reality all thanks to workplace giving. It's a powerful reminder that when we come together, whether through volunteering or payroll deductions, we can create life-changing wishes.

The Make-A-Wish Mid-South workplace giving program began 20 years ago in 2005.



In 20 years, the Make-A-Wish Mid-South team has raised more than \$124,000 for wishes.



Although workplace giving is optional, 100% of the Mid-South team personally gives to wishes.



Want to make a wish a reality? Join us in making more wishes come true. Every dollar, every hour, every effort counts. Learn more at wish.org/midsouth



*I wish to go
on an Alaskan
Cruise*

Keeley, 16
heart condition

Wish kid

Art Feature

Keeley's wish wasn't just a trip; it was liberation after a long medical journey. After years of being unheard, her mother Frances became an unwavering advocate, pushing through medical barriers until finally, at 12, a doctor listened. "We had to fight for someone to see her," Frances said. "Dr. Shane was the first to truly hear Keeley."

Receiving her diagnosis was overwhelming, but the promise of a wish opened a door to something more. "It was like freedom," Keeley said softly. "A break from doctors." She looked forward to each day with growing excitement, counting down and imagining what it would feel like to just be a kid again.

Keeley decided her wish was to go on an Alaskan cruise and experience the wonder of nature and the last frontier with her family.

The experience was transformative. Keeley flew on a plane for the first time, saw glaciers and waterfalls, and tasted crab while sailing past wild animals. **"Her face lit up," Frances recalled. "That joy stayed with her."**

July 4th fireworks painted the sky with color during their wish trip, but the real celebration was within Keeley; each moment was a reminder that life held more than treatments and waiting rooms.

"I didn't feel stuck," Keeley said. "I felt happy."

Wishes give children like Keeley the space to breathe: to be seen, heard, and cherished beyond illness. They deliver hope in the form of adventure, laughs, and joy that echoes through families long after the moment passes.

"It changed how she sees life," Frances said. "We'll never forget it." Supporting wishes means giving families memories of light that shine through even the toughest journeys.

*The art above was illustrated by
Keeley herself after her wish.*



I wish to be a pilot
Fueled by Hope

• COVER STORY •

Judah had always dreamed of flying, not just as a passenger, but as the one behind the controls. When he shared his wish to become a pilot, it was clear that this wasn't just about airplanes but about adventure and a future filled with wonder.

His journey began at the FedEx headquarters in Memphis, where he was welcomed like a true aviator. With wide eyes and a grin that stretched ear to ear, Judah learned his wish to be a pilot was coming true in a few days! Judah celebrated by climbing into a flight simulator with a professional pilot, and for a moment, he wasn't just imagining the skies—he was navigating them.

"Every moment held his attention," Judah's mom, Amanda, said. "He truly thought every moment was amazing, but the flight simulator was his absolute favorite!"

However, the journey was just beginning.

Judah and his family soon arrived in Dallas, TX, home of Southwest Airlines. Here, he was formally fitted for his very own pilot's uniform, complete with wings. He toured the Southwest campus, met aviation experts, and learned firsthand what it takes to soar through the skies.

Throughout the day, Judah's excitement never waned. His smile was constant, and his joy was contagious. Every moment was like being on cloud nine and a reminder of what wishes can do.

"Judah is pretty quiet and reserved but, on that day, I can't even describe the joy and light that was brought out of him. I've never seen him smile so much," said Amanda.

Wishes like Judah's reflect the wish kids that Make-A-Wish Mid-South serves and their biggest dreams.

Scan the QR code on the right to watch Judah's wish take flight.





I wish to go shopping at Bass Pro Shop

Alex, 6
leukemia

Wish

Ink Gives BACK

Special thanks to Ink! for donating wish family tee shirts.



I wish to have a playground

Gannon, 4
congenital heart disease



I wish to touch a dolphin

Kaitlin, 9
blood disorder



I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort

Pablo, 5
leukemia



I wish to have a shopping spree

Zxya, 17
autoimmune disorder



I wish to go to Morgan

Gag
resp
dis



I wish to meet Dolly Parton

Leila, 5
cancer



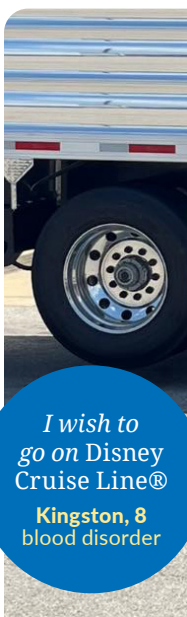
I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort

Nova, 4
cancer



I wish to go to Hawaii

Bennett, 15
rare disease



I wish to go on Disney Cruise Line®

Kingston, 8
blood disorder

KIDS

*I wish to
go to the beach*
Aryana, 18
nervous system
disorder



*I wish to go to
the Walt Disney
World® Resort*
Madison, 13
leukemia



*I wish to
go to Hawaii*
Jeremiah, 17
bone marrow
transplant



*I wish to
meet
Ryan Walen*
Ge, 10
respiratory
disorder



*I wish to
meet my favorite
princesses*
Mila, 6
congenital heart
disease



*I wish to meet
Lionel Messi*
Dean, 12
cancer



*I wish to go
on an Alaskan
Cruise*
Keely, 16
heart condition



*I wish to
go to Turks
and Caicos*
Tanner, 18
leukemia





Jane Arnold

Kind Hearts Create Big Moments

If you've had the pleasure of meeting Jane Arnold, then you'd know she's the kind of person that radiates warmth and purpose. Her journey to becoming the Arkansas Volunteer Coordinator was not just her next career move—it was a calling.

"I've always been drawn to service," Jane shared. "Growing up, my family taught me that caring for others is just what you do. It's part of being human." That mindset followed her into college, where she joined Chi Omega, a sorority that supports Make-A-Wish as its national philanthropic partner.

"That was my first real connection to the mission. I saw firsthand how powerful a wish could be."

Years later, when Jane was looking for her next step professionally, a friend sent her a job posting—Make-A-Wish Mid-South was looking for its next Volunteer Coordinator.

"I read it and immediately thought, 'This is it.' It felt like everything I believed in was wrapped up in one LinkedIn post," Jane recalled.

Now, Jane spends her days juggling emails, coordinating wish granters, and training new recruits.

"No two days are the same," she said in between laughs, "but the best ones? Those are the days I get to connect with our volunteers or attend a wish celebration. I still tear up every time."

Jane's love for Arkansas runs deep, and she's proud of the Make-A-Wish volunteer community.

"There's this shared spirit across the state, a real sense of responsibility to care for each other, especially the kids. It's beautiful."

When asked what she wishes more people knew about volunteering with Make-A-Wish, Jane didn't hesitate to answer:

"People think it might be sad or heavy, but it's actually full of joy. You're helping create moments of pure happiness. They show up with full hearts, they understand the weight of what families are going through, and they know how to make it fun, whether it's a Disney trip or a shopping spree. Her message to anyone thinking about becoming a Wish Granter is simple:

"Do it. You don't need special skills—just a kind heart. You'll help turn dreams into reality, and I promise, it'll change your life too."

Every *wish* begins with a referral

Who is eligible?

Make-A-Wish fulfills wishes for children who:

- have been diagnosed with a critical illness (as defined by Make-A-Wish criteria).
- are between the ages of 2 ½ and 18 at the time of referral.
- have not already received a wish from Make-A-Wish or another wish-granting organization.

Is my child eligible?

Make-A-Wish is connected with all major pediatric hospitals in the region; we recommend speaking to the child's social worker and/or healthcare specialist to see if your child's diagnosis may qualify for a wish as they are often familiar with our medical eligibility criteria. Once referred, Make-A-Wish Mid-South will obtain medical records from your child's physician to determine eligibility for our program.

Who can refer

- A child's parent/guardian or immediate family member
- Medical professional treating the child
- Potential wish child

How to refer

- Visit wish.org/refer-a-child
- Ask your doctor/nurse/social worker/child life specialist to make the referral

Clearing up some misconceptions

- Make-A-Wish is not just for children with a terminal condition. **We serve children with a wide range of life-threatening medical conditions.**
- Every child whose medical condition qualifies will receive a wish without regard to a family's financial and/or citizenship status.
- No child's wish takes away from another's opportunity to receive one.

The Wish Journey

The journey begins once a child is referred and their condition is medically qualified for a wish. The experienced wish-granting team will support the child and their family throughout the entire process.

98% of medical providers say a *wish* can improve a child's physical well-being & overall quality of life*



There could be eligible children who have yet to be connected with Make-A-Wish Mid-South. Please help us reach them!

Make-A-Wish® WALK FOR WISHES®

SPONSORED BY:



This May marked the 10th Anniversary of Walk For Wishes NWA!

With a surprise safari, wish kid Mackenzie learned her wish to go to Animal Kingdom was coming true!

Current wish families joined wish alum to walk for a cause as we together celebrated 10 years of Walk For Wishes in Northwest Arkansas.

Thank you to all who walked, donated, and celebrated the power of a wish!

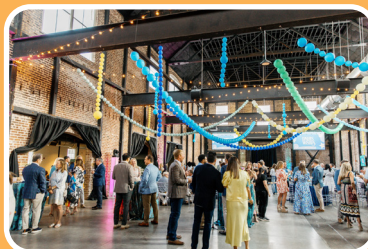


DISHES FOR WISHES

Dishes for Wishes celebrated its 19th year at The Kent in Memphis surrounded by some of Make-A-Wish Mid-South's most loyal supporters.

Felicia Willett of Felicia Suzanne's hosted and rallied Memphis' top restaurants to support wishes. Wish kid Abigail and her family moved many to tears as they shared their journey.

Be sure to catch wish kid Abigail and her family at this year's Evening of Wishes event!



Make-A-Wish KTCS Radiothon



Long-time partner KTCS 99.9 joined with us to host the Make-A-Wish KTCS Radiothon, a huge effort to fundraise for wishes in the River Valley.

Thanks to our incredible partner, Gray Brothers Equipment, who generously donated a mower for the mower giveaway.

And a big thanks to all of the volunteers and donors who are bringing wishes to life for River Valley Kids through the radiothon!



Make-A-Wish MID-SOUTH GOLF CLASSIC

This year, the Make-A-Wish Golf Classic teed off at a new course — Spring Creek!

It was a hole-in-one! With beautiful weather, a stunning course, and a whole lot of heart, this 18-hole adventure was an incredible day filled with purpose and play.

Golfers loved hearing from wish kid Leila and her family about their life-changing wish experience.

Thank you to all the participants who teed up and golfed for wishes—your generosity helps bring life-changing wishes to children across the Mid-South.



Make-A-Wish
MID-SOUTH

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Evening of Wishes

November 15, 2025
Little Rock

Have-A-Heart Wish-A-Thon

February 13, 2026
Jonesboro

Wine for Wishes

February 27, 2026
Memphis

KTCS Wish-A-Thon

April 10, 2026
Fort Smith

Walk For Wishes

April 18, 2026
Fayetteville

Dishes for Wishes

April 26, 2026
Memphis

For more details about these events and more, visit wish.org/midsouth



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Northwest Arkansas

One West Mountain
Suite 108
Fayetteville, AR 72701



★ CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF WISHES ★

40

... YEARS OF ...

wishes

**Make-A-Wish
Mid-South is
celebrating its
40th Anniversary
in 2026.**

Be sure to watch
out for unique ways
to support, honor,
and commemorate
this incredible
milestone with us!

