Make-A-Wish®
NEBRASKA

Year-in-Review

A LOOK BACK AT THE WISHES FROM OUR LAST FISCAL YEAR
SEPT. 1, 2024 TO AUG. 31, 2025

I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet princesses

Selena, 3 | South Sioux City
genetic disorder

wish.org/nebraska

Make-A-Wish®
NEBRASKA

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

Brigette Young, President/CEO Make-A-Wish Nebraska, with wish kid Jamie and Jacqueline Fernandez, First Alert 6 Anchor and Alert Center Reporter

Dear Friends,

As we close the books on another extraordinary fiscal year, I am filled with deep gratitude for your steadfast support and dedication. Your generosity and unwavering commitment have made it possible for us to reach a truly inspiring milestone: this fiscal year, we granted a record-breaking 133 wishes to local children with critical illnesses!

Every wish granted is more than just a memorable day, it represents a transformative moment for our wish kids and their families. The excitement and fulfillment of a heartfelt wish brings a renewed sense of hope and happiness, creating lasting memories that help carry them through some of their most challenging times.

However, the impact of a wish extends beyond the immediate joy it brings. Research shows that granting wishes can boost emotional well-being, restore confidence, and encourage a positive outlook. These effects not only lift spirits but can also help give wish kids a better chance of surviving and thriving.

Our achievements this year would not have been possible without you. Your kindness, compassion, and willingness to give your time have created life-changing experiences for so many children and families in our community. Together, we've made an enduring difference, and I am truly grateful for your ongoing support.

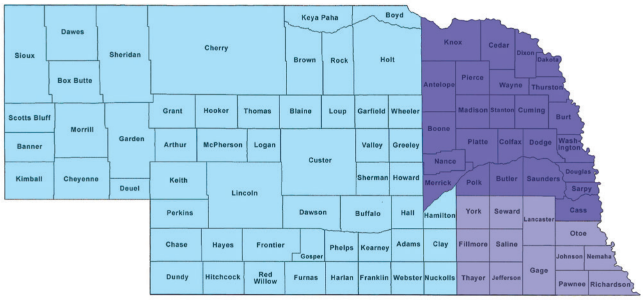
As we look ahead to another year of hope and possibility, I invite you to stand with us as we strive to grant even more wishes and transform more lives.

Thank you for giving the gift of hope to a child in need.

Brigette Young

Brigette Young
President/CEO

Statewide Impact



🟪 Omaha Region Wish Area

▨ Lincoln Region Wish Area

🟦 Greater Nebraska Region Wish Area

Since 1983, more than **3,400 wishes** have been granted in Nebraska.

100% Local – Our mission is delivered across the entire state of Nebraska.

The average cost of a wish is **$10,000**.

Every August 31st we reflect back on another incredible fiscal year of granting wishes. With the help and generosity of individuals and companies from across the state, we were able to grant **133 unforgettable wishes** to children in Nebraska with critical illnesses this fiscal year.

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Board Chair: Kayla Hansen, Medical Solutions
Vice Chairman: Ryan Peterson, Truck Center Companies
Treasurer: Gonzalo Ledesma, First Interstate Bank
Secretary: Chris Richardson, R&R Realty
Past Chairman: Kelly Hillman, Union Bank & Trust, Lincoln

Medical Advisor

Dr. Jenna Allison, Children's Nebraska

Members

Mike Abramson, Frankel, retired
Vickie Ahlers, Baird Holm, LLP
Dawn Becker, Jacobsen, Orr, Lindstrom & Holbrook, Kearney
Jon Blumenthal, McGrath North
Gary Byrne, Tri-City Title, Kearney/North Platte
Kyle Canning, Scoular
Kathy English, Children's Nebraska
Brad Ewerth, Ewerth & Associates, CPA, PC, Lincoln
Rahul Jalali, Union Pacific Railroad
Lisa Jansen, Nebraska Hematology-Oncology, Lincoln
Bryce Juedes, Landscapes Unlimited, Lincoln
Nico Marasco, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services
Dr. Jeremy Payne, Boys Town National Research Hospital
Justin Riviera, Cushman & Wakefield/The Lund Company
Luke Tieso, Gallagher
Denise Willett, Omaha Friends Council Liaison
Brigette Young, Make-A-Wish Nebraska

Staff

Headquarters

1005 S. 107th Ave., Ste. 102
Omaha, NE 68114
Phone (402) 333-8999

Brigette Young
President/CEO

Linda Hogrefe
Vice President/CDO

Jennifer Shuman
Program Services Director

Emily Marston
Director of Marketing & Communications

Courtney Nelson
Director of Community Outreach

Madeleine Berner
Wish Granting Coordinator

Erin Cassano
Office & Database Manager

Alisa James
Office Assistant

Romy Reicks
Bookkeeper

Karen Lewis
Program & Office Assistant

Lincoln Office

8033 S. 15th St., Ste. B
Lincoln, NE 68512
Phone (402) 475-9474

Melissa Davis-Schmit
Vice President - Lincoln

Mindy Lubeck
Wish and Development Manager - Lincoln

Kearney Office

412 E. 25th St., Ste. D
Kearney, NE 68847
Phone (308) 234-6612

Chloe Wells
Director of Development – Greater Nebraska

Make an Impact

DONATION

You can give online, by mail, or by phone or impact future generations through a planned gift.

IN-KIND

You can create life-changing experiences by donating goods.

VOLUNTEERING

You can help make the wishes of children in our community come true when you become a Make-A-Wish volunteer. Our mission is possible only with the dedication of our volunteers.

REFER A CHILD

We rely on wish referrals from caring individuals to help us reach more kids with critical illnesses and grant them a wish that changes lives forever. The eligibility consideration process is initiated when a wish referral inquiry is submitted to the local chapter.

Learn more about who is eligible for a wish, who can refer a child and how the referral process works by visiting: www.wish.org/refer-a-child

SEPTEMBER 2024

Sawyer's Wish

I wish to go to Jurassic World® at Universal Studios®

Sawyer, 11 | Lincoln

chronic kidney disease

When Sawyer was just five years old, his family learned he had chronic kidney disease.

Doctors soon discovered additional challenges: a dilated left ventricle, seizure disorder, developmental delays, and a suspected mitochondrial disease. Sawyer has bravely endured muscle and kidney biopsies, genetic studies, and visits to specialists in both Nebraska and Ohio—all without clear answers. His two older sisters face similar health issues, suggesting a genetic link.

For more than eight years, his family has lived with uncertainty. There's no cure, no exact diagnosis, just the hope that each new test might finally lead to some solutions and better care. As Sawyer's kidney function declined and a transplant became necessary, explaining everything to his younger brothers was tough. The whole family felt anxious about whether Sawyer's other health concerns might affect his chances for a transplant. Every doctor's appointment came with worry, and even now, after a successful transplant, that concern never truly goes away.

Despite all the medical challenges, Sawyer is a happy kid. He greets friends and teachers with big hugs and an even bigger smile. Dinosaurs are his ultimate passion—he can't get enough of Jurassic Park® and Jurassic World®, and he loves chatting about his favorite prehistoric creatures. Another favorite of his is Sonic the Hedgehog; Sawyer even named his new kidney "Sonic," and his family often jokes about making sure Sonic stays hydrated!

For Sawyer's family, medical appointments and treatments have often taken center stage—especially during the transplant evaluation process. However, Sawyer's wish gave his family the one thing they needed most–a chance to step back and enjoy something special together.

"When you are going through something like this it is easy to only be looking at a surgery coming up, or the next labs, or the next appointment. There seemed to be no time to think about planning anything else or adding anything to your plate. As a family we needed a break," said Sawyer's dad, Ben.

That's exactly what Sawyer's wish meant to him—a break from all the medical talk and a chance to dream. His wish to visit Jurassic Park® was inspired by videos and stories he'd seen, and it quickly became something the whole family looked forward to. Once Sawyer learned his wish would come true, he couldn't stop talking about the upcoming trip! It became a bright spot during some tough days.

"When we were in the hospital for the transplant there were many times that he was hurting, sad, scared and overwhelmed. We had a digital picture frame loaded with pictures from the trip, and at those times if we would get him talking about the trip and the pictures on that frame he would just light up. He would go from not talking at all to the doctors or nurses, to laughing and smiling as he relived the trip. It was a game-changing blessing for Sawyer and our family and it still is today. To the folks who support Make-A-Wish, you are making a real difference in these kids' lives!" said Ben.

Paul's Wish

Every 20 minutes, a family hears the devastating news that their child has been diagnosed with a critical illness. And 20 minutes later, another.

Imagine hearing the words…

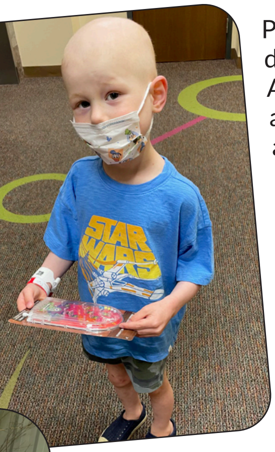
"I'm sorry to tell you, but your child has cancer."

"Your child needs a heart transplant."

"There isn't a cure for your child's condition."

In an instant, life is turned upside down.

In early April 2022, Paul had just turned five. He was thriving in Pre-K, full of energy and excitement for kindergarten in the fall. But a persistent ear infection and unexplained leg pain led his mother to rush him to the emergency room. Blood tests revealed white blood cell counts 10 to 20 times the normal range. The diagnosis: Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.



Paul spent the next ten days in the hospital. A port was inserted, and chemotherapy and steroids began. His grandparents stepped in to care for his siblings, Teddy and Molly, while his parents stayed by his side. Over the next two years, Paul endured intense chemotherapy treatments multiple times a week, more than 20 spinal taps, countless blood draws, and a dozen transfusions. He postponed kindergarten and lost his signature orange hair—lovingly nicknamed "Cheeto dust" by his family. Yet through it all, Paul held onto his dry, hilarious sense of humor.

While receiving treatments, his family learned he was eligible for a wish and suddenly a spark of hope was ignited. Paul and his family's minds were filled with a very welcome distraction from their current situation, and they were able to focus on all the joy and possibilities of a wish come true.

When Paul's Wish Granters first met with him, he was seven years old and thriving in first grade. Paul's favorite subject is space. He's fascinated by the solar system, the moons of Jupiter, and the gases on Venus. So when he was asked what his one true wish would be, Paul didn't hesitate: a trip to the Kennedy Space Center! Paul's family was gifted an experience they never could have imagined.

"Paul's Make-A-Wish trip was a great opportunity for our family to celebrate Paul's strength and perseverance throughout chemotherapy, and to celebrate the strength of our family over the last 2½ years. We are so grateful to Make-A-Wish for this opportunity!" said Paul's mom, Christine.

In the face of unimaginable hardship, Paul's story is a testament to resilience, love, and the power of a wish. It's a reminder that even in the darkest moments, hope can shine through—and sometimes, it looks like rockets, stars, and the joy of a child who never stopped dreaming.

I wish to go to the Kennedy Space Center

Paul, 8 | Omaha

leukemia

Alex's Wish

I wish to go to Costa Rica to learn about coffee

Alex, 18 | Omaha

endocrine disorder

Alex loves coffee, family, and his core group of friends. He is an empathetic person with a tender heart for animals and those around him who are hurting. He even plans to go into the healthcare field. According to his family, Alex is strong, inspiring, and resilient. Like so many Make-A-Wish recipients, Alex personifies courage and reminds everyone about the power of perseverance.

Alex's medical journey began with a devastating diagnosis—he had not one, but two different brain tumors—a Rathke's Cleft Cyst and a Craniopharyngioma. These diagnoses not only threatened his health but left him with a lifelong condition, Panhypopituitarism, severely affecting his endocrine system. With three brain surgeries and radiation therapy behind him, life became a careful balancing act of daily medications and biweekly injections.

Those early days were especially hard for Alex and his family. Overnight, routines shifted as they rallied around Alex, determined to give him the support and strength he needed. After his initial treatments and a new routine to manage his condition, they hoped the worst had passed. But another routine MRI brought unwelcome news: a new tumor had formed. Another surgery, another round of radiation, and, just as they caught their breath, a final blow—part of the tumor had grown outside the reach of radiation, requiring yet another surgery. Yet, through it all, Alex's grit never wavered.

When it came time to choose his wish, Alex knew exactly what he wanted.

"I wanted to go somewhere warm and tropical. Coffee was something that gave me joy when I was going through the hardest parts of my surgeries and radiation. Knowing that, I wanted to go to a country that was known for their coffee, so I chose Costa Rica and fell in love with the country," Alex said.

The impact of finding out he was receiving a wish was immediate.

"We initially noticed that he was smiling again, something we had not seen for quite some time. When his amazing wish granters, Gina and Conner, came over to our house for the first time, I could see a glimmer of hope in his eyes. He was so happy and honored to receive a wish," said Alex's parents, Katherine and Ted.

Alex's wish became more than just a trip. It was a chance to reclaim happiness—and to create lasting memories with the people who mattered most—his family.

"With my dad being prior military, we moved all the time, so we're a very tightknit family. They've supported me through everything, so I wanted my wish to be a memory we could all share," said Alex.

Alex's story shines as a beacon of hope—a reminder that even in the toughest times, joy can be rediscovered.

JANUARY 2025

Everest's Wish

I wish to go to Walt Disney World®

Everest, 7 | Adams
Batten disease

In January 2025, 7-year-old Everest had her wish to go to Walt Disney World® granted. However, long before Everest's wish was ever conceived, she was diagnosed with CLN3 Batten disease, a rare, hereditary brain disorder that is as devastating as it is elusive. For Everest and her siblings, Batten disease is not just a diagnosis; it is a daily reality, one with no known cure or treatment, and it is terminal.

What makes the journey for Everest's family heavier than most is the fact that all three children in the family are living with the same disease. Batten disease, with its relentless progression, has most recently begun to affect Everest's sight. She has begun to lose her vison just as her older brother—who is now almost completely blind—has. To prepare for the challenges ahead, her family has recently moved into a "zero-entry" home—one that is safe and accessible at every turn.

Yet, the physical environment is only one piece of the adaptation. This disease is not just physical; it is emotional, spiritual, and psychological. It brings deep grief and hard conversations that no parent ever expects to have with their children.

In the midst of these challenges shines Everest herself – a child whose spirit is defined by kindness and a remarkable ability to find joy in the everyday. She adores animals, delights in creating art, and is always happiest when surrounded by those she loves.

What's most remarkable about Everest is her selflessness. She is the kind of child who thinks first and foremost of others, rarely asking for anything herself. Her family describes her as someone whose happiness is truly found in togetherness—a gentle soul who treasures closeness above all.

Against the backdrop of Everest's illness, the opportunity for a wish came like a burst of sunlight.

"Everest's wish was deeply meaningful for two big reasons. First, she is incredibly selfless... so having the chance to make a choice that was completely her own was a rare and wonderful gift," said Everest's parents, Samuel and Sydney. "Second, right before her wish, Everest had begun losing her vision, and since then, even more of her sight has faded. Her trip came at just the right time—some of the last horizons she was able to see were at Disney World®."

Everest chose Walt Disney World® and Universal Studios® for her wish because she wanted to meet all the characters and spend time with her family. Over the course of just five days, Everest and her family met more than 40 characters! Beyond the excitement, what made the experience most meaningful to their family was simply spending every moment together. They didn't have to think about work, cooking, treatments, or the demands of everyday life. They could just focus on being a family.

"Batten disease makes life incredibly hard—but Make-A-Wish brought such joy and ease into our lives. Every part of the experience was filled with care and wonder, something we truly believe could only happen through the unique "magic" of Make-A-Wish. When you support this organization, you're giving kids like ours life-changing experiences—precious moments they might otherwise never get the chance to experience," said Samuel and Sydney.

FEBRUARY 2025

Carter’s Wish

I wish to be a St. Louis Blues hockey player

Carter, 13 | Kearney

lymphoma

For wish kids and their families, hope isn’t just a feeling—it’s a lifeline. When hospital rooms replace playgrounds and treatments become routine, the emotional weight can be overwhelming. But sometimes, a single spark—a wish—can change everything.

Just six days after his 11th birthday, Carter was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. In the months that followed, he endured five rounds of chemotherapy, multiple surgeries, and more than 40 nights at Children’s Nebraska.

His childhood was paused, replaced by IVs, scans, and uncertainty.

Carter’s love for hockey runs deep. His favorite team? The St. Louis Blues. His heroes? Robert Thomas and Jordan Kyrou. So when Make-A-Wish told him his wish would be granted, Carter knew exactly what he wanted: to meet the players, skate with them, and watch a game.

What Carter didn’t know was that Make-A-Wish’s official sports partner, Fanatics, and the St. Louis Blues had something much bigger in store.

On February 5th, Carter signed a one-day contract with the Blues. He was welcomed by the coaching staff, had his official team headshot taken, and toured the locker room. Then came the moment he’d been dreaming of—lacing up his skates and hitting the ice at Centene Community Ice Center with Thomas and Kyrou.

But the surprises didn’t stop there.

Fanatics outfitted Carter with a full set of Blues-branded gear. The next day, he was invited to help announce the starting lineup for the Blues’ game against the defending champion, the Florida Panthers. Carter walked out with the team, skated laps, and stood proudly with them during the national anthem.

“The trip was honestly way more than I ever imagined,” Carter said. “Skating with the team and announcing the starting lineup were definitely my favorite parts. I’m super grateful for the Make-A-Wish program and all the St. Louis Blues players and staff for making it all happen. It was an unforgettable experience.”

Carter’s parents were equally moved.

“We will be forever grateful to Make-A-Wish Nebraska, Make-A-Wish Missouri & Kansas, and the entire St. Louis Blues Organization for making Carter’s wish come true,” his mom, Kaleigh, shared. “By the time we left St. Louis, it truly felt like we were leaving family behind. Witnessing our child being embraced and supported by a team he has looked up to for as long as we can remember was an incredibly moving experience and one we will always be thankful for.”

Carter’s story is a testament to the strength of a child’s spirit and the transformative power of a wish. In the face of illness, he found joy. In the heart of a hockey team, he found belonging. And in the kindness of strangers, his family found healing.

Photos courtesy of the St. Louis Blues

MARCH 2025

MadisonRose's Wish

WRITTEN BY
WISH KID MADISONROSE

On July 29, 2024, life changed in an instant. One phone call changed the lives of four people. My mom answered, and the urgency in the voice on the other end was traumatizing —the doctors said we had ten minutes to pack a bag and get to the hospital. Ten minutes to leave behind the regular routine of life forever. When we arrived, the doctors gave us news that would alter everyone's world: I was in stage 5 kidney failure. My kidneys could no longer do their job, and without immediate treatment, my life was in danger. Dialysis wasn't going to be a slow process, it was going to become reality real quick.

Soon after, I underwent surgery to have a peritoneal dialysis catheter placed in my stomach. I was placed in recovery in the hospital for a week. After I was all recovered we were sent in for dialysis training. Sadly, since I was on dialysis training close to the start of the school year I had to miss my first three days of sophomore year. Once I was done with training, a week later, I began dialysis treatments at home. The transition was overwhelming. As a high school sophomore, my life suddenly revolved around medical routines, strict food restrictions, and early bedtimes. This meant less and less time with my friends and all the people I've cared about since elementary school. Although, the changes didn't just affect me—they rippled through my family. Everything we knew had to be re-learned.

But in the midst of the darkness, a small ray of light appeared. My doctors told me I was eligible for Make-A-Wish. We excitedly took this opportunity and after a few months of waiting, the light became even brighter. In December, I received the amazing news: my wish was going to be granted. The possibilities felt endless, but my heart kept returning to one dream. A trip to the beautiful state of Hawaii.

Make-A-Wish embraced the idea wholeheartedly. They began planning my trip with thoughtfulness and care, making sure my dialysis treatments could be accommodated every step of the way. As the plans were being arranged, they treated my family and me to dinner at J. Gilbert's, where we enjoyed incredible food and constant laughter. They showered me with thoughtful gifts, making me feel special, seen, and celebrated.

On March 30th, my dream became reality. We boarded our flight to Hawaii, excitement bubbling. The days that followed were nothing short of magical. From breathtaking beaches to unforgettable adventures, it was the trip of a lifetime.

Make-A-Wish handled every detail, ensuring my medical needs were met so that my family and I could focus on making memories. Hawaii wasn't just a vacation—it was a reminder that joy can exist even in the hardest seasons of life. It was a celebration of faith, family, and hope. Stage 5 kidney failure has tested me and my family in ways I never expected. But it has also taught me the value of every moment, the importance of support, and the power of dreams. My wish came true, and it gave me more than just a trip—it gave me a reason to keep looking forward.

I wish to go to Hawaii
MadisonRose, 16 | Bennington
end-stage kidney disease

APRIL 2025

Jaxon's Wish

I wish to go to NYC and learn about fashion
Jaxon, 13 | Omaha
heart transplant

In summer of 2023, Jaxon was fatigued, losing weight and vomiting daily. He went through test after test, medication after medication and all sorts of GI intestinal invasive tests with no prognosis. In December of 2023, his mom picked him up from school and he was struggling to walk and was very bull-legged. She then noticed from the waist down he was extremely swollen. After calling his doctor, she was told to take him to the ER at Children's Nebraska in Omaha. It was there that the doctor diagnosed him with congestive heart failure. His heart was enlarged to the point it collapsed his lung. He was taken by helicopter to St. Louis Children's Hospital. Once in St. Louis, he had a right ventricular diameter and left ventricular diameter placed and once he was strong enough, he was placed on the heart transplant list. He received a transplant offer within 24 hours and received a new heart on January 6, 2024. He then had surgery again 2 days later to close his chest. He had to learn to walk again and spent time doing physical therapy. He graduated from physical therapy toward the end of 2024 and is doing well now!

Jaxon wants to be a fashion designer one day. He is learning to sew with his aunt and loves it. His aunt lives close to him, and he waits for her to become available so he can go to her house to sew. Jaxon loves sewing dresses for his twin sister, Ellie, and they pretend to walk the runway (their hallway) with his sister being the model and Jaxon being the fashion designer.

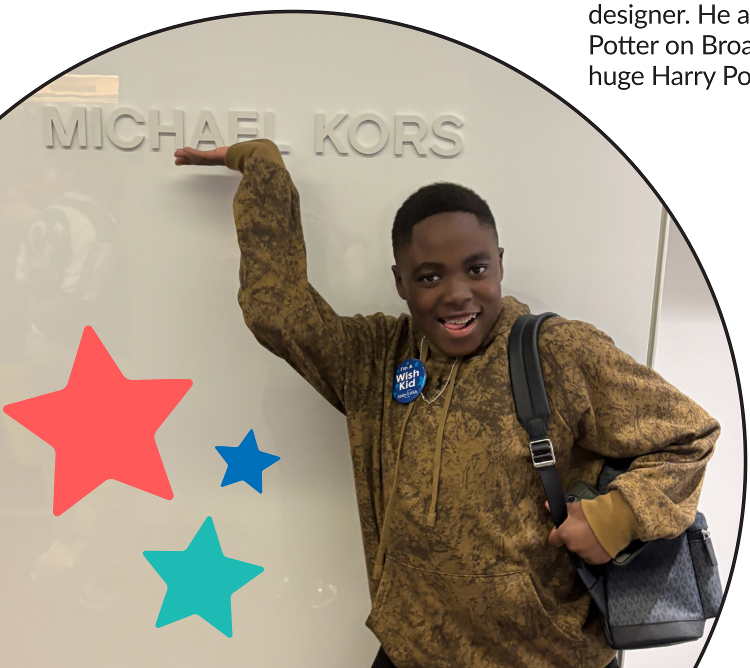
Jaxon's wish was to go to New York City because of his dream to be a fashion designer. He also wanted to see Harry Potter on Broadway because he is a huge Harry Potter and theater fan.

"Once Jaxon found out his wish was going to be granted, the joy was back in his eyes. It was the first time in a year and a half that we saw true happiness instead of fear, sickness, sadness, and uncertainty," said Jaxon's mom, Nichole.

On his wish, Jaxon was able to see Harry Potter on Broadway, visit Kleinfeld Bridal, visit the Michael Kors headquarters and so much more!

Jaxon's wish was not just for him- this trip gave his whole family the ability to watch his dreams come true. With having a heart transplant, tomorrow isn't always promised. Doctors' appointments and treatments mean sometimes his siblings take a back seat to his medical condition. But on his wish, the focus wasn't on his transplant or medical needs, the focus was on his family, their time together and the joy this wish provided.

"Make-A-Wish is not an organization that just gives charity to a sick kid. It's more than that. Make-A-Wish gives the entire family the ability to enjoy every minute of happiness without having to worry about how this could be the last time, or we have to make sure we can do this or that to accommodate Jaxon," said Nichole. "Instead he got to just be the brother and son and we all just got to be a family. And when you haven't had that in over a year and a half, it was truly the greatest gift anyone could give us."



MAY 2025

Connor's Wish

WRITTEN BY CONNOR'S PARENTS, JESSICA & DILLION

Connor was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy at just 2.5 years old, after not reaching several developmental milestones. Since then, our journey has been filled with countless doctor visits, tests, and treatments. Because Nebraska doesn't have a Duchenne Care Team, we travel to Kansas City every 6 months for Connor's specialized care.

Though it's often overwhelming, this journey has brought our family closer together. One of our greatest blessings has been watching the bond between Connor and his big sister, Harper, grow stronger each day.

If we had to describe Connor, we'd call him curious, silly, and truly unstoppable. He has a passion for Legos, Pokémon, chickens, and any chance to splash and play in the water. What lights him up most is a day at home surrounded by family and his big sister. Every day, Connor reminds us to look at life with wonder and to find joy in the simplest things.

Connor's wish for a hot tub became incredibly important because it helps his body in ways nothing else can. Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy causes his muscles to become tight and sore, but the warm water of the hot tub soothes and relaxes those muscles, easing his discomfort and giving him a place where he can move more freely. Beyond the physical relief, the hot tub is also a source of fun and joy to share with our whole family—offering both comfort and happiness, which is a true gift.

Usually shy and reserved, Connor doesn't often like talking about himself. But when he learned that his wish would be granted, he was so excited that he wanted to share the news with our close family and friends right away! Seeing him open up and light up like that was a special moment, showing how much this wish truly meant to him.

To everyone who supports Make-A-Wish, we want you to know that your generosity truly changes lives. For Connor, his wish wasn't just about receiving a hot tub—it meant relief for his muscles, a place to enjoy his favorite activity, and countless special moments with his family. It also brought him confidence and joy, which are simply priceless. We are deeply grateful to everyone who makes wishes like his possible.

I wish to have a hot tub
Connor, 7 | Gretna
neuromuscular disorder

JUNE 2025

Selena's Wish

For Selena and her family, every laugh, every shared glance, and every gentle hug is nothing short of a celebration—a triumph over the unknowns and challenges that come with her diagnosis of Cockayne Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that affects growth, development, and overall health.

Her family quickly learned that despite her illness, they could still treasure every moment and celebrate the little things together as a family.

Selena's world is built on these moments. She finds joy in playing and laughing with her sisters. She loves simple things like music, snuggles, and exploring the world around her. Her smile and laughter light up their family home.

When Selena found out she would be receiving a wish, she knew her wish would be to go to Walt Disney World®. She longed to visit Disney World®, a place where princesses walked around, and where Minnie and Mickey Mouse dance among the crowds. She was excited to hear all the music and experience the magic there. For Selena, this wish represented more than a vacation. It was an invitation to step into a world of hope and opportunity.

The anticipation of her wish alone sparked a bliss that was nearly as powerful as the trip itself.

"She lit up with excitement! Having something so special to look forward to filled her with happiness and brought joy into our home," her mom, Michelle, said. "Her wish was so special because it gave her, and all of us as a family, a chance to step away from the everyday challenges of her illness and just experience pure joy together. It gave us memories we'll hold onto forever."

These memories have become touchstones for the family—reminders of what is possible, even in the most difficult circumstances. For Selena and her family, being at Walt Disney World® and surrounded by all the magic Disney had to offer was a special memory for them – it was like the world came alive just for her.

I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet princesses
Selena, 3 | South Sioux City
genetic disorder

JULY 2025

Noah's Wish

I wish to have a shopping spree at Mall of America
Noah, 18 | Bellevue
leukemia

At just 14-years-old, Noah received the life-altering diagnosis of Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. The news, which arrived on May 27, 2021, sent shockwaves through his family and circle of friends. Yet, in the face of uncertainty, Noah and his family responded with remarkable resilience. United in determination, they mapped out a plan with hope fueling every step.

Thanks to his dedicated healthcare team, modern medicine, and unwavering faith, Noah achieved remission by June 20, 2021. The experience no doubt changed the trajectory of his life, but, it also opened new doors for him. Today, Noah is healthy, thriving, and embracing new beginnings at college as he pursues a degree in Computer Science.

Noah is known to be very compassionate. He is a devoted sibling, an avid basketball fan, and was a passionate basketball player before his illness. Though his diagnosis placed his athletic aspirations on pause, Noah's curiosity remains boundless—he loves painting, exploring new restaurants, and spending quiet moments at home with his beloved cat, Stella.

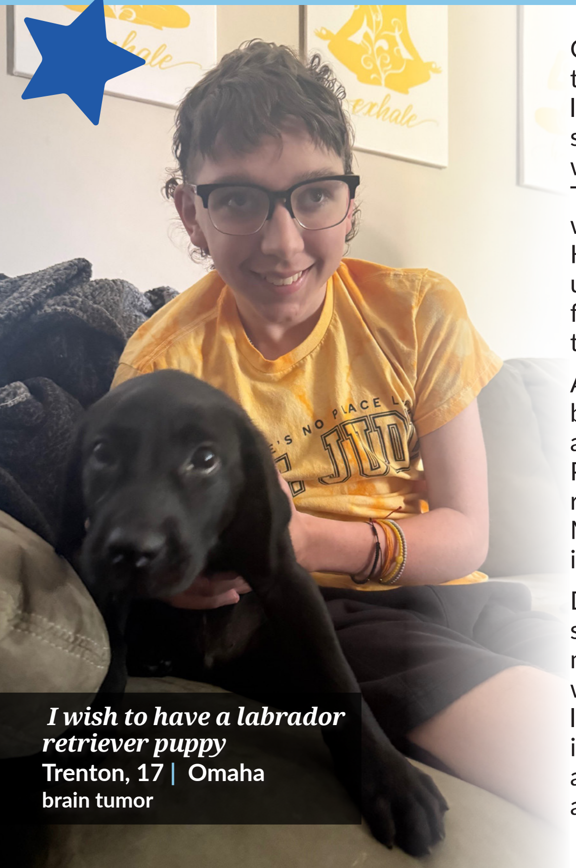
One pivotal moment in Noah's journey came when his wish to have a shopping spree at Mall of America was granted. Noah really wanted a MacBook laptop and other essentials for college. For his family though, providing these tools wasn't possible on their own, and the wish proved to be an invaluable launchpad for Noah's academic success. His wish was also significant for his mom.

"Noah moved across the country to go to college, so he wanted this to be a special event for me since he was moving out and so far, away," Noah's mom, Elise said. "We are two peas in a pod; we really enjoyed our time on his wish."

Noah's journey wasn't just about his leukemia diagnosis; it was about coming of age during a tough time. Surrounded by a steadfast support network, Noah faced his fight with stoicism and grace, inspiring those around him with his quiet strength. His journey is a testament to courage, the power of community, and the transformative power of a wish. His story reminds us all: even in the face of adversity, dreams can come true.

AUGUST 2025

Trenton's Wish



I wish to have a labrador retriever puppy
Trenton, 17 | Omaha
brain tumor

Wish Kid Trenton and Dr. Paul Klimo

On May 15, 2024, Trent was thriving in his track season when his parents received a life-changing call from his school. Trent was showing stroke-like symptoms—his speech was unclear and his right side immobilized. Thanks to his teacher's quick thinking, he was sent to the nurse and briefly improved. His parents took him to the hospital, but unlike previous visits that had reassured the family that Trent was simply dehydrated or tired, this episode was different.

At UNMC, a scan revealed a mass in Trent's brain. Within 30 minutes, Trent's life took a dramatic turn–he was diagnosed with Pineoblastoma. The mass needed urgent removal. They soon traveled to St. Jude in Memphis, expecting a brief stay that turned into a 10-month journey.

Despite his circumstances, Trent always stayed positive, relying on faith, family and music to keep his spirits uplifted. Sports were and continue to be a big part of his life. Before his diagnosis, he was involved in track, football, bowling, weightlifting and boxing. Although Trent will never be able to do contact sports again, his football teammates have continued to support him and include him in their walk out at every Friday game.

When Trent learned he was eligible for a wish, the decision wasn't easy. He considered meeting his favorite singer or attending the Super Bowl. But after meeting Rose, the hospital dog, Trent realized he wanted a dog of his own! The family decided to name their new dog Klimo, in honor of Dr. Paul Klimo, the neurosurgeon who removed Trent's tumor.

"This man, he saved my boy, my baby, my joyful God-loving son. We knew that was it, that's our dog—boy or girl—we will honor him that way because how do you repay someone for all they have done to help your child?" said Trent's mom, Debbie.

Trent's story is one of love, perseverance, and community. Although the road has had its ups and downs, Trent continues to find happiness and joy every day, lifting others with his strength and spirit. Bad days come and go, but the love and support from those around Trent and his family remain constant.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Kearney Powersports

For twenty-four years, Kearney Powersports has stood as a beacon of generosity in the Kearney community, championing Make-A-Wish Nebraska and helping transform the lives of children facing critical illnesses. The journey began when Kearney Powersports wanted to host a poker run and raise money for a local charity. A former employee there, who was a volunteer for Make-A-Wish, suggested reaching out to our organization about raising money for local wishes. Thus began a partnership that would flourish year after year.

That initial poker run blossomed into the annual Roll-N-Ride, a highly anticipated event that gathers riders, families, and supporters from across the region. Each year, the ride starts from the Kearney Powersports store, winding roughly 160 miles through Nebraska's highways and small towns, with four exciting stops along the way. The route changes annually, keeping the adventure fresh for participants. At the end of the journey, participants are treated to a meal, provided in partnership with NebraskaLand Bank, Cunningham's Journal, and the Kearney Eagles, turning the event into a true feast of friendship and shared purpose.

Roll-N-Ride has become a highlight of the community calendar, sometimes drawing as many as 400 riders. To date, Roll-N-Ride has raised over $240,000 to help grant local wishes!

For the team at Kearney Powersports, the most meaningful part of supporting Make-A-Wish Nebraska is when wish kids have been at their event—being able to interact with them and hear their stories has made a lasting impact. Connecting with these inspiring children, learning firsthand about their journeys, and witnessing the joy and hope that their fulfilled wishes bring has created unforgettable moments of gratitude and belonging for everyone involved.

At Make-A-Wish Nebraska, we are deeply thankful for Kearney Powersports' unwavering commitment, creativity, and heartfelt leadership, and we look forward to many more years of hope and joy shared on the road—and beyond.

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

Raef, 22
brain tumor
I wish to meet the Denver Broncos
(Wish Year 2018)

Antonio, 15
nervous system disorder
I wish to have a Vecta Mobile Sensory Station
(Wish Year 2015)

Braxton, 15
leukemia
I wish to have a shopping spree in Denver
(Wish Year 2024)

Blake, 13
brain tumor
I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2024)

Freddie, 2
cancer
I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2025)

Betty, 7
cancer
I wish to have a party with my family
(Wish Year 2025)

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

2025 FISCAL

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

Luna, 4, Lincoln	lymphoproliferative disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Frederick, 2.5, Omaha	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Yermando, 14, Omaha	cancer	I wish to have a shopping spree
Carter, 12, Kearney	lymphoma	I wish to be a St. Louis Blues Hockey Player
Colton, 18, Union	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to New York City
Kase, 8, Cambridge	brain tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii
Zoe, 9, Papillion	chronic kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Wesley, 9, Omaha	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Cade, 6, Sutton	lymphoma	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Harley, 8, Doniphan	brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet princesses
Evalee, 9, Bellevue	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Charolotte, 6, Kearney	lymphoma	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Emersyn, 11, Grand Island	brain tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii
Hunter, 10, Raymond	congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and stay at Art of Animation Resort
George, 7, Omaha	brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Betty, 7, Omaha	cancer	I wish to have a party with my family
Isabel, 12, Omaha	end-stage kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Elias, 5, Arnold	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet Mr. Incredible
Lexee, 14, Grand Island	cancer	I wish to go to Hawaii
MadisonRose, 16, Bennington	end-stage kidney disease	I wish to go to Hawaii
Jaxon 13, Omaha	heart transplant	I wish to go to NYC and learn about fashion
Angelena, 7, Lincoln	lymphoma	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet princesses
Joalie, 6, Omaha	heart condition	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and sing with Ana and Elsa
Boone, 18, Gothenburg	leukemia	I wish to go to the Men’s NCAA FInal Four basketball tournament
Caleb, 15, Union	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Arianna, 14, Ogallala	cancer	I wish to go to Hawaii
Nikolai, 3, Lexington	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Fayth, 14, Omaha	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Hawaii
Clair, 15, Kearney	heart condition	I wish to go to Cancun
Charlie, 14, Hastings	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to go to Wrestle Mania
Rose, 9, Jackson	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Kash, 10, Bellevue	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Hawaii
Joshua 7, Lincoln	lymphoma	I wish to go on a Disney Cruise Line®
Jackson, 18, Lincoln	cystic fibrosis	I wish to have a shopping spree
Abiel, 3, Omaha	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Connor, 7, Gretna	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to have a hot tub
Samuel, 9, Omaha	leukemia	I wish to go to Hawaii
Joshuwa, 18, Gretna	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Tyler, 16, Fremont	end-stage kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Damian, 17, Grand Island	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and Universal Studios®

YEAR WISHES

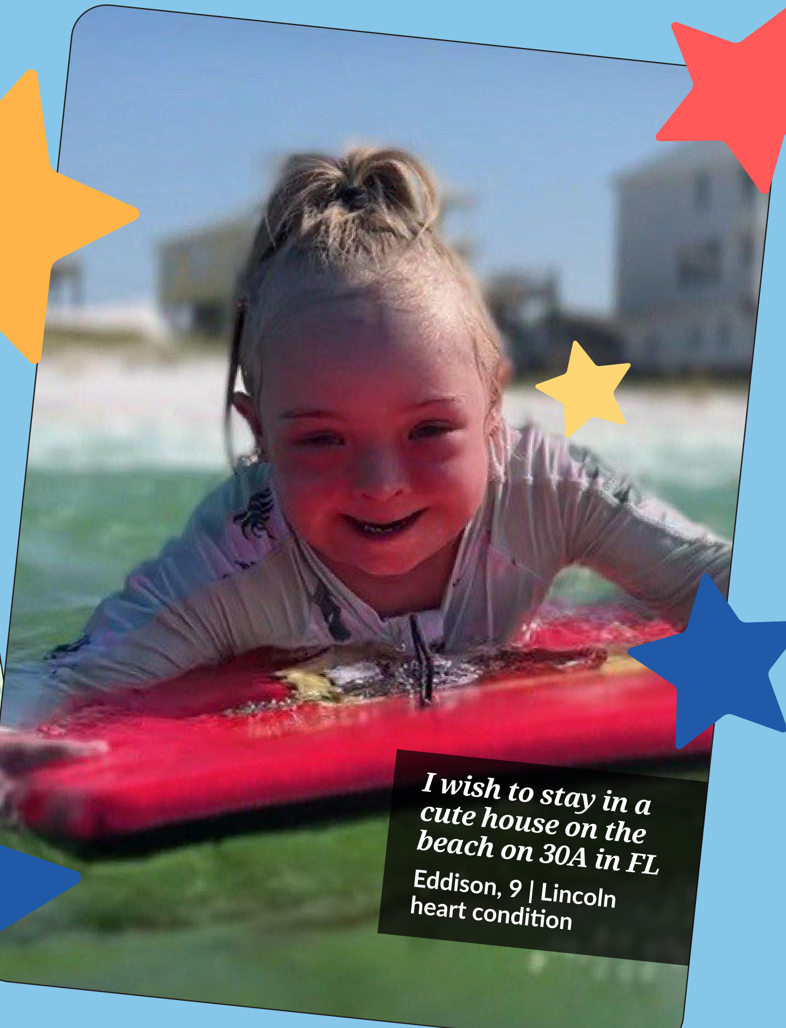
Zanessa, 17, Alliance	cancer	I wish to go to Hawaii
Taylor, 10, Glenvil	leukemia	I wish to go to Hawaii
Lester, 8, Omaha	congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Disneyland® to see the Cars and Marvel attractions
Calvin, 7, Doniphan	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to see the Lion King characters
Selena, 4, South Sioux City	genetic disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet princesses
Lina, 5, Madison	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
G'henai, 18, Bennington	nervous system disorder	I wish to have a hot tub
Gisselle, 8, Gering	blood disorder	I wish to have a camper with my name on it in grey, black, pink, and white
Jason, 18, Omaha	lymphoma	I wish to go to Hawaii
Carleana, 10, Omaha	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Victor, 7, Chapman	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Lexi, 4, Lincoln	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet Mickey Mouse
Taytem, 11, Kearney	genetic disorder	I wish to meet Kane Brown
Noah, 18, Bellevue	leukemia	I wish to have a shopping spree at Mall of America
Liam, 4, Concord	congenital heart disease	I wish to go to the San Diego Zoo
Nicolas, 11, Columbus	brain tumor	I wish to have a shopping spree in Omaha
Anna, 5, Omaha	nervous system disorder	I wish to have a hot tub

Fiona, 15, Papillion	lymphoma	I wish to take lessons for soprano sax, drums and electric guitar
Greyson, 17, Bellevue	heart transplant	I wish to go to the aquarium in Atlanta, GA
Gage, 17, Nebraska City	cancer	I wish to go to Hawaii
Angel, 6, Grand Island	genetic disorder	I wish to have Maltese puppy
Raegan, 16, Ord	kidney disease	I wish to go to Nashville, TN
Jessica, 12, Martell	liver transplant	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and make a Light Saber
Oliver, 4, Bellevue	congenital heart disease	I wish to have a backyard playset
Ronin, 5, Omaha	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to the beach
Alaina, 9, Ashland	nervous system disorder	I wish to have a UTV
Beckett, 2, Lodgepole	bone marrow transplant	I wish to have a backyard playset
Franklin, 6, Kearney	leukemia	I wish to have a backyard playset
Trenton, 17, Omaha	cancer	I wish to have a labrador retriever
Cesar, 16, Curtis	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to have an all-terrain track chair
Cayleigh, 13, Omaha	vascular disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and to Harry Potter World
Jayce, 17, Omaha	nervous system disorder	I wish to have sensory toys
Eddison, 9, Lincoln	heart condition	I wish to stay in a cute house near the beach on 30A in Florida.

I wish to go to Cancun

Clair, 15 | Kearney

heart condition



I wish to stay in a cute house on the beach on 30A in FL

Eddison, 9 | Lincoln

heart condition

Make-A-Wish®
NEBRASKA

Headquarters
1005 South 107th Avenue, Suite 102
Omaha, NE 68114

Lincoln satellite office
8033 South 15th Street, Suite B
Lincoln, NE 68512

Kearney satellite office
412 East 25th Street, Suite D
Kearney, NE 68847

/MakeAWishNebraska
@MakeAWishNE
@makeawishnebraska

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

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/refer-a-child
Call 800-760-WISH (9474)

#1 Most Trusted Nonprofit Operating Locally Across 50 States
MAKE-A-WISH®
MORNING CONSULT® 2024

Events

Thanks to Phelps Memorial Health Center, wish kid Landon found out his wish to go to Hawaii was being granted at the 2025 Kearney Evening of Wishes gala.

Turkey Trot
November 27, 2025 | Omaha

Wheel of Wishes
December 12, 2025 | Lincoln

Wish Ball
February 21, 2026 | Lincoln

Pot O'Wishes
March 19, 2026 | North Platte

Blue Jean Ball
April 25, 2026 | Omaha

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes
May 7, 2026 | Omaha

Visit wish.org/nebraska to learn more about our events