



I wish to have a
sports-themed cabin

Zach, 10
kidney transplant



Make-A-Wish.
MAINE

IMPACT REPORT

Fiscal Year 2025



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear friends,

This past year has been extraordinary. Along with the talented and dedicated Board of Directors that I have the great privilege to lead, I'm thrilled to share that Make-A-Wish Maine once again matched our record of 89 wishes granted—for the second year in a row. We also had a record-breaking fundraising year, raising more money than ever before in our chapter's history. Thanks to the incredible support of volunteers, community partners, and donors, our wish granting pace continues to increase, and we are setting our sights even higher in the year ahead.

Another incredible milestone we celebrated this year was granting our 2,000th wish. This achievement gave us the chance to reflect on the many individuals and organizations who have come together to make these wishes possible. It is truly inspiring to see how Maine communities unite to create life-changing moments for children battling critical illnesses.

As we continue this important work under the leadership of our President & CEO Brian Franks, we are filled with excitement for the future. Brian's personal connection to the mission as a wish dad keeps us focused on what matters most—bringing hope, strength, and joy to children and families across our state.

Together, every one of us can help turn fear into hope for a child in Maine. Thank you for believing in the power of a wish.

With gratitude,

Harry Lanphear
Board Chair

ON THE BACK COVER:

Wish 2,000



Kiley's wish to meet her favorite character Winnie-the-Pooh was the milestone 2,000th wish for Make-A-Wish Maine. Kiley's younger brother Liam, who lives with the same rare metabolic diagnosis, received his wish to go to Walt Disney World in 2017. "This moment is important because my kids are literally one in 600 million rare," describes wish mom Heidi. "They're very special and it's so nice to be able to have an organization to help support them."

Make-A-Wish Maine 2025-2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jeremy Ward
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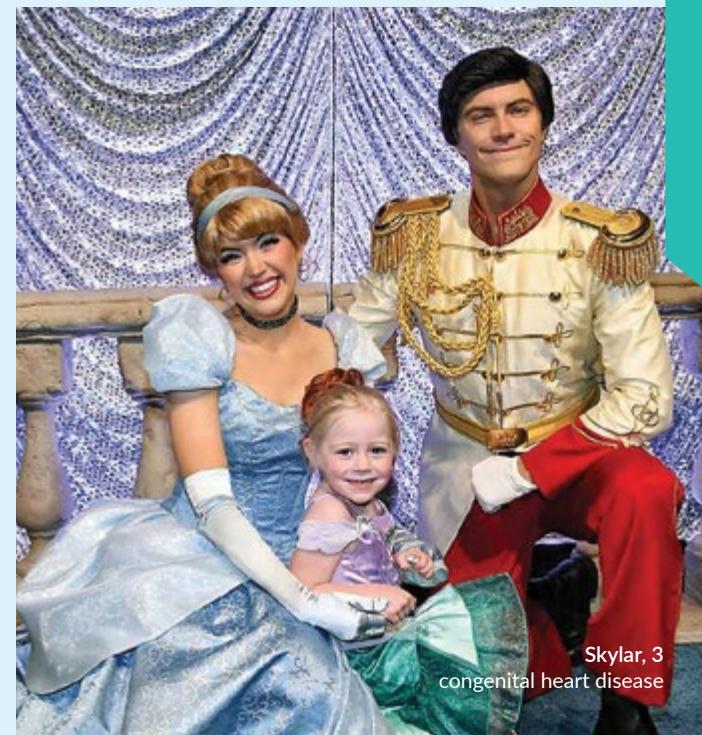
Once Upon A Wish Party

A Special Celebration

This spring, five Maine wish kids experienced the trip of a lifetime when they attended the Once Upon a Wish Party at Walt Disney World—an unforgettable royal celebration exclusively for wish families.

Of the 50 wishes granted at this event from across the country, five were from Maine! And for the first time ever, three Maine wish kids boarded the same flight together from Portland, making the send-off a celebration in itself.

The Once Upon a Wish Party event was filled with magical touches at every turn. Wish kids and their families took part in a Royal Wardrobe Fitting and Makeover, enjoyed a whimsical Palace Pajama Party, and even had lunch with the Madrigal Family from Encanto! The highlight of the celebration was the Once Upon a Wish Royal Ball, a spectacular evening where children stepped into their own storybooks, meeting all the Disney Princesses and favorite characters in person.



As part of their wish, each family also received passes to all four Walt Disney World parks—Epcot, Hollywood Studios, Animal Kingdom, and Magic Kingdom—allowing them to make countless memories together throughout their stay.

"We still cannot believe that our kids are able to take part in this beautiful Once Upon a Wish Party," wrote Thao, wish mom to Kaitlyn. "Our kids loved it, and they laughed and smiled through the whole event. They even had some tears when they had the father-daughter dance and the coronations crowning!"

For wish kids, the Once Upon a Wish Party was more than a trip to Disney—it was a chance to escape the challenges of illness, celebrate resilience, and experience the true magic of a wish.

This year's Once Upon a Wish Party carried special meaning:



The Royal Ball coincided with the 45th anniversary of Chris Greicius's wish, the little boy whose dream to be a police officer inspired the founding of Make-A-Wish. It was a reminder of the power of a single wish—and the ripple effect it creates for generations of children.

Scan to learn about the wish that started it all:



celebrate wishmakers

WISH ALUMNI

A WishMaker is anyone who takes action in support of wish kids—whether by donating, volunteering, fundraising, or partnering with Make-A-Wish. Through their involvement, WishMakers help replace fear with confidence, sadness with joy, and anxiety with hope for children facing critical illnesses. Here are some of our incredible WishMakers!

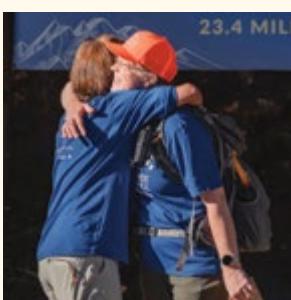
★ Katie Kelley | As an Official Photographer for Make-A-Wish Maine, Katie of Katie Kelley Creative is a true WishMaker who generously gives her time and talent to capture the magic of wish moments and the joy of our most memorable events. With her creative eye and compassionate spirit, Katie ensures that families have lasting images of the hope, strength, and happiness their child experiences through a wish. Her photography not only preserves these treasured memories but also helps share the heart of our mission with the wider community. Fun Fact: All of the photos on this page were taken by Katie!



★ John & Sara Gendron | John and Sara and the team at Gendron & Gendron are extraordinary WishMakers whose generosity and longtime support have made a lasting impact on Make-A-Wish Maine. In addition to their ongoing donations, they recently hosted a powerful wish celebration at their facility, giving wish kid Kaed the chance to experience the healing joy of his wish surrounded by friends, family, and community. By opening their doors and hearts, John and Sara created a truly memorable moment that highlighted the strength and hope a wish can bring.



★ Kristin McCabe | Kristin is a dedicated Trailblaze Challenge volunteer whose enthusiasm, organization, and heart for the mission make her an invaluable part of the Make-A-Wish Maine family. Whether she's helping with logistics, cheering on hikers, or stepping in wherever support is needed, Kristin brings positivity and encouragement to every aspect of the event. Her commitment goes beyond tasks—she creates a welcoming and uplifting atmosphere that inspires participants and fellow volunteers alike. Kristin embodies the spirit of Trailblaze, showing how one person's passion and generosity can fuel hope and make a meaningful difference for wish kids across Maine.



★ Abby Mueller | As a Mission Delivery Intern, Abby has been an incredible WishMaker, using her skills and dedication to help bring more joy to children across Maine. She supported wish planning, researched strategies to increase referrals, and worked toward our goal of granting a wish for every eligible child. A medical student at Tufts, Abby brings both compassion and determination to her work, making a meaningful impact on the lives of wish kids and their families. After her internship, Abby continued her impact by taking part in our Trailblaze Challenge and becoming a wish granting volunteer!



Learn more about becoming a WishMaker at: wishmaker.org.

Matt's Wish

Then & Now

Matt was a teenager when a day home sick from school resulted in a leukemia diagnosis that rocked his world.

What followed was a lengthy treatment regimen for this shy and quiet boy. He had painful and difficult procedures, challenging side effects, and new people in his space regularly. What kept him strong was his love of music, a language he taught himself and a crutch when life got hard.

"There were times where I think if he just saw me he would be nauseous and we figured out ways to deal with that," says Jay Westra, RN. "And music was part of that."

Matt brought his guitar to appointments and would even play in the atrium, sharing his passion and talent with the staff and patients at Barbara Bush Children's Hospital.

"One of the ways he calmed himself down and got through everything is just to start playing on the guitar and start singing," Jay remembers. "And it actually became an attraction for everyone else in clinic and uplifted everyone else in clinic."

It was a surprise to no one that when he chose his wish, it was music-focused. Matt's wish to take his music to the next level included new equipment and a once-in-a-lifetime experience performing in front of hundreds of new fans. Since his wish in 2023, Matt has continued to play and now performs both covers of popular songs and his own music.

Attendees of Wish Night 2025 got to see his talent firsthand as he took to the stage, performing multiple songs to cheers and applause. We can't wait to see where Matt goes next and this is one Wish Alum to watch!



Katie Kelley Photography

We believe a single wish transforms lives.

Strength

Research shows a wish can give kids the strength to fight against and even overcome a critical illness.

Hope

A wish renews hope, uplifts spirits and encourages the belief in the impossible.

Trauma Relief

A wish provides much-needed relief from trauma and stress caused by critical illness.

Turning Point

The wish journey is often a pivotal experience during a child's treatment and recovery.



100% of medical providers surveyed said the wish experience improves a child's emotional well-being.

Refer a Child Today

Help us reach our goal to reach every eligible child by making a referral today at wish.org/refer-a-child.



An Extraordinary Year



240+
Volunteers

operating across the state
to deliver our mission
in every county in Maine

38
Wish Alumni
Engagement Events

attended by 208 wish families,
building a community with wish
alumni well beyond their wish

WISH GROWTH

At Make-A-Wish Maine, we are committed to grant the wish of every eligible child and are proud to partner with Maine's largest hospitals and pediatric specialty groups to ensure each child in Maine living with a critical illness has the opportunity to wish.

RECORD 89 WISHES

2 years in a row



Make-A-Wish Maine
grants an average of
one wish every four days

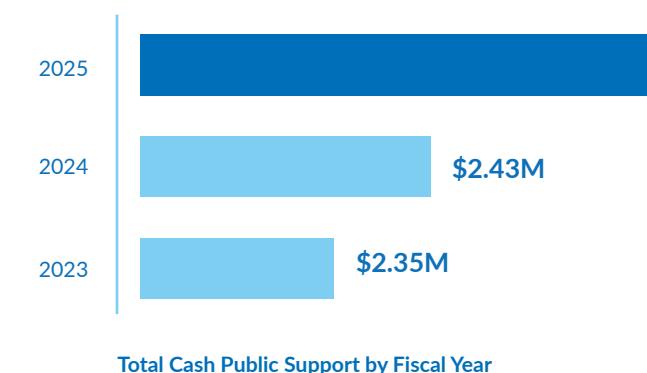
to a child battling
a critical illness



91 wishes planned in 2026

REVENUE GROWTH

Make-A-Wish Maine received the 2025 Fundraising Excellence Award from Make-A-Wish America, celebrating our year-over-year growth. This award is a celebration of more than 6,800 donors coming together to create transformative wishes for children battling critical illnesses.

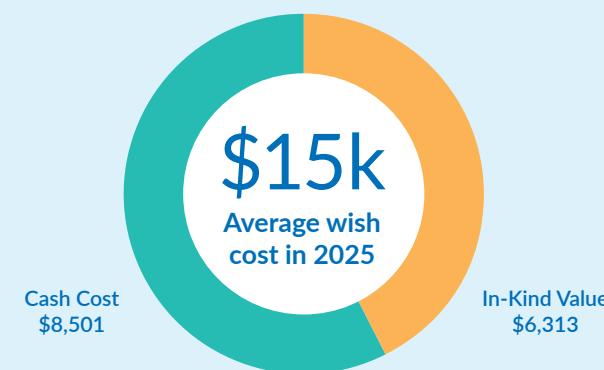


\$2.62M
Record-breaking
fundraising
year

2025 Fundraising
Excellence Awardee
from Make-A-Wish America



42% of the wish cost is covered
through in-kind donations



We use in-kind support to supplement our wish experiences and stretch donor dollars. While the overall average cost of a wish is nearly \$15,000, over 42% is covered through donations from over 500 amazing in-kind partners annually, allowing us to grant more wishes.

TRUST & TRANSPARENCY

71% of every donation goes directly towards wish expenses, well above Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance recommended nonprofit ratio of 65%.

To view our audited financials, please visit our website at wishes.org/maine/our-chapter



Annie Cavallaro
Volunteer and Alumni Manager



Brian Franks
Wish Dad/President & CEO



Kim Hackett
Development Manager



Rita King
Mission Delivery Coordinator



Michele Mullen
Administrative Coordinator



Abby Parke
Wish Coordinator



Mackenzie Perry
Wish Manager



Meredith Plaud
Director of Marketing & Communications



Sonya Purington
Director of Mission Delivery



Nichole Rutherford
Director of Development



Fun Fact:
Make-A-Wish ranked in the
Top 20 Most Admired Employers
making us one of only
two nonprofits to make the list!
(Morning Consult, 2024)



WISH HIGHLIGHT

Zach's Wish

Fit for a Sports Star

Ten-year-old Zach from Alton has always been a passionate sports fan, even while facing more medical challenges than most children his age.

Born with a kidney disorder, Zach endured countless procedures before receiving a life-saving kidney transplant in October of 2024. His resilience and positive spirit inspires everyone around him. This past year, Zach's dream of a sports-themed cabin in the woods became a reality.

Before the big wish reveal, Zach experienced an unforgettable day at the University of Maine, where the athletic teams partnered with Make-A-Wish to create a one-of-a-kind celebration leading up to his wish reveal.

The day began with a limo ride for Zach and his family, setting the tone for an extraordinary experience. Upon arrival, five members of the UMaine baseball team and head coach Nick Derba greeted Zach with cheers and presented him with a game-worn jersey.



From there, the family enjoyed a private tour of the updated Harold Alfond Sports Arena and Shawn Walsh Hockey Center, exploring locker rooms, medical and training facilities, and the media room. It was an exclusive behind-the-scenes experience for Zach and the surprises kept coming!

Zach and his family watched part of a hockey practice before heading to the football sidelines, where he was given a bag of UMaine merchandise including a hockey jersey, football, and hat (which he quickly passed on to his younger stepbrother to have as a keepsake). The Coastal Athletic Association Commissioner even presented Zach with his own official coin toss coin.

After hockey practice ended, goalie Albin Boija and forward Max Scott came out and spent time tossing a football with Zach and his siblings. Boija presented Zach with a signed goalie stick, while Scott gifted him a game-worn helmet signed by the entire team.

Zach joined the lineup to greet the football team as they entered and exited the field, exchanging high-fives and fist bumps.



The day concluded with Maine football's first win of the season. When asked by UMaine media about his favorite part of the day, Zach didn't hesitate: "Hanging with Boija and Max."

Nick Fonzi, UMaine's Director of Hockey Operations, summed up the experience of meeting Zach perfectly:

"You wouldn't know all that Zach has been through in his 10 years. Many of us could learn lessons from his attitude and resilience."



Thanks to the incredible support from UMaine Athletics, Zach's day was filled with joy, laughter, and unforgettable memories—a true celebration of strength, community, and dreams coming true. And this was all leading up to his wish reveal! Zach's memories and keepsakes from this special day will live inside his sports-themed cabin for years to come.

Make-A-Wish

LEGACY OF WISHES

Leave a lasting legacy that will cost nothing during your lifetime and will help us grant the next 2,000 wishes.

Consider designating Make-A-Wish Maine as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy and retirement plan.

Your gift will help us grant transformative wishes for local children with critical illnesses.

Have you already named Make-A-Wish Maine in your estate plans? If so, please let us know.

We want to thank you and welcome you into our Legacy of Wishes Society.

To learn more, please contact
Director of Development
Nichole Rutherford at
(207) 221-2306 or
nrutherford@maine.wish.org



CELEBRATING OUR STARS

WE'RE HONORED TO ANNOUNCE THESE

2025 Award Recipients

Each year, we recognize individuals and organizations that exemplify the very best in support, commitment and passion.

Mike Williams Society

This award recognizes volunteers who have given at least 300 hours of time or granted 15 or more wishes.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of this organization. Simply said, we could not do what we do without their dedication and selfless commitment to helping kids in our state. Currently there are over 240 volunteers who work as the face of the organization. They help a child dream about what their wish might be, and best of all, they help make it happen.

One of our first volunteers who helped set this expectation and inspire hundreds after him to follow in his footsteps was Mike Williams. Since his very first wish in 1983 in Colorado, to Maine, back to Colorado and lastly in Indiana, Mike has been a wish granter on over 1,000 wishes. In honor of his dedication, the Mike Williams Society was formed in 1996 to honor those who, like Mike, have given generously of their time and talent to make wishes come true for the courageous children of Maine.

★ Danielle Beckwith | Danielle has been a wish granting volunteer since 2013 and has granted more than 15 wishes. Bringing creativity and kindness to this role, Danielle has created magical wish experiences.

★ Carolyn Dupre | Carolyn became a wish granting volunteer when her daughters went to college and has granted more than 15 wishes. Carolyn makes every wish special and unique!

★ Drew Pisani | Drew is a trusted volunteer for Trailblaze Challenge and is someone the team can count on to keep our hikers safe and prepared out on the trail, while also offering smiles and motivation.

★ Lizz Tharpe | Lizz brings joy and inspiration to everyone she meets through Trailblaze Challenge, motivating our hikers to push on and celebrating their successes. Additionally, through her coaching at Bonny Eagle Middle School, the softball team has raised critical funds for wishes.



Brendan Batson Youth Engagement Award

Recognition of Maine youth who give substantial time and energy to support Make-A-Wish.

★ University of New England

We are proud to present the Brendan Batson Youth Engagement Award to the University of New England, whose students and athletes have shown outstanding dedication to supporting Make-A-Wish Maine. Through their beloved annual Teddy Bear Toss and commemorative jersey auction, UNE raises money to help grant wishes and beyond fundraising, they created unforgettable memories by welcoming wish families to their game, where players and fans alike joined together in a celebration of community, compassion, and hope.

Community Spirit Award

Recognition of organizations or individuals who significantly contribute to our cause.

★ Jeff Glidden / Drumming Up Wishes



Jeff's passion and dedication have made a profound impact on Make-A-Wish Maine. A professional drummer and founder of the annual Drumming Up Wishes event, Jeff has turned his love of music into a powerful force for good. Inspired by the joy of seeing both his daughters' wishes come true, Jeff continues to rally bands, communities, and supporters together. Jeff's generosity and community spirit embody the very heart of our mission.

WishMaker Award

The WishMaker Award is given to a supporter who embodies selfless service, distinguished dedication, and a willingness to go above-and-beyond for the advancement of our mission.



★ VIP Tires & Service

We are proud to give the WishMaker Award to VIP Tires & Service, in recognition of their outstanding and sustained support of Make-A-Wish Maine. Over their partnership beginning in 2008, VIP has contributed more than \$1.6 million to chapters across New England. In 2024 alone, VIP raised and donated a record \$330,000 to Make-A-Wish chapters across New England during its 'Season of Wishes' campaign in December. VIP customers make donations and then John Quirk, VIP's Executive Chairman and Owner, matches the contribution, dollar for dollar.

"Granted wishes involve the entire family and let them enjoy a special time together, doing something fun, without the strain of the medical situation top of mind," said Quirk. "Make-A-Wish is doing an amazing thing one child at a time with this program, and we're proud to support them."

VIP's leadership, generosity, and culture of giving make them a true champion of hope for wish kids throughout New England.

Our Young Leaders Council is comprised of young professionals throughout Maine looking to support the Make-A-Wish mission through community awareness, engagement and fundraising.

Make-A-Wish Maine 2025-2026

YOUNG LEADERS COUNCIL

Marisa Nizzi
Chair
MERGE

Erin Miller
Chair-Elect
Martin's Point

Ryan Baillargeon
Glia

Jack Bjorn
Pierce Atwood

Drew Blaney
RM Davis

Sam Burgoine
HM Payson

Carissa Chipman
Chalmers Insurance

Ashley Deep
Mainely Tubs

Rachel Emerson
Maine Title Company

Emily Gilman
Comprehensive Rehab Consultants

Kate Hart
US Bank

Zac Henry
Clark Insurance

Keegan Hyland
Raymond James

Maddie Jarvis
Cornerstone Energy Services

Alanna Parker
Insulet Corporation

Samantha Ramsey
United Insurance

Josh Verneau
Clark Insurance

Keara Wagner
HM Payson



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Stay In Touch

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wish.org/maine

@MakeAWishMaine



Help wishes take flight! While your airline miles will expire, once donated to Make-A-Wish Maine they will never expire. Ensure no child waits a moment longer than they have to for their travel wish by donating your unused miles today!

Visit wish.org/airline-miles for more information.

