



Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAKE-A-WISH, NFL, AND FANATICS DELIVER THE ULTIMATE SUPER BOWL LX EXPERIENCE FOR JAMES FROM APEX. NC

The wish-granting organization has granted more than 300 wishes for children with critical illnesses to attend the Super Bowl since 1982. Fanatics elevates the week with VIP moments and exclusive gear as families experience Super Bowl LX festivities Feb. 4–8, 2026

RALEIGH, NC (Feb. 3, 2026) – Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina is sending James, a 16-year-old who battled leukemia from Apex, NC, to the San Francisco Bay Area to attend Super Bowl LX with support from the National Football League (NFL), Fanatics, the official sports partner of Make-A-Wish, and other corporate partners. Families will take part in five days of Super Bowl festivities from February 4–8, culminating at Levi's® Stadium in Santa Clara for the NFL's championship game.

Over the past 44 years, Make-A-Wish has granted more than 300 Super Bowl wishes, with the NFL supporting hundreds more football wishes through all 32 teams and their players. The first Super Bowl wish was granted in 1982 for John Paul Serna, a 12-year-old from Arizona who attended Super Bowl XVI, marking the ninth wish in Make-A-Wish history.

The NFL and Fanatics will provide exclusive access and experiences throughout Super Bowl Week, ensuring each wish kid and their families enjoy a memorable event. Activities include:

- **Wednesday, Feb. 4:** Welcome reception at Topgolf, a longtime partner of Make-A-Wish, where wish kids will connect with one another with a trading card activation hosted by Topps.
- **Thursday, Feb. 5:** Powered by the NFL's longstanding commitment to Make-A-Wish, families will get a behind-the-scenes tour of Levi's Stadium followed by attendance at NFL Honors.
- **Friday, Feb. 6:** Fanatics has some NFL player-sized surprises in store for the wish families when they visit Lids Pier 39. Each wish kid will receive a \$200 credit for official Super Bowl LX merchandise. Families will also take in the Super Bowl Experience, hosted by the NFL, where wish kids can create the perfect sidekick at the Build-A-Bear x NFL Shop station. They'll build their very own bear and dress it in their jersey of choice for a game-day good luck charm. New this year, several Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year nominees will offer personal words of encouragement to wish kids, creating voice recordings that can be incorporated into the bears they

- **Saturday, Feb. 7:** Families explore San Francisco and enjoy the energy of Super Bowl Week.
- **Sunday, Feb. 8:** The week culminates at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara. The wish kids will watch the New England Patriots and Seattle Seahawks face off for the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

"For wish kids, the Super Bowl isn't just a game," Said Sarah Hughes, Chief Program Officer for Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina. "It's a moment of pure joy, hope, and belonging. We're grateful to our partners at the NFL and Fanatics for helping make these once-in-a-lifetime wishes possible and for providing an experience that goes far beyond the game."

Since partnering with Make-A-Wish in 2023, Fanatics has enhanced more than 900 sports-related wishes by creating experiences such as athlete meet-and-greets, premium hospitality at championship events, exclusive merchandise, and surprise moments that make wish kids feel like MVPs.

The Super Bowl remains one of Make-A-Wish's most impactful annual wish-granting moments. For more than four decades, the NFL has played a key role in granting wishes that bring joy and strength to children and families facing critical illness.

To learn more and find out how you can get involved, visit wish.org/eastnc.

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About Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina

For 40 years, Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina has been granting life-changing wishes for children aged 2.5–18 battling critical illnesses. From the Triangle to the coast, we've brought hope, joy, and lasting memories to over 4,800 children and their families. We are proud to say that our organization is 100% local, as all of our funds and all of the children we serve are from Eastern North Carolina. Part of a nationwide network of 57 chapters that have granted more than 340,000 wishes, we strive to grant the wish of every eligible child in our 49-county community, giving them chance to experience the transformative power of a wish. Learn more at <https://wish.org/eastnc>.

Editor's Note: Interviews with James and his family prior-to, during and after the wish may be arranged. In addition, Make-A-Wish will be capturing b-roll throughout the experience for media purposes. To coordinate an interview or request footage, please contact Ashley White, Marketing Manager, Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina via awhite@eastnc.wish.org.