

WISHES

Make-A-Wish®
NEBRASKA

Official Newsletter of
Make-A-Wish Nebraska

Spring 2026



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

Eddison, 9 | Lincoln
heart condition



wish.org/nebraska



Dear Friends of Make-A-Wish Nebraska,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and awe at the remarkable achievements we accomplished together. Thanks to your unwavering generosity, our Chapter reached a remarkable milestone this past fiscal year by granting a **record-breaking 133 wishes**. This extraordinary achievement was made possible by the dedicated network of physicians, social workers, wish granters, volunteers, and donors, all working together to ensure every eligible child receives a wish uniquely tailored to them.

Each wish fulfilled is a testament to the power of compassion and the strength of our community.

We are equally proud to share that 87% of every donation goes directly toward our mission – ensuring that your generosity has the greatest possible impact, transforming lives and creating opportunities for those we serve.

None of this would have been possible without your dedication. Whether you contributed your time, resources, or encouragement, you played an essential role in making dreams come true. On behalf of everyone at Make-A-Wish Nebraska, thank you for believing in our mission and making wishes come true.



Sincerely,

Brigette Young
President/CEO



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2026 FISCAL YEAR - WISHES SINCE SEPT. 1, 2025

Blaklee, 13, Omaha	transplant	I wish to have a camper	Willow, 4, Valley	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to have a shopping spree
Kolton, 16, Omaha	respiratory failure	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Jase, 12, Tilden	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Eleanor, 5, Fairmont	gastrointestinal disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet princesses	Zoey, 11, Omaha	gastrointestinal disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® to meet Ana and Elsa from Frozen
Audrey, 5, Kennard	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Janessa, 16, Bellevue	kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Addison, 5, Crofton	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go on a Disney Cruise Line®	Kinsley, 7, Ponca	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Peter, 3, Lincoln	kidney transplant	I wish to go to Disneyland®	Landon, 15, Holdrege	cancer	I wish to go to Hawaii
Anthony, 4, Bennington	wilms tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Jailyn, 18, Howells	metabolic disorder	I wish to have a college scholarship
Everleigh, 6, Bellevue	blood disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Kendri, 12, Sargent	cancer	I wish to go to Anna Maria Island in Florida
Austin, 17, Lexington	congenital heart disease	I wish to meet the Dallas Cowboys	Jack, 3, Bennington	kidney transplant	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Journie, 3, Omaha	end stage kidney disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and meet Moana	Grant, 6, Ashland	leukemia	I wish to go to Universal Studios®
Riggs, 7, Platte Center	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Evan, 8, Omaha	cancer	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Skylar, 8, Omaha	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Discovery Cove®	Rhylee, 3, Fremont	genetic disorder	I wish to go shopping at Mall of America
Xayvior, 12, Omaha	rare metabolic disorder	I wish to go to Oahu to swim with dolphins	Aiden, 10, South Sioux City	nervous system disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Addison, 9, Lincoln	brain tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii	Tyler, 18, Dalton	leukemia	I wish to go on the Carnival Jubilee cruise ship
Mateo, 9, Columbus	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to go to the Omaha zoo and Children's Museum	Booker, 10, Imperial	cancer	I wish to go to the Denver Broncos stadium
Giovanni, 13, Kearney	cystic fibrosis	I wish to go to a Charger's game	Kaden, 18, Kearney	end-stage kidney disease	I wish to meet Jimmie Johnson at the Daytona 500 Race
Nicholas, 17, Omaha	leukemia	I wish to have a 2018-2019 Panini Prizm Basketball Hobby box	Keyton, 15, Bennington	gastrointestinal disorder	I wish to go to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter®
Noah, 7, Peru	congenital heart disease	I wish to go to Walt Disney World® and Universal Studios®	Breckyn, 7, Broken Bow	leukemia	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
Elizabeth, 12, Lincoln	autoimmune disorder	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®	Everett, 8, Omaha	leukemia	I wish to go to Universal Studios®
Joshua, 10, Omaha	blood disorder	I wish to have an online shopping spree	Aaron, 11, Schuyler	genetic disorder	I wish to have a big chair to watch sports
Shelby, 3, Omaha	nervous system disorder	I wish to have a travel trailer	Harley, 5, Cozad	wilms tumor	I wish to go to Hawaii
Aiden, 12, Omaha	blood disorder	I wish to go to NYC and see the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade	Bexton, 4, Kearney	leukemia	I wish to swim with and help sea turtles
Benjamin, 18, Omaha	brain tumor	I wish to be a Husker Football Player	Jacob, 14, Malcolm	metabolic disorder	I wish to have a hot tub
Jagger, 15, Omaha	neuromuscular disorder	I wish to be a Husker Football Player	Finnley, 4, Omaha	wilms tumor	I wish to go to the San Diego Zoo
			Luke, 11, Malcolm	metabolic disorder	I wish to have a lift for a hot tub
			Colin, 12, Albion	heart transplant	I wish to meet Stephen Curry
			Sophie, 3, Omaha	brain tumor	I wish to go to Walt Disney World®

Eddison's Wish Story



I wish to stay in a cute house near the beach on 30A in Florida
Eddison, 9 | Lincoln heart condition

From the very beginning, Eddison has shown the world what courage looks like.

Eddi spent the first 70 days of her life in the NICU and has faced several rare and serious diagnoses. While doctors once predicted she might only have a few years, her family has learned not to measure life by limitations—but by love, creativity, and togetherness. Whether it's bringing oxygen tanks along on kayaking trips or using a portable concentrator on hiking adventures with her dad, Eddi's family believes that if she can't join the adventure,

they simply choose a different one. What could feel like sacrifice has instead become a gift, teaching them that choosing what's best for another person brings joy to everyone.

Eddi is happiest when she's with her favorite people—her siblings or “big kids” as she calls them, mommy, and daddy. She loves making plans, no matter how small – from movie nights and board games to baking cookies or folding laundry together. Music fills her heart, and she's always ready to sing and dance to her favorite songs. With her infectious charm, she's even mastered convincing her teenage siblings to take her for donuts or a quick Target run for “something cute.”

Ever since she learned to sit up, Eddi has loved playing in sand. Living in Nebraska doesn't offer many sandy beaches, but wherever Eddi goes outside, she finds a patch of gravel or dust and happily plays for hours. So, when it came time to choose her wish, Florida was an easy decision—endless beautiful sand, boats, and, of course, donuts readily available!

Eddi's wish was more than a trip. With no cure for her illness, her family knows that time is precious.

“There isn't a cure for Eddi's heart and lungs. We know that someday, we won't have any more time. Having her wish granted gave us a gift that is

incomparable – time with our Eddi,” said Eddi's parents, Brooke and Joe.

When Eddi learned her wish was coming true, she couldn't contain her excitement. She packed her suitcase early, told everyone she met about the beach, and talked nonstop about sand, boats, and family fun.

To Eddi's family, Make-A-Wish doesn't just grant wishes—it blesses entire families in ways that are both tangible and immeasurable. Eddi's wish created memories that will last forever, reminding them that even in the hardest moments, joy, love, and hope can still shine bright!



Bexton's Wish Story

At just 17 months old, Bexton was diagnosed with pre B-Cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia — news that completely turned his family's world upside down. The diagnosis came the day after his parents had celebrated the excitement of seeing his baby sister, Wrenley, on her first ultrasound. In an instant, joy shifted to fear. Instead of simply preparing to welcome another baby, they were facing the unimaginable: not knowing if their first child would survive.

The next two and a half years were filled with treatments, hospital stays, and countless trips back and forth to appointments. Bexton's doctors shared that he set records for the number of ER visits due to fevers and illness during treatment, sometimes averaging a visit every one to one-and-a-half weeks during flu season. Life revolved around staying close to the hospital and watching carefully for any sign of sickness. Yet even in the darkest moments, Bexton and his family remained positive and hopeful. His parents say the experience brought them closer together as a couple and as a family, teaching them to embrace time together and focus on the positives each day could hold.

Through it all, Bexton has always been a joyful, easy-going kid. He loves his sleep and will happily snooze for 12 hours if given the chance. He adores his 8-year-old yellow lab, Ollie, especially giving him high fives and sneaking him extra treats. He's proudly "all boy," with a love for heavy machinery, hunting, fishing, roping, and wearing his cowboy boots. Some of his favorite activities include catching bullfrogs with his uncles and papa, riding Rangers and 4-wheelers at his grandparents' homes, throwing the football, hitting baseballs, and building Legos with his mom, dad, and little sister.

During treatment, Bexton developed a special fascination with turtles. While spending so much time at Children's Nebraska, he claimed the turtle statue in the lobby as "my turtle." Soon turtles were everywhere in his world — stuffed animals, movies, and videos from friends who spotted them outside. When he learned he qualified for a wish, his choice was immediate.

Although he was too young to swim with sea turtles, Bexton's wish took him to the Turtle Hospital in Florida, where he met turtles receiving care. Seeing them being treated by doctors, just like he had been, was a powerful and emotional moment. He realized they "just needed some medicine to feel better," too — a bittersweet reflection of his own journey.



I wish to swim with and help sea turtles
Bexton, 4 | Kearney
pre B-Cell acute
lymphoblastic leukemia

For his family, the wish was more than a trip. It was a long-awaited breath of fresh air and a joyful closing chapter after years of holding their breath. It was time together, celebration, and healing. When the week ended, Bexton told his mom:

"This was the best week ever, mom. I want to do it again!"





MEDICAL REFERRAL SPOTLIGHT: LIZ

I work as a medical social worker in the outpatient Hematology/Oncology clinic at Children's Nebraska. At Children's Nebraska we take a multidisciplinary approach with our patients' care. I work closely with providers and nurses to help families navigate an oncology diagnosis or chronic hematology condition. My day-to-day role includes meeting with families to assess needs or barriers - connecting our patients with resources, mental health support, counseling, and referrals.

But my favorite role is being a referral source - connecting our patients to Make-A-Wish Nebraska. **I feel incredibly honored to play even a small role in such a magical process.** I have the absolute privilege of sharing this

opportunity with them and explaining what Make-A-Wish is all about. Every single time, I'm met with raised eyebrows, wide eyes, and the biggest toothy smiles. Sometimes even a scream of excitement!

I introduce the family to the wish concept, let them know they are eligible, and submit a referral with their approval. Referrals are important because they allow Make-A-Wish to receive accurate information directly from the medical team that qualifies a child for a wish.

Make-A-Wish does an amazing job connecting with the family and helping the child dream BIG. I love catching up with the kids and hearing about what they're dreaming up and getting excited about with their wish. It gives us something joyful and hopeful to talk about during clinic visits - something that isn't focused on treatment. I've seen how having a wish brings light into really hard seasons, offering families a sense of hope, normalcy, and something positive to look forward to.

Each wish is unique to the child. Some of my favorite wishes that come to mind include: "To create music - taking lessons for soprano sax, drums, and electric guitar," "To create a gaming unit

with a famous YouTuber," and "To attend the National Finals Rodeo and meet a professional rodeo cowboy."

Another wish that has especially stayed with me is "Be a zookeeper at the Omaha Zoo for a day." I knew the many challenges this child faced, not only during chemotherapy, but also outside of their diagnosis and treatment. This wish reflected something deeply special to them.

I truly believe wishes make a meaningful difference in a child's outlook on their treatment and care. Knowing they have a wish, even before they decide what it will be, gives them something positive to look forward to. While the kids I work with are incredibly resilient, a wish adds an extra layer of strength and hope. A wish is such a beautiful way to honor both the child and their family and recognize everything they've endured.

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

Laurie
illness unknown
*I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 1999)*

Shaeden, 19
nervous system disorder
*I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2024)*

Arianna, 14
cancer
*I wish to go to Hawaii
(Wish Year 2025)*

Jessa, 12
rare condition
*I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2024)*

Kase, 9
brain tumor
*I wish to go to Hawaii
(Wish Year 2025)*

Zain, 6
brain tumor
*I wish to go to Walt Disney World®
(Wish Year 2024)*

Kendri, 12
cancer
*I wish to go to Anna Maria Island
in Florida
(Wish Year 2025)*

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

DONOR SPOTLIGHTS

ROUGHRIDERS

Since first supporting Make-A-Wish Nebraska in July 2008, the Roughriders motorcycle group has been a powerful force for hope, compassion, and community impact. Their connection to Make-A-Wish began through longtime member Doug "Minnow" Terry, whose friendship with someone at Make-A-Wish helped introduce the Roughriders to the mission. After learning more about the life-changing work being done for local children, the Roughriders knew they had found a cause that aligned with their values.

Over the years, the Roughriders have attended the Make-A-Wish Wish Ball in Lincoln and proudly sponsored two tables, so more members could be a part of the experience. They shared, "We've experienced Make-A-Wish changing children's lives, and there is nothing more precious than that."

One unforgettable moment came in 2012, when the Roughriders escorted wish kid Cayden on his wish journey to become a "Pop Star." Meeting Cayden at his elementary school, the group rode Harley-style alongside his limo all the way to Omaha, where Cayden completed radio interviews before heading to the airport and flying to Los Angeles to live out his pop-star wish. It was a powerful reminder of how community can rally together to make magic happen.



Doug's passion for Make-A-Wish lived on through moments like these, bringing people together and helping create unforgettable moments for wish kids. In 2025, Doug sadly passed away. Doug will always be remembered as a beloved brother whose heart for the Make-A-Wish mission helped shape our continued partnership. Doug's family honored his legacy with a memorial donation and this year the Roughriders remembered him with an empty chair at the Lincoln Wish Ball.

Through every mile traveled and every wish supported, the Roughriders continue to prove that generosity, brotherhood, and compassion can change lives.

SWING FOR WISHES: SEWARD

What began as a simple idea has grown into a meaningful community tradition supporting Make-A-Wish Nebraska. After participating in several Make-A-Wish golf tournaments and seeing first-hand how the proceeds help grant wishes, Lana Daws, the founder of Swing for Wishes, felt inspired to bring a golf tournament to Seward. In 2025, with encouragement from fellow golfers and close friends who shared a passion for the mission, that idea became a reality.

The success of Swing for Wishes is rooted in the dedication of a group of friends. They worked together to turn their vision into a successful event. Their commitment and love for helping children and families facing critical illnesses have made the tournament a celebration of hope.

For Lana, involvement with Make-A-Wish has been deeply personal. After retiring from a career in education, becoming involved as a wish granter felt like a natural next chapter. Supporting children and families during some of life's most difficult moments has brought both perspective and

purpose. Lana shared, "Being a witness to how the child, their parents and their entire family dealt with this challenge was amazing. And, if I could be a small part of this challenge by working with them to make the child's wish come true, my heart was full."

Whether it's planning a trip to Walt Disney World®, becoming a zookeeper for a day, or creating something special at home, each experience leaves a lasting impression for Lana. Many of the families she worked with have even become lifelong friends.

The inaugural Swing for Wishes tournament was made possible by the generosity of the Seward community. Last year, the tournament raised an incredible \$19,500 for Make-A-Wish Nebraska. From sponsors and golfers to volunteers and supporters, the event reflected what can happen when a community rallies together.

Plans are already underway for the next Swing for Wishes tournament, scheduled for June 26, 2026, at the Seward Community Golf Course. With continued support and enthusiasm, Lana is confident it will be another day filled with generosity, connection, and the power of granting wishes.



Make-A-Wish[®]

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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/nebraska
Call 800-760-WISH (9474)

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

Events

Blue Jean Ball

April 25, 2026 | Omaha

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes

May 7, 2026 | Omaha

Norfolk Golf Tournament

May 29, 2026 | Norfolk

Truck Center Companies Concert and Golf Tournament

June 11-12, 2026 | Omaha

Swing for Wishes

June 26, 2026 | Seward

Lincoln Federal Savings Bank Golf Tournament

July 17, 2026 | Lincoln

Evening of Wishes Gala

August 6, 2026 | Kearney

Wine, Whiskey and Wishes

September 17, 2026 | Lincoln

Learn more at wish.org/nebraska



*** A NIGHT OF ***
CHAMPIONS

BLUE JEAN BALL

PRESENTED BY THE McKEE GROUP and D|A DAVIDSON

Make-A-Wish[®] NEBRASKA

Join us April 25th for our annual **Blue Jean Ball: A Night of Champions!** The fun-filled evening will include some very special wish stories, highlighting the life-changing impact of a wish, as well as silent and live auctions raising funds to grant even more wishes for children battling critical illnesses in Nebraska. Get your tickets today at BlueJeanBallOmaha.org or scan the QR code above. Hope to see you there!