

The  
POWER  
of

Joy

2025

Make-A-Wish<sup>®</sup> Southern Florida

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



More than 640 volunteers fuel our wish-granting mission with unwavering commitment.



A wish forever transforms the lives of children, their families, and entire communities.



A wish is granted every 10 hours in Southern Florida.



Research shows that wishes can give kids the hope they need to fight.



In a typical year, we grant more than 370 wish assists.

Our vision is to grant the wish of every eligible child in our local communities.



A wish unites neighbors, friends, and entire communities through life-changing experiences.



For children battling a critical illness, a wish gives them the chance to believe anything is possible.



In the last year, Make-A-Wish Southern Florida granted wishes for 504 local children.

**Keyla, 7**

1<sup>st</sup> Wish Kid to experience WishWorks

★ **MORE INSIDE**



Dear Friends,

This year reminded us that hope and joy are powerful forces—especially when a community chooses to carry them together.

Fiscal year 2025 was the most transformational in our chapter's history. Thanks to your generosity, we forever impacted the lives of nearly **900 wish kids**—both those here at home and those who traveled from chapters around the world to discover their wishes with us. One of those extraordinary wishes was our **15,000<sup>th</sup>** milestone: 7-year-old Gemma's VIP experience at Zoo Miami. We celebrate it not only because Gemma's life will be forever changed by her wish, but because it places us among just **five Make-A-Wish chapters in the world** to have transformed so many lives. Every smile, every strengthened family bond, every moment of relief in a difficult season was made possible because you cared enough to support us. For the child facing another treatment, the sibling who needed a day to feel seen, and the parent who needed a reason to exhale and believe—thank you. You transformed days, lives, and futures.

A defining milestone of the year was the Grand Opening Ceremony of the Finker-Frenkel Wish House—a place built to elevate how children and families uncover a wish that is truly theirs. From the first hello at the door to immersive spaces designed for imagination, the Wish House is changing the wish discovery process in ways that are both deeply personal and profoundly memorable. We are already seeing the difference: more time for exploring, more room for joy, and more clarity around each child's one true wish. It stands as a testament to what vision and steadfast partnership can achieve, and it will continue to shape how we serve wish kids for generations to come.

This commitment to excellence and collaboration was recognized nationally when our chapter received the prestigious **Richard K. Davis Power of One Award**—an honor that celebrates transformational impact, leadership, unity, and collaboration across the Make-A-Wish enterprise. We are humbled to be two-time recipients of this award, having first received it in 2015. We accept it on behalf of you: the donors, volunteers, medical partners, corporate supporters, and staff who never stop believing in the life-changing **power of a wish**.

As we look ahead, our promise is simple and unwavering: to grant the wish of every medically eligible child—with an experience that restores joy, strengthens families, provides hope, and inspires communities. Your support fuels that promise. Thank you for standing with us and investing in the courage of children who deserve a bright chapter in their story. Together, we will continue to create hope—**one wish at a time**.



*Eugene Frenkel*

**Eugene Frenkel**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Make-A-Wish® Southern Florida



*Norman Wedderburn*

**Norman Wedderburn**  
President & CEO  
Make-A-Wish® Southern Florida

# A VIP STAY IN TAMPA BAY



*I wish to go  
to Tampa*

**Addilyn, 7**  
respiratory disorder

Addilyn is a 7-year-old from Oklahoma who had her wish fulfilled in late April to go to Tampa. This trip was extra special, marking the **first time** that Addilyn and her family left their home state!

They got to soak in the sunrays, explore a new city, and visit the famous white sand beaches in St. Petersburg. Addilyn really wanted to ride a rollercoaster, which she also got to do, with tickets to Busch Gardens Tampa Bay.

The highlight of Addilyn's wish was her **VIP experience at the Clearwater Aquarium**—home of Dolphin Tale stars Hope and Winter! When asked about her aquarium encounter, she animatedly listed all the animals she got to interact with, including Hope.

Addilyn and her younger sister watched Hope perform tricks within her enclosure, gleefully taking in every second. The Clearwater Aquarium generously gifted Addilyn a stuffed manatee plushie from their gift shop, which she clutched tightly for the duration of her visit!

Addilyn and her family will **never forget** their fun-filled week spent in Florida.

**“Meeting Hope was just insane, I mean, the look in my daughter’s eyes, it’s priceless.” - Addilyn’s Father**

*Wish granted in collaboration with  
Make-A-Wish Oklahoma*



# VENERA

A FILM BY

JACKSON WALKER



*I wish to write, direct,  
and act in a movie*

**Jackson, 10**  
respiratory disorder

**JACKSON TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT**

Jackson is a creative kid with a big passion for movies. He decided that his wish was the perfect chance to get a jump start on his dream career. He wished to write, direct, and star in a movie!

Jackson established the movie would be a sci-fi thriller with some comedic flair. The next step was to produce the movie. Jackson got to experience the process from the inside, spending a day at Shout Creative Studios, filming some scenes in front of green screens. He loved every moment, especially being the director.

**“Jackson’s having so much fun and that’s what everybody wants. He’s going to remember his movie and the people that came, forever.” - Jackson’s Father**

The following day was time for some live action acting at Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital, which is where Jackson is often treated. A mock hospital room was the setting for a pivotal scene in his movie. This time, he wore a huge smile and got down to the serious business of movie-making. A professional stylist did his hair and makeup while he got into wardrobe for his role and chatted with his co-star (*pictured on the right*). Surrounded by cameramen, directors and lots of microphones, Jackson felt right at home when the cameras rolled. *‘Venera’* premiered at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival after months in the making.

All dressed up, Jackson and his family took a chauffeured limousine ride to Savor Cinema. He was surprised to see a bunch of his friends and his grandparents who flew in from New York for his wish alongside his family, Make-A-Wish staff and supporters, his medical team, and the media. As the closing credits rolled, the crowd erupted with cheers. Then, Jackson sat in the director’s chair for an onstage Q&A session. Jackson’s cinematic dream concluded with photos and autograph signings for his fans.

*Referred by Amy Walker, Jackson’s mother  
Wish adopted by Nicole’s Wish  
Wish Granters: Leslie Levine & Kara Salsburg-Boehly*





## LEMURS & LASTING MEMORIES

*I wish to go  
to Sarasota*  
Megan, 15  
brain tumor

Megan's grandmother and aunt are Sarasota natives, and she resides in Texas. While there may be distance between them, they stay near and dear to Megan's heart throughout her current journey battling a brain tumor.

Naturally, Sarasota was the only place that Megan wanted to go when asked what her wish would be.

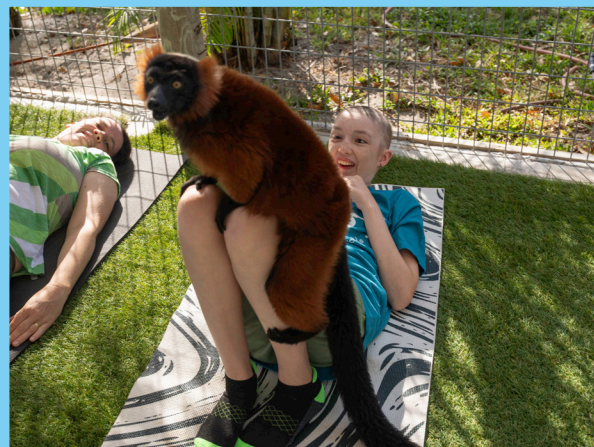
Megan and her family flew in from Houston for a family vacation, exploring Sarasota's hidden gems while creating everlasting memories. Their first day included a "Dolphins & Donuts" boat tour, looking for dolphins along the coast while snacking on complimentary donuts and coffee. Another day's journey included a visit to Tree Umph for their best attempt at a tree top adventure course.

Though, as a curious teen and true animal lover, the peak of Megan's trip was a private yoga class with lemurs at Big Cat Habitat! Megan struck all the yoga poses while the friendly and furry creatures would climb around and interact with her.

In fact, the lemurs climbed all over everyone, appearing just as captivated in their human guests as they were of them. Megan found this especially amusing—she even got to feed them apples!

**“The lemurs are like little kids or puppies, wanting to run around and explore everyone, crawling all over you! I wouldn't have wanted to go anywhere else.” - Wish Kid Megan**


*Wish granted in collaboration with  
Make-A-Wish Texas Gulf Coast & Louisiana*



A purple rectangular sign with white text mounted on the teal siding of a shed. The text reads "TEAGAN'S SHE-SHED" in a large, serif font, with "EST. 2025" in a smaller font below it.

TEAGAN'S SHE-SHED  
EST. 2025

# TEAGAN FINDS HER INDEPENDENCE

A young woman with long, wavy red hair stands in the doorway of a teal-colored shed. She is wearing a blue denim jacket over a red dress. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The shed has a white door with a window and a white frame. The background shows some greenery and a clear sky.

*I wish to have an  
art studio she-shed*

**Teagan, 15**  
heart condition

Since the fifth grade, Teagan has envisioned a private place to write, create art, and record YouTube videos. These creative outlets help her process emotions about her health, express her feelings, and provide a sense of accomplishment.

When her wish granters arrived to discover her heartfelt wish, Teagan was very passionate about having her own custom she-shed!

Growing up sharing a bedroom with her little sister, Teagan never fully had a place she could call her own. She wanted somewhere where she could have her own time away from the world and get to do what she wants to do, on her terms. Teagan's she-shed gave her autonomy.

Even before it was delivered, there were numerous steps involved in making her wish come true.

From setting a structural foundation and securing building permits to installing an AC unit and adding electricity, it was a labor of love for every party involved.

**“Her wish really has brought her peace—a place that she can call hers and have time for herself. We all need that, right? Especially when she’s battling a chronic disease and school. It’s nice to be able to provide relief to these kids.” - Teagan’s Nurse, Shelly Screen, on the World of Wishes Podcast**

*Referred by Shelly Screen, Teagan’s nurse*

*Wish adopted by Aubuchon Homes*

*Wish Granters: Francine Waldman, Lia Kiss, & Toni Morgenstein*



# CLAIRE RESTORES THE REEF

*I wish to be a  
marine biologist*

**Claire, 12**  
lymphoma



While undergoing treatment, Claire spent hours learning about marine life and dreaming about her future as a marine biologist. When her wish granters visited, it didn't take long to discover Claire's one true wish: to dive into the world of ocean science and help restore coral reefs. That dream took Claire and her family all the way to the Florida Keys for an unforgettable marine biology adventure.

Claire's trip included a visit to a turtle hospital, a swim with dolphins, and a slice of Key West's famous key lime pie. The true highlight was meeting world-renowned marine biologist, Dr. David Vaughan, founder of Plant a Million Corals. The organization is on a mission to restore one million corals using groundbreaking microfragmentation technology, which accelerates coral growth and recovery at unprecedented rates.

At the restoration lab, Claire got a one-on-one, hands-on experience with real coral science. She learned how to clean, care for, and replant coral using the same techniques that is helping revive reefs around the world. She even examined coral samples under a microscope—just like a real scientist!

Dr. Vaughan generously gifted Claire two of his published books on coral reefs, and before the day was over, she had already made it halfway through one. Claire's passion, intelligence, and love for marine biology amazed everyone she met. Her wish wasn't just a vacation—it was a step toward the future she's working so hard for. Now back home, Claire holds tight to her dream, and thanks to her wish experience, she's more determined than ever to make it a reality.

**“This further motivates me to want to become a marine biologist and has changed my life *for the better.*” - Wish Kid Claire**

*Wish granted in collaboration with  
Make-A-Wish New Jersey*



# MASON FINDS TREASURE IN A WISH

*I wish to  
be a pirate*  
Mason, 7  
respiratory disorder



Diagnosed just days after he was born, Mason lives with a respiratory disorder and receives daily treatments. However, he does not let it define him—he is a lively, energetic kid with the heart of a true pirate!

Whether he's dressed head-to-toe in pirate gear or hunting for treasure with his metal detector, Mason lives for adventure. According to his family, Mason's passion for pirates goes beyond toys and games; everything has to be pirate-themed, even birthdays and Halloween costumes! So, when it came time to choose his wish, Mason didn't hesitate. He wanted to be a pirate.

His wildest dream came true in the Florida Keys, where he and his family set sail for an unforgettable journey at Hawks Cay Resort. Two "pirates" welcomed Mason aboard for a day full of excitement: he learned expert sword-fighting skills, designed his own pirate hat, embarked on a wild treasure hunt around a pirate ship, and swapped sea tales. It was the perfect day fit for a true buccaneer.

This wish didn't just leave a lasting impact on Mason—it inspired one of the actors who played a pirate that day. She later joined us on the World of Wishes Podcast to share her heartfelt story, including her personal connection to Make-A-Wish and how Mason's courage and joy reminded her why wishes matter.

**“Mason’s wish has been a light. This wish shows our kids that *you can dream big—and your dreams can be real!*”**

*- Mason's Mother*

*Wish granted in collaboration with  
Make-A-Wish Minnesota*



## ★ Donor Spotlight

# Celebrating the *heart* behind a million-dollar milestone

For 13 years, **Melissa Howard** has been a devoted champion of our wish-granting mission. Her steadfast generosity and belief in the power of hope have helped transform countless lives across our community. Melissa is deeply committed to creating meaningful impact for children facing critical illnesses. As a longtime Cooking For Wishes Ambassador, she embodies the leadership, passion, and purpose that drive this signature event.

“A wish gives a sick child and their family something amazing to look forward to. **It gives them the strength and hope to keep fighting.**”

When a child is sick, their **entire family is affected**. The most rewarding part is hearing from wish parents how much the wish impacted their entire family.”

We proudly honor our Cooking for Wishes Ambassadors—extraordinary community leaders whose generosity helps ensure every eligible child in our region receives a life-changing wish. Melissa not only serves as an ambassador; she sponsors the interactive dinner event each year. This year, she demonstrated her unwavering commitment by becoming **our first-ever Title Sponsor**.

Cooking for Wishes is a high-energy, interactive culinary experience unlike anything else in our Suncoast community. Guests cook a gourmet multi-course meal right at their table, guided by Michael's On East Executive Chef Jamil Pineda and Sarasota culinary icon Phil Mancini, with exceptional wine pairings curated by Michael Klauber to elevate every course. This year, thanks to incredible supporters like Melissa, Cooking for Wishes surpassed **\$1 million raised for the first time in its history**.



Join **Melissa** in making wishes come true!

Support our signature events, get involved, and explore what's coming up next at [wish.org/sfla/our-events](https://wish.org/sfla/our-events)

★ Wish Alumni

# THEN & NOW

Wish  
granted  
in 2012

## TYLER GUTZMER

*I wish to be a commentator for the Miami Heat*

“Being able to watch a basketball game that close will forever be one of the coolest things in my life.”

— Episode 26, World of Wishes Podcast



Wish  
granted  
in 2016

## JILL SHARKEY

*I wish to shadow a professional makeup artist*

“My wish was the push in life that I needed... to tell me I have a purpose in life, I’m meant to do this just like he is.”

— Episode 21, World of Wishes Podcast

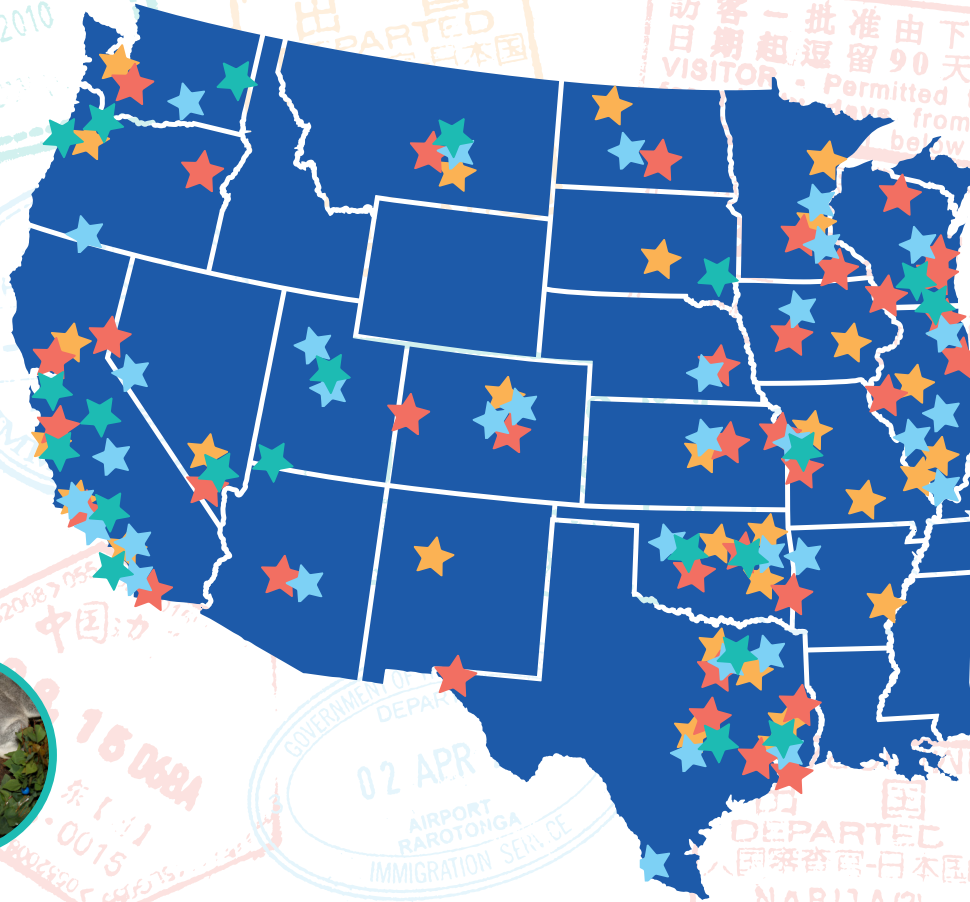


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# GEOGRAPHY DOESN'T LIMIT IF A CHILD'S WISH COMES TRUE



## 378 WISH ASSISTS\*

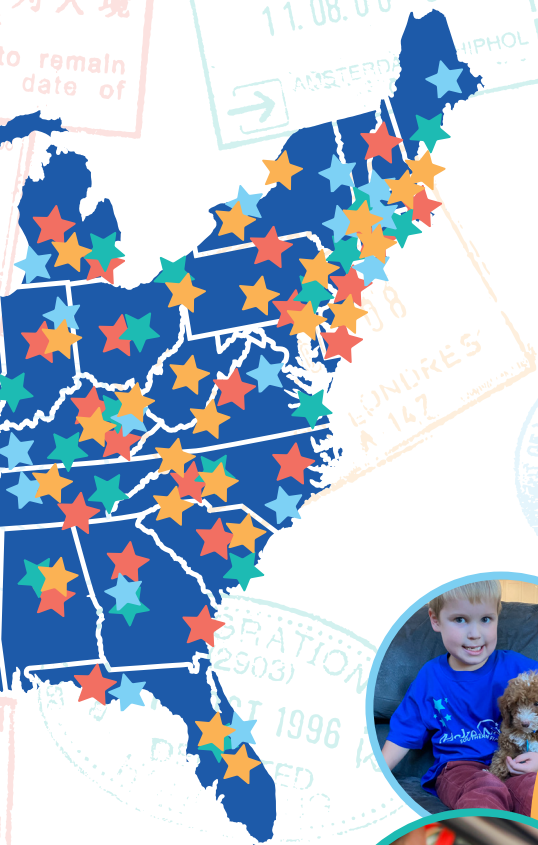
Wish Assists not pictured: Canada (15), Israel (2), Netherlands (1), and Norway (1)

*This number refers to the amount of wish assists granted between September 2024 and August 2025 in Make-A-Wish Southern Florida's territory.*

# \*A WISH ASSIST

through Make-A-Wish helps children who qualify for a wish, but live outside the local chapter's service area or in a different country, have their wish granted.

It's a collaborative effort between Make-A-Wish chapters to ensure that every eligible child can have their wish granted, no matter where they reside.



Make A Wish

## WISHES IN FLIGHT®

You can create a *world of hope* for wish kids.

Donate airline miles today at [wish.org/travel](https://www.wish.org/travel)

Did you know?

More than **80% of all wishes** involve some sort of travel.



*I wish to meet*  
**Disney® Imagineers**  
**Madison, 13**  
leukemia



## IMAGINEERING A WISH

**DISNEY'S 170,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH COMES TRUE**

Madison's wish marked a major milestone—the 170,000<sup>th</sup> Disney wish granted globally—celebrated on Disneyland's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. While undergoing treatment for leukemia, 13-year-old Maddie from Fort Myers was inspired by *The Imagineering Story* and *Behind the Attraction* on Disney+, sparking her dream to meet the Imagineers who bring Disney magic to life.

Her trip included a VIP tour, meetings with Imagineers across disciplines like ride technology and Audio-Animatronics, and an exclusive look at historical sketches and archives. Walt Disney Company CEO, Josh D'Amato even surprised her with BDX droids Oskar and Red.

Since the very first official wish was granted at Disneyland Resort nearly 45 years ago, Disney has now helped fulfill **170,000 wishes** globally with Make-A-Wish, delivering happiness when it's needed most to wish kids and their families around the world. Disney is proud to be the **world's largest wish granter for Make-A-Wish**, granting a wish every hour of every day.

★ Corporate Spotlight

# CAPITAL ONE CELEBRATION



3+  
WISHES  
RAISED

In February of 2025, **Capital One** employees from across the country gathered at the JW Marriott in Tampa for a week of celebration and team building.

One of the most unforgettable moments came when three wish families were invited into a packed ballroom for a surprise reveal. Thanks to the generosity of Capital One associates, \$32,000 was raised—enough to grant **three life-changing wishes** and create memories these families will cherish forever.

Danika's wish to visit Disney World became a magical reality, complete with princess encounters and dazzling parades. Zakir, whose passion for music runs deep, now has his very own music studio where he's already composing and recording songs. Benjamin's dream of a cruise turned into an incredible adventure at sea, giving his family time to relax and explore together. Seeing these wishes come true was a powerful reminder of the hope and joy that Make-A-Wish brings to children facing critical illnesses.

After the emotional reveal, employees honored Make-A-Wish with a 5K walk, reinforcing their commitment to making a difference. The day ended with an ice cream social, where associates celebrated their collective impact and reflected on the lives they helped transform. There's joy that comes from community and giving back—not just through fundraising, but by creating real moments of happiness for children and families who need it most.





*I wish to have a VIP  
experience at Zoo Miami*

**Gemma, 7**  
leukemia



## GEMMA WALKS ON THE WILD SIDE

Gemma, who just celebrated her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday, battled leukemia for more than two years. Her love of animals gave her something positive to focus on, helping her through the most difficult times with ICU stays, aggressive treatments and chemotherapy at **Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital**.

Now in remission, Gemma was beyond excited to experience her wish—to have a **VIP experience at Zoo Miami**. During the limo ride to the zoo, Gemma, her parents, and her grandparents had silly balloon fights and a dance party. A huge “Happy Wish Day” sign and a red carpet told Gemma this was no ordinary day at the zoo.

A private tour of animal adventures with behind-the-scenes access was planned based on Gemma's favorite animals. **Zoo Miami Goodwill Ambassador, Ron Magill** took her under his wing for up close and personal encounters with her favorite creatures. Gemma's caravan of golf carts explored the zoo, stopping for visits with her favorite animals.



Gemma took selfies with the tortoise and giggled at the sounds of the elephants and the chimpanzees. Gemma's attention was on the animals, but Ron's attention was on Gemma, keeping her engaged and ensuring that **her wish was the best it could be.**

As they approached Winston the cheetah, Ron presented Gemma with a cheetah ear headband and a stuffed cheetah, which she named **Pepsi**. Gemma was a little disappointed to discover that Leila, the tiger, was out of sight, resting in the shade when they approached her home. However, as Gemma and her family were exiting the zoo, they passed Leila's habitat, and the tiger was out just to see Gemma. **It was surreal!**



Gemma's wish is the **15,000<sup>th</sup> wish granted by Make-A-Wish Southern Florida** since 1983, making us **one of only five chapters in the world to reach this milestone.**



**“This was the gift of childhood and innocence, the chance to be a kid again. We could not stop smiling.”**

**- Honey, Gemma's Grandma**

# MAKE-A-WISH SOUTHERN FLORIDA MILESTONE WISHES

*I wish to have  
a computer*

Todd, 14  
neuromuscular disorder



1<sup>ST</sup> WISH

1,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH



*I wish to have  
a tree house*

Michael, 6  
respiratory disorder

1983

2000

2,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH

*I wish to pet  
baby animals*

Danni, 9  
brain tumor



3,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH



*I wish to be a  
Florida Marlin*

Luc, 6  
lymphoma

*I wish to have  
a swing set*

Tyler, 3  
respiratory disorder



4,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH

7,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH



*I wish to record  
my own CD*

Victoria, 8  
bone marrow transplant

2006

*I wish to be a  
motorcycle  
policeman*

Austin, 7  
blood disorder



5,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH

6,000<sup>TH</sup> WISH



*I wish to be  
a firefighter*

Jonalya, 7  
immune system disorder

11,000TH WISH



*I wish to have a horse*  
Madison, 14  
cancer

13,000TH WISH



*I wish to have an all-terrain wheelchair*  
Noah, 9  
neuromuscular disorder

9,000TH WISH



*I wish to go deep sea fishing*  
Michael, 12  
heart condition

14,000TH WISH



*I wish to have a custom golf cart*  
Charlie, 5  
leukemia

2020

2025

8,000TH WISH



*I wish to be a runway model*  
Peaches, 13  
blood disorder

12,000TH WISH



*I wish to have an interactive playground*  
Wyatt, 4  
respiratory disorder

10,000TH WISH



*I wish to have a lighthouse-themed Man Cave*  
Luke, 12  
blood disorder

15,000TH WISH



*I wish to have a VIP Zoo Miami Experience*  
Gemma, 7  
leukemia

STEP INTO A WORLD OF  
**IMAGINATION**

★  
WISHWORKS



## ★ 1<sup>st</sup> Wish Kid

# Every dream begins with the power of a *wish*

8-year-old **Keyla** stepped into a world of wonder as the very **first wish child to experience WishWorks** on April 2, 2025.

Battling a gastrointestinal disorder with courage and grace, Keyla became the hero of her own story in a place where creativity and magic unite.

Every detail, from the whimsical architecture to the immersive storytelling, was crafted to celebrate her journey and ignite her joy. After her journey through the experience, she looked up with wide eyes and said,

*“I never want to leave.”*

That simple sentence captures everything WishWorks was meant to be. A place where children feel joy, wonder, and a sense of belonging.

Check out the world of possibility at [wishhouse.org](https://wishhouse.org)

Meet **Einstein**,  
WishWorks'  
official ambassador!





## 100+ wishes

Jennifer Prior  
Raquel Del Orbe  
Carolyn Pucci  
Jackie Parisi  
Sue Pikus  
Ralph Balkin  
Dianne Billig  
Candy Norton  
Jessica Rivera  
Gustavo Diliz  
Fran Waldman  
Katia Rodrigues  
Janine Balkin  
Shelby Ruebens  
Cindy Baumgarten Velen

## 200+ wishes

Leslie Levine  
Mindy Brown  
Martha Carmen

## 300+ wishes

Kara Salsburg Boehly

# 648 VOLUNTEERS

*\*This number includes volunteers active from September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025 at Make-A-Wish Southern Florida*

Each year, the volunteers of Make-A-Wish Southern Florida demonstrate extraordinary heart and commitment—and this past fiscal year was **no exception.**

Among the many memorable moments, one story stands out: when wish alum Lia Kiss attended a Make-A-Wish event in 2024, she unexpectedly crossed paths with her own former wish granter, Francine Waldman.

Lia immediately recognized Fran, sparking a warm reunion that quickly evolved into something even more meaningful. Inspired by their reconnection, the two began granting wishes together, creating a full-circle journey that beautifully captures the impact—and lifelong connections—that Make-A-Wish volunteers help create.

Over the last fiscal year, **648 active volunteers** contributed their time and talents to our chapter. This group is remarkably multilingual—speaking **more than 14 different languages**, including American Sign Language, Creole, French, Hebrew, Hindi, Urdu, Italian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and more—allowing us to support wish families with cultural sensitivity and care.

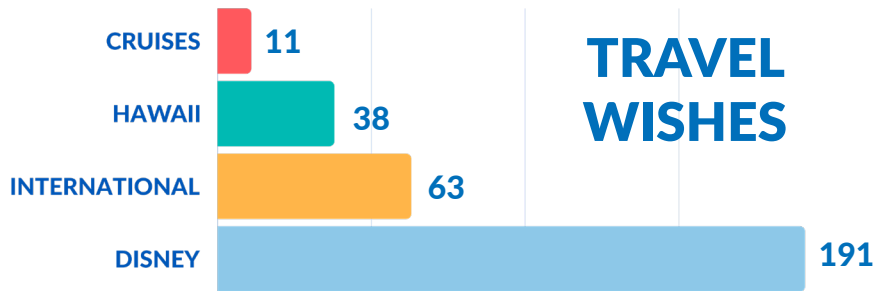
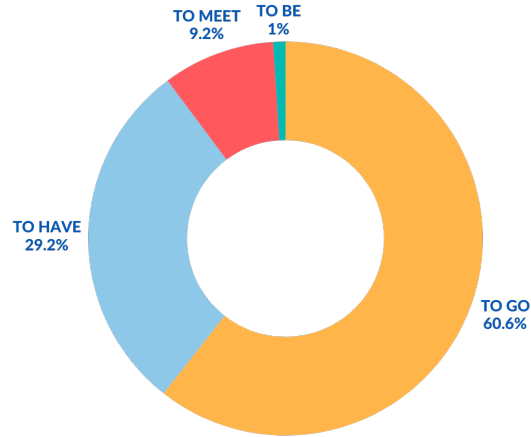
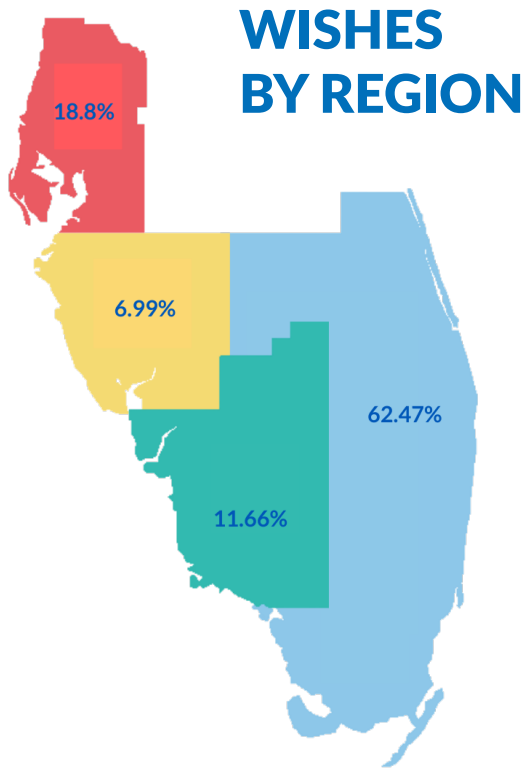
Many of our volunteers have reached truly extraordinary milestones: 15 volunteers have granted over 100 wishes, 3 volunteers have granted over 200, and **one exceptional volunteer has surpassed 300 wishes granted.** Their dedication is a testament to the power of volunteerism and the transformational joy that we bring to children and families throughout Southern Florida.



**MAKE WISHES COME TRUE**  
AT [WISH.ORG/SFLA](http://WISH.ORG/SFLA)

# 504 LOCAL WISHES GRANTED

*\*This number includes wishes from September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025 in the Make-A-Wish Southern Florida territories (Southeast Florida, Southwest Florida, Suncoast, Tampa Bay, and the U.S. Virgin Islands)*



**Did you know?** Make-A-Wish Southern Florida earned the prestigious **Richard K. Davis Power of One Award** from Make-A-Wish America in recognition for our outstanding collaboration. We served on the Chapter Performance Committee, assisted with multiple CEO searches, contributed a six-figure gift to the Wish Fulfillment Fund, granted 49 out-of-territory wishes, and hosted their National Board Meeting with exceptional hospitality.



# CHAIRMAN'S CHALLENGE SOCIETY

*Members of the Chairman's Challenge Society are generous philanthropists dedicated to making the InterContinental® Miami Make-A-Wish® Ball a success. Led by our Chair, Shareef M. Malnik, these supporters underwrite the cost of the Ball so that more funds can go directly toward making children's wishes come true.*

Shareef M. Malnik & Gabrielle Anwar

Stuart Miller

The Lennar Foundation, Marshall Ames

Richard Polidori

Todd & Kim Glaser

Geert-Jan & Joyce Bakker

Finker-Frenkel Family Foundation

Dennis Crowley

Barry & Missy Skolnick

Andrew & Tatsiana Ansin

Alan Mruvka, StorageBlue

Anonymous

Nick & Adriana Ayala

Michael & Caroline Parrish

# THE WISHMAKER'S CIRCLE

The Wishmaker's Circle, introduced in 2025, honors the compassionate donors who turn wishes into reality and bring lasting joy to families. This enhanced giving society welcomes Cornerstone Society members, ensuring that every supporter is recognized at their original giving level. By committing gifts over a five-year period, these dedicated philanthropists help sustain the magic of Make-A-Wish for years to come.

## STRENGTH LEVEL

\$100,000 - \$499,999

Bob and Sharon Bond  
Kirk A. Copanos  
Charitable Trust, John  
Dimitri Copanos,  
Founder  
JAS Family Foundation  
Just Play LLC  
Linsley Family Foundation  
**Levitz Family Foundation**

## JOY LEVEL

\$50,000 - \$99,999

Javier & Annette Bencomo  
**Lianne & Jeffrey Caruso**  
**Tom & Margarita**  
Castellanos  
**Michelle & Jeffrey**  
Eisenberg  
Bianca Ferrari  
John K. Howie & Janice L.  
Howie Foundation  
**Stacey & Josh Mandel**  
Family Foundation  
Michael, Zyta & Zoe Rinzler  
Amy & Harris Siskind  
**Vecchitto Family**  
Charitable Foundation

## CORNERSTONE LEVEL

\$10,000 - \$49,999

**Jeff & Lisa Andrews**  
Anonymous in Memory of  
the Hamilton Family  
Jennifer Barnes  
& Jack K. Barnes  
Mike & Amanda Beauvais  
**Boyers Law Group**  
Walter O. & Shari Byrd  
**Gary & Barbara Davis**  
Greg DeChurch  
**Steve & Emily Demar**  
Dr. Gregory  
& Dawna Desrosiers  
The Edelman Family  
Foundation  
**Richard Eisenberg**  
**Robby Elias**  
Susan & Charlie Emby  
and Family  
Tim & Lois Farrell  
**Amy L. Federman**  
Susan & Leonard  
Feinstein Foundation  
**Marcus and Lauren**  
Fernandez  
**John W. Fisher III**  
& Joanne Fisher  
**Yale & Karen Fishman**  
**John and Jericho Flinn**  
**Ruth & Randy Friedlander**

## Vita & Dan Goldberg

Danielle  
Gonzalez-Rubinstein  
Lisa Gruenloh – *in honor*  
*of Kennedy Burger*  
Jose & Mary Holt  
Mason & Beth Jackson  
**Bruce & Tamar Jacobs**  
Julie Katz  
**Richard & Pauline Kelly**  
and Family  
George & Sally King  
David & Louise Kingsley  
Michael & Terri Klauber  
Richard & Gail Lipsig  
Jeanette M. Lombardi  
– *in loving memory of*  
*Alan G. Martinez*  
Andrew & Lisa Mandala  
Taylor Marini  
**Steve Medwin**  
Jill & Brad Miller  
Jerome & Lynne Miller  
Family Foundation  
**C.J. & Lindsey Mintrone**  
**Mala Murthy**  
**Larry & Stephanie Ordet**  
Daniel Pacheco  
Niven Patel  
**David Pearlman**  
& **Deborah White**  
**Terrie Rosenthal**

## Christopher & Asia Rux

**Jonathan & Karen Sard**  
Capt. Julie Schumacher,  
USMC & Casey  
Schumacher - *in memory*  
*of Emily Sutker*  
Marla Selva  
Peter & Katy Spohn  
Chuck Stauffer  
& Tracey Rippon  
Storch Family Fund  
Rich & Teresa Thompson  
Sharon Truske  
**James & Nichole Vogt**  
**Norm Wedderburn**  
**Deborah White**  
& **David Pearlman**  
**Jerry & Susan Wolf**  
Matthew & Kari Zipay

*\*Names highlighted in bold celebrate members who have generously supported Make-A-Wish through our Cornerstone Society multiple times, reflecting their heartfelt, multi-year commitment to making wishes come true.*



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Coming from a multitude of professional backgrounds and diverse in geographic representation, our Board of Directors is a driving force in our mission to grant the wish of every eligible child in our territory. Members are elected to three-year terms and assist in all phases of Make-A-Wish Southern Florida's efforts. From financial planning to wish granting, our Board of Directors provides the leadership and guidance that propels us forward.

## **Eugene Frenkel**

*Chairman of the Board*  
Legacy Wealth Group

## **Dennis Crowley**

*Vice Chair*  
Doctor's Choice Pharmacy

## **Karen Ford**

*Treasurer*  
Community Volunteer

## **Jennifer Barnes**

Medtronic

## **Caitlin Beck Stella**

Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital

## **Gal Bensaadon**

Red Door Construction

## **Tatiana Cancro**

Sandbar Capital LLC

## **Lianne Caruso**

Caruso Homes

## **Justin Clinger**

Odd Sox

## **Brian R. Exelbert**

Morgan Stanley

## **Marcus Fernandez**

Kinney, Fernandez and Boire, PA

## **Mayte Fernandez**

CGI

## **Damon Ficklin**

Polen Capital

## **Taylor Gang**

Evensky & Katz / Foldes Wealth  
Mgmt. & Gang Family Cellars

## **Domini Gibbs-Sorey**

City of Miami

## ★ **Wish Alumnus**

## **Steven Gillis**

Transportation Control Systems, Inc.

## **Sherri Gutierrez**

Arquitectonica

## **L. Scott Helms**

Helms Development

## **Terry Jove**

Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits

## **Lani Kane-Hanan**

ONE Company

## **Shareef M. Malnik**

*Chairman of the Board Emeritus*  
Sonrisa Rum, Inc

## **Drew Mandala**

Stillwater Structured Finance LLC

## **Jeff Miller**

Miller Strategies

## **C.J. Mintrone**

PNC Bank

## **Michael Parrish**

Howden

## **Ricky Patel**

Akerman LLP

## **Joe Perez**

Zerep Holdings

## **Danielle Rubinstein**

Greenberg Traurig

## **Barry Skolnick**

BLS Asset Management Corporation

## **Richard Weissman**

The Learning Experience

## **Laura Zebersky**

*Immediate Past Chair*  
Community Volunteer



*I wish to meet  
Lionel Messi*  
Samuel, 12  
congenital heart disease

# TAMPA BAY ADVISORY BOARD

Members of our Tampa Bay Advisory Board are committed to sharing their time and talents to advance our wish-granting mission in the Tampa Bay community. The following Tampa Bay Advisory Board members are determined to help us reach the vision of granting the wish of every eligible child.

## Greg Grabau

Chair

Monin Gourmet Flavorings

## Steven Gillis

Transportation Control  
Systems, Inc.

## Senton Pojani

Aon

## Ted Abrams

Joffrey's Coffee & Tea Company

## Gary Godsey

Stream Realty

## Casey Rodgers

Vinik Sports Management

## Amanda Beauvais

L'Oreal

## Brian Hill

Imperium Data

## Chris Rux

Cherry Bekaert

## Andy Cunningham

Royal Oak Realty Trust

## Susan Meister

Heritage Insurance

## Rich Thompson

The Baldwin Group

## ★ *Wish Dad*

## Mike Eshoo

Signature Aviation

## C.J. Mintrone

PNC Bank

## Jim Vogt

AGPM, LLC

## Taylor Ferguson

Google

## Mala Murthy

United Healthcare

## Matt Zipay

Northern Trust

## Marcus Fernandez

Kinney, Fernandez and Boire, PA

## Frank Musolino Jr.

*Immediate Past Chair*  
TD Industries

## John Flinn

RIPA & Associates

## Anthony Pedicini

Strategic Image Management

# SUNCOAST ADVISORY BOARD

Members of our Suncoast Advisory Board bring exceptional knowledge and skills to help further our wish-granting mission in the region. The following Suncoast Advisory Board members have committed themselves to granting life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.

## Sherra Fritz

WWSB ABC 7

## Phil Mancini

Michael's On East

## Renee Phinney

Palm Printing

## Terri Klauber

Michael's On East

## Luke Nicholas

Mariner Wealth Advisors

# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ADVISORY BOARD

Members of our Southwest Florida Advisory Board offer their leadership and professional expertise to help further our wish-granting mission. The following community members have devoted themselves to making every eligible child's wish come true.

## Chuck Stauffer

Chair  
Hotwire Communications

★ **Wish Dad**

## Pam Blackwell

First Horizon

## Lianne Caruso

Caruso Homes

## Mike Dal Lago

Dal Lago Law

## Justin Einstein

Aubuchon Homes

★ **Wish Dad**

## Amy Frith

Canterbury School

## Rick Gallo

Immediate Past Chair  
Rick Gallo Auctioneer

## Jenny Gezella

Naples Princess

## Megan Kohan

Suffolk Construction

## Stephanie LeDuff

Zoll Cardiac Management Solutions

★ **Wish Mom**

## Steve Lynch

Intellastar/Sports Performance Peak

## Jean Noel

Sergeant, Lee County Sheriff's Office

## Renee Poppie

Realty World J Pavich RE

## Jason Rundorff

Naples Global Advisors

# MEDICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Members of our Medical Advisory Council bring their expertise to our mission and help us to grant the wish of every eligible child.

## Dr. Brian Cauff, M.D.

Pediatric Hematology/Oncology  
Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital

## Dr. Laura D'Addese, M.D.

Pediatric Cardiology  
Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital

## Dr. Joanna Davis, M.D.

Pediatric Hematology/Oncology  
Specialist  
Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer  
Center/University of Miami Health  
System

## Dr. Maggie Fader, M.D.

Pediatric Hematology/Oncology  
Nicklaus Children's Hospital/Kidz  
Medical Group

## Mrs. Maria Pilar Gennaro, APRN

Pediatric Neurology  
Nicklaus Children's Hospital

## Dr. Mark Glassman, M.D.

Pediatric Gastroenterologist

## Dr. J. Blaine John, M.D.

Pediatric Cardiology  
St. Joseph's Children's Hospital/  
Pediatric Cardiology Associates

## Mrs. Michele King, B.S., CCLS

Child Advocacy Programs  
Golisano Children's Hospital of  
Southwest Florida

## Dr. Paula Schleifer, M.D.

Pediatric Neurology  
Nicklaus Children's Hospital

## Dr. Stacie Stapleton, M.D.

Pediatric Neuro-Oncology  
Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital

## Dr. Ginger T. Medel

Honorary Medical Advisor

# MAKE-A-WISH STAFF

Make-A-Wish provides a spark of hope that can be a game-changer in the life of a child with a critical illness. This belief guides and inspires every person who joins our staff to grant wishes that change the lives of the kids we serve.

**Norman Wedderburn**

**President/CEO**

*Southeast Florida*

**Richard Kelly**

**Chief Operating Officer**

*Southeast Florida*

**Karen Mullins**

**Chief Program Officer**

*Southeast Florida*

**Marla Selva**

**Chief Financial Officer**

*Southeast Florida*

**Julie Robbins**

**Director of Business Intelligence & Information Technology**

*Southeast Florida*

**Lisa Andrews**

**Regional Director**

*Tampa Bay*

**Taylor Marini**

**Regional Director**

*Suncoast & Southwest Florida*

**Mary Holt**

**Director of Mission Resources**

*Southeast Florida*

**Sharon Truske**

**Director of Philanthropy**

*Southeast Florida*

**Meredith Morris**

**Director of Mission Delivery**

*Southeast Florida*

**Melanie Holley**

**Volunteer Program Manager**

*Southeast Florida*

**Patty Abreu**

**Manager of Medical & Community Outreach**

*Southeast Florida*

**Jackie Perl**

**Special Events Manager**

*Southeast Florida*

**Elizabeth Erra**

**Manager of Mission Delivery**

*Southeast Florida*

**Kristen Bladen**

**Development Manager**

*Tampa Bay*

**Kevin Fantis**

**Development Manager**

*Southeast Florida*

**Renee DePinto**

**Development Manager**

*Southwest Florida*

**Liv Mayrom**

**Brand Strategy Manager**

*Southeast Florida*

**Jessica Rivera**

**Senior Community Development Specialist**

*Southeast Florida*

**Patty Escobar**

**Senior Grants & Development Specialist**

*Southeast Florida*

**Megan McGee**

**Senior Volunteer Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Katia Rodrigues**

**Senior Wish Discovery Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Martha Carmen**

**Wish Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Alex Lieberman**

**Wish Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

# MAKE-A-WISH STAFF (...CONTINUED)

**Jade Ferrada**

**HR and Accounting Senior Associate**

*Southeast Florida*

**Jacqueline Alexander**

**Wish Assist Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Miguel Medina**

**Special Events Coordinator**

*Southwest Florida*

**Klaida De Armas**

**WishWorks Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Sydney Yates**

**Wish Coordinator**

*Tampa Bay*

**Lauren Srodka**

**Donor Care & Support Coordinator**

*West Coast*

**Reilley Halter**

**Community Engagement Coordinator**

*Tampa Bay*

**Ariel Espinal**

**Accounting Associate**

*Southeast Florida*

**Emily Rickerson**

**Community Engagement Coordinator**

*Suncoast*

**Andrea Rosa Rojas**

**Wish Discovery Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Jenna Bleich**

**Wish Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Andrew Gomez**

**Data & Information Technology Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Sophie Rubinowitz**

**Wish Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Leilani Nieves**

**Development Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Gabriela Botero**

**Digital & Social Media Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Denise Ekendahl**

**Wish Assist Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Anna Arnaout**

**Medical Administrative Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Natalia Yepes**

**Special Events Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Patty Moore**

**Community Engagement Coordinator**

*Southwest Florida*

**Amber Haydar**

**Brand Projects Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Amy Araya**

**Wish Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Mackenzie Orosz**

**Special Events Coordinator**

*Tampa Bay*

**Sophia Cecilio**

**Wish Discovery Coordinator**

*Southeast Florida*

**Jensen Coppa**

**Medical & Community Outreach Coordinator**

*West Coast*

**Maria Montalvan**

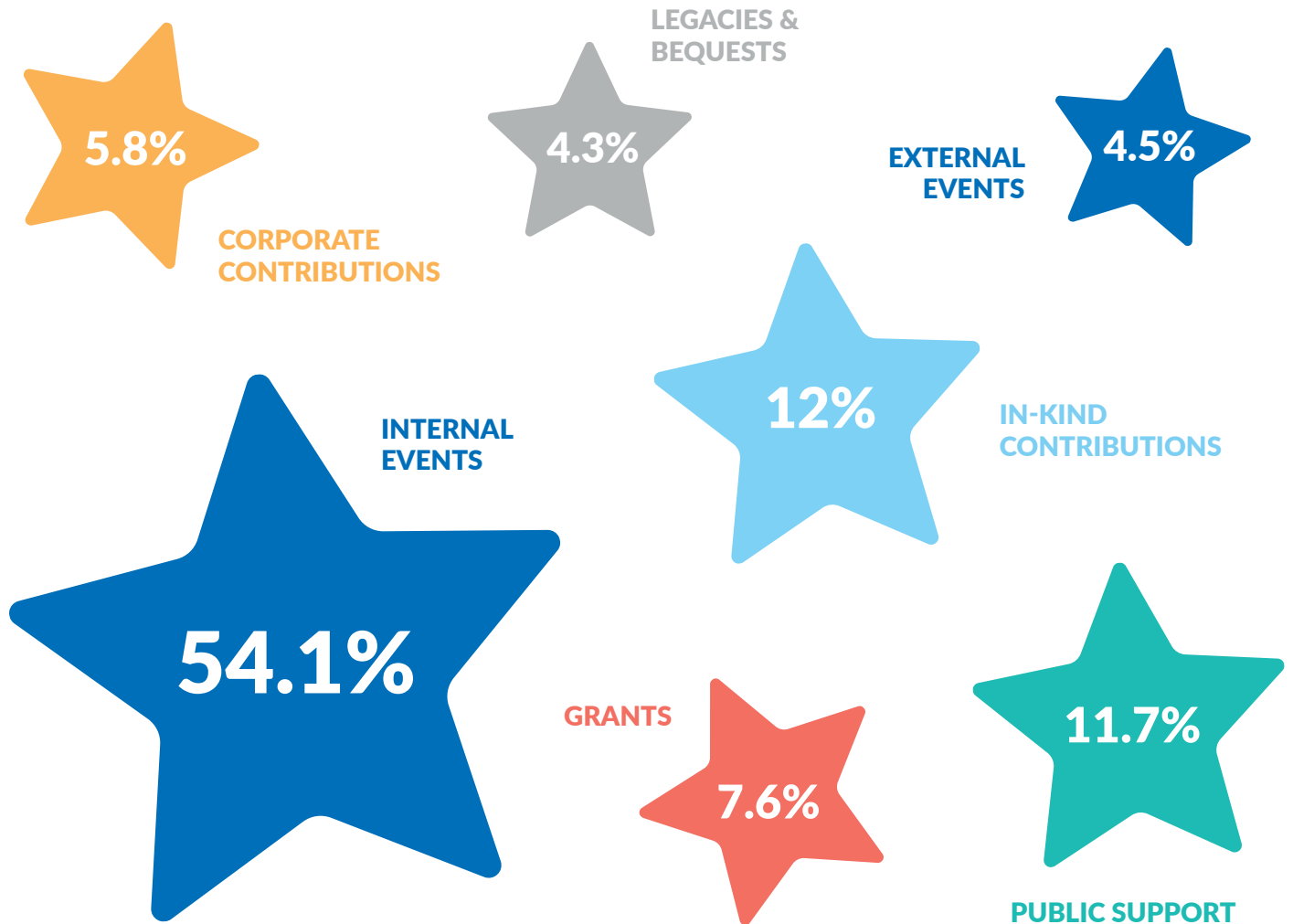
**Mission Support Administrator**

*Southeast Florida*

# FINANCIALS

Corporate sponsorships, special events, foundation grants, individual contributions, and more make it possible for Make-A-Wish Southern Florida to deliver our wish-granting mission. All funds raised locally are used to grant the wishes of local children with critical illnesses.

## WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM...



<b>STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION</b> August 31, 2024 and 2023	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$9,927,205	\$9,112,959
Investments	28,981,781	25,879,613
Contributions Receivable	6,062,385	6,466,626
Property and Equipment, Net	33,840,892	33,690,118
Other Assets	2,970,876	3,167,788
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$81,783,139</b>	<b>\$78,317,104</b>
Liabilities	\$5,950,644	\$6,640,743
Net Assets	75,832,495	71,676,361
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$81,783,139</b>	<b>\$78,317,104</b>

<b>STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES</b> Years Ended August 31, 2024 and 2023	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Operating Revenue</b>		
Public Support	\$17,161,843	\$22,004,213
Investment & Other Income	3,105,568	3,735,558
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>20,267,411</b>	<b>25,739,771</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Program Services	10,506,675	10,237,249
Fundraising	3,610,094	2,839,727
Management & General	1,994,508	1,825,926
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>16,111,277</b>	<b>14,902,902</b>
<b>Non-Operating Activity</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,170)</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,156,134</b>	<b>\$10,832,699</b>

*Audited financial statements are available upon request.*

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



In our 43-plus  
year history, we  
have granted  
more than 15,000  
*local* wishes.



A wish is  
not just  
nice, it's  
*necessary.*



Every  
20 minutes,  
a child is  
diagnosed  
with a  
critical illness.



There is  
\$0 cost to a  
wish family to  
experience  
a wish come  
true.



A wish is essential to a child's medical journey.

More than 70% of our \$15+ million annual budget is allocated to wish granting.



Make-A-Wish Southern Florida serves children and families in 22 Florida counties, plus the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Make-A-Wish Southern Florida is a 4-star charity, according to Charity Navigator.



Make-A-Wish is the world's top wish-granting organization.

**Finker-Frenkel Wish House**  
343 NW 6th Street  
Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 394-8474, Toll Free (888) 773-9474

**Southwest Florida Regional Office**  
3655 Bonita Beach Road, Suite 3  
Bonita Springs, FL 34134  
(239) 992-9474



**Make-A-Wish**<sup>®</sup>  
SOUTHERN FLORIDA

**Thank you to all of our donors for helping make wishes come true!**

*For a complete list of our donors, visit [makeawishdonors.org](https://makeawishdonors.org)*

**wish.org/sfla**       **@makeawishsfla**

**Tampa Bay Regional Office**  
1300 N. Westshore Blvd, #100  
Tampa, FL 33607  
(813) 288-2600

**Suncoast Regional Office**  
8126 Lakewood Main Street, Suite 202  
Sarasota, FL 34202  
(941) 378-9474