



*I wish to go give  
Squishmallows  
to sick children*

**Audrey, 13**  
leukemia

**Make-A-Wish<sup>®</sup>**  
METRO NEW YORK AND  
WESTERN NEW YORK

*Annual Report*  
Fiscal Year 2025

September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

# A child makes a wish.

## YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.



Dear Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York Friend and Supporter,

Fiscal year 2025 (FY25) brought transformation to Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York. We celebrated the career and retirement of Phil Lussier, who served as the chapter's CEO for eight years and who warmly welcomed me into this role last March.

I can confidently say that this role has changed my life. It is an honor and privilege to be part of an organization that cares so deeply and is focused solely on doing good: that is, **creating life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses in our communities.**

I'm proud to say that in FY25, **we granted the wishes of 909 children:** 656 local wishes and 253 wish assists for kids outside our chapter who dreamed of experiencing their wishes within our communities. Those wishes were as unique as the children who made them. FY25 marked the return of international travel wishes, with 56 granted—opening the world to children whose dreams know no borders. For medically fragile children, we granted 31 rush wishes—doing everything possible to allow these children to experience the joy of a wish come true.

All wishes start with referrals. **The vast majority of referrals - 79% - come from medical professionals** who see the power of a wish as part of a child's plan of care. In FY25 we received 679 qualified referrals, up 6% from the previous year, and we're building even stronger relationships in specialties like cardiology, gastroenterology and neurology.

Because **every child deserves an equitable wish experience**, we're always working to remove barriers and create access. In FY25, **we trained 162 new wish-granting volunteers**, 82 of whom speak another language in addition to English—so families can communicate in the language they're most comfortable with.

It is only through the **passion, commitment and generosity of caring individuals, corporate partners, community supporters and foundations** that our chapter has the resources it needs to bring wishes to life. Some FY25 highlights include:

- The Jersey Mike's "Month of Giving" campaign across Long Island and the Rochester market brought in \$325,000 of new revenue—an amazing show of partnership and purpose.
- In Western New York, we welcomed significant new corporate support from Moog, Inc. and Natale Builders.
- Longtime chapter partners Cerberus and Wafra reinforced their commitment with year-round support across numerous program areas.
- Our Metro New York gala hit the \$2 million mark for the third consecutive year, and galas in Buffalo (\$625K) and Rochester (\$450K) didn't just meet their goals—they blew past them.
- We reimagined our 'Cheers to Wishes' event, and that bold move paid off with \$100K year-over-year growth.
- Our annual golf outing—only in its second year—again surpassed the \$300K mark, cementing its place as a signature program.
- The Wishathon in Rochester and Radiothon in Buffalo both outperformed expectations, raising close to \$400K combined.

Thank you for helping us **create wishes that have the power to spark hope and launch a child onto a journey filled with exciting possibilities**, creating a turning point in their treatment and recovery. Our mission at Make-A-Wish is powerful, but not possible, without WishMakers like YOU, who truly make the difference.

With deep gratitude,

**John M. Healey**  
President & CEO  
Make-A-Wish Metro New York  
and Western New York





# Make-A-Wish®

METRO NEW YORK AND  
WESTERN NEW YORK

## OUR MISSION

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

## OUR VISION

*To grant the wish of every eligible child.*

## THE IMPACT OF A WISH

Make-A-Wish **conducted research** that provided quantitative measures of the breadth and depth of the impact of the Make-A-Wish mission.

Make-A-Wish alumni, parents and medical providers overwhelmingly agree that the wish experience contributes substantially to physical, mental and emotional health; and:



Was a necessary part of the medical treatment journey, improved the odds of survival, provided a support system and better health outcomes, and gave the child a better chance of recovering from their critical illness.



Increased hope, strength, joy, confidence, self-esteem, quality of life and well-being.



Served as a coping mechanism and a turning point during treatment.



Brought families closer together and strengthened relationships with loved ones.



Helped kids overcome traumatic stress, hopelessness, depression and loneliness.

*I wish to go on the  
Disney Cruise Line®*

Ryan, 6  
leukemia



*I wish to travel to Chicago on a train and visit the Illinois Railway Museum*

**Hazael, 11**  
heart transplant

**Hazael was born with a rare syndrome that caused fluid buildup in his lungs and a heart murmur. He needed a heart transplant to survive.**

The journey through treatment while awaiting a new heart was emotionally “horrible” for Hazael, said his mom, Yosilda. His pain and fear of needles would bring Yosilda to tears. Through it all, playing with toy trains would bring Hazael the most joy, and Yosilda often made it a point for them to take the train to his medical appointments in order to find light in a dark time.

At 9, Hazael underwent a successful heart transplant. As he recovered, he experienced life-changing news – his wish to go on a train trip was granted! His eyes lit up with anticipation, and his family was filled with overwhelming gratitude. From that moment, Hazael approached his recovery with greater determination, fully focused on getting healthy enough to climb aboard a train and speed toward the adventure waiting for him.

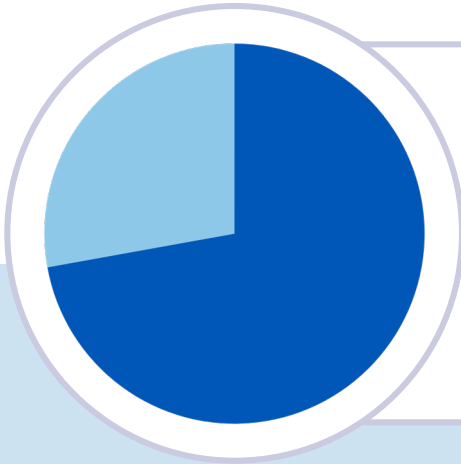
When his wish came true, Hazael embarked on a grand train trip from New York to Chicago. With each passing mile, the rhythm of the tracks beneath him echoed a newfound strength in his heart and hope for brighter days ahead. “I can’t describe with words how beautiful this wish-come-true was for Hazael,” Yosilda said. “It’s priceless.”

Hazael will remember his wish experience forever, and Yosilda said that from this moment forward, he will continue learning as much as he can about trains so that one day he can become a conductor or engineer – something she believes is attainable now, only because of his wish.

***“For those who support Make-A-Wish, please don’t stop,” Yosilda said. “If you stop, many kids like my Hazael will stop dreaming. Make-A-Wish is good. Make-A-Wish is family. Make-A-Wish is love. Please continue doing this as long as you can.” ~Yosilda***

## Mission Accomplishments

### Total Wishes Granted: 909



● 72%

Local Wishes: 656

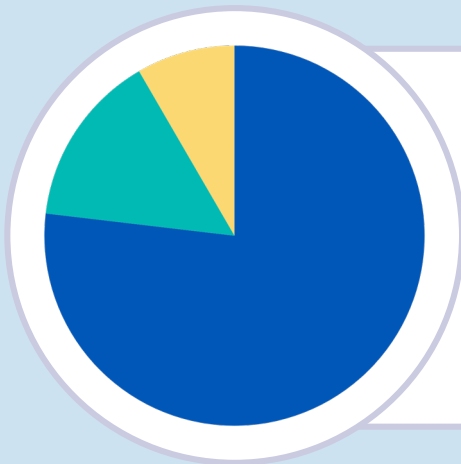
Wishes granted to children from the local communities we serve in Metro New York and Western New York.

● 28%

Wish Assists: 253

Wishes granted to children from across the country and around the world who wish to visit New York.

### Local Wishes by Region: 656



● 77%

Metro New York: 504  
New York City and Long Island

● 15%

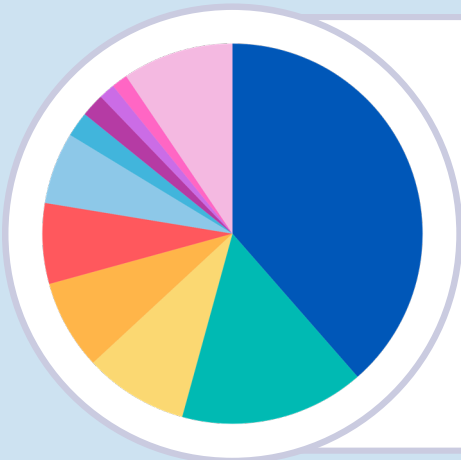
Buffalo and surrounding counties: 97

● 8%

Rochester and surrounding counties: 55

The communities our chapter serves account for 74% of the population of New York State.

### Types of Wishes Granted



● Disney Destination 41%

● Shopping Spree 17%

● Travel: Internat'l 9%

● Travel: Domestic 8%

● Travel: Hawaii 7%

● Celebrity/Sporting Event 7%

● Room Redecoration 2%

● Computer 2%

● Cruise: Non-Disney 1%

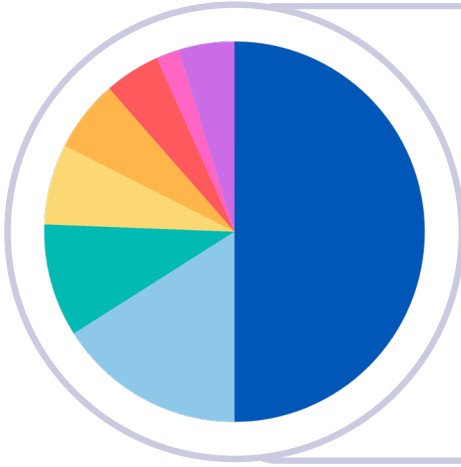
● Education/Scholarship 1%

● Other 10%

**Visiting a Disney destination remained a popular wish in FY25, accounting for 41% of wishes.**

However, wishes are as unique as the children who make them and we granted a wide array last year, from trips to Hawaii to celebrity meetings to shopping sprees and room redecorations.

**FY25 Wish Kid Diagnosis**



● Oncology	50%
● Hematology	16%
● Neurology	10%
● Nephrology	7%
● Pulmonology	6%
● Cardiology	5%
● Gastroenterology	2%
● All Other	4%

Two of the most common misconceptions about Make-A-Wish is that all of the children we serve have cancer and are terminally ill.

In fact, just **half of the children we serve are referred with a cancer diagnosis**. There are hundreds of acute and chronic life-threatening illnesses that qualify for a wish.

And, most importantly, **the majority of children whose wishes we grant go on to live typical, healthy lives.**

**Medical Partner Commitment**

The Children’s Hospital at Montifore was the top referring hospital in Metro New York, while **Golisano Children’s Hospital** (Rochester) and **Roswell Park Cancer Institute** (Buffalo) were the top referring facilities in Western New York in FY25.



**679**  
qualified referrals



**79%**  
of referrals were from a medical professional

**New Data in 2025: The Incidence & Prevalence Directional Study**

Make-A-Wish plays a vital role in pediatric healthcare by providing hope and holistic care that extends beyond medical treatment. In 2025, Make-A-Wish conducted the John Dawson Foundation Incidence & Prevalence Directional Study. This study provides much-needed data on a national and chapter level regarding the incidence and prevalence of medical conditions that qualify for a wish **to ensure that chapters are reaching every eligible child.**

**Key Findings**

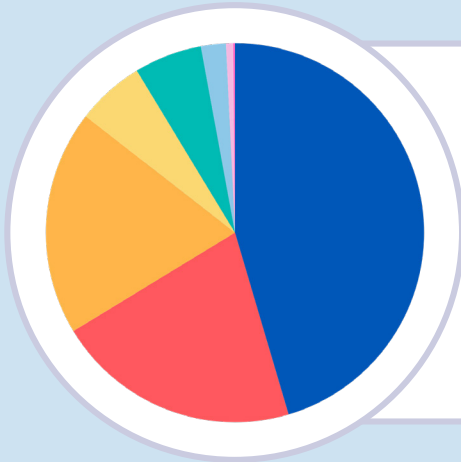
The research showed that Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York is reaching approximately **60% of children with a critical illness eligible for a wish** in the communities our chapter serves.

In certain diagnosis areas, such as cardiology and organ transplants, we are reaching even less. The detailed information in this study is critical to helping our chapter strategically tailor outreach efforts to medical and community partners to better find and serve underrepresented medical conditions, race/ethnicities, and ages.

As we move forward, this tool will help us better ensure that every eligible child has the opportunity to be part of the wish process.



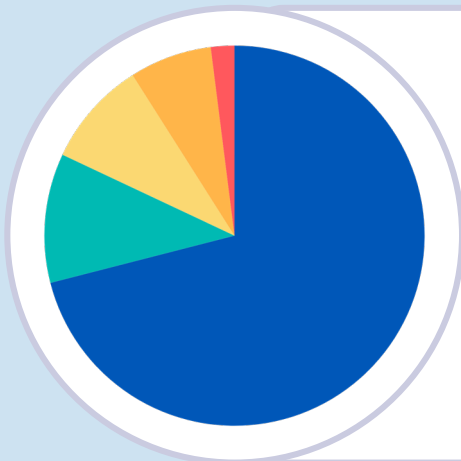
FY25 Wish Child Race



● White	45%	● Two or more races	6%
● Other Race	21%	● Not Reported	2%
● Black or African American	19%	● American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
● Asian	6%		

*Race disclosure is not mandatory for wish fulfillment; we respect families' choices not to provide this information.*

FY25 Wish Child/Family Language



● English	71%
● Spanish	11%
● English & Spanish	9%
● English & Another Lang.	7%
● Another Language	2%

**New York City is the most linguistically diverse city in the world.** Recruiting bi-lingual wish-granting volunteers is at the forefront of our efforts to provide an equitable wish experience to every family we serve.

The chapter also utilizes Certified Languages International (CLI) for oral and written language translation to provide the highest quality communications to all families, regardless of primary language.

**Volunteer Engagement**

**Volunteers are the backbone of Make-A-Wish.** Whether meeting with children and families to discover meaningful wishes or supporting staff at fundraising events, they are essential to our mission and impact.

In FY25, we conducted an assessment of our wish-granting volunteers to better understand current engagement levels, skillsets, languages spoken, and geographic distribution. These insights now guide our ongoing recruitment and placement strategies, ensuring we align volunteer strengths with the needs of the children and families our chapter serves.



**600+**  
Volunteers



**149**  
New volunteers trained in FY25



**26**  
Languages spoken by volunteers



**82**  
Bi/multi-lingual volunteers trained in FY25

*I wish to go to  
Aulani Resort  
in Hawaii*

Ava, 5  
cancer

*“This wish wasn’t just a trip. It was a future we dared to imagine. A future we could look towards, even though that seems so unlikely. In giving that wish, you’re giving the child and the parents that strength to hold on through the worst days.”*

- Maurice, wish dad



**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2025**

<b>REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>Total</b>
Public Support:	
Contributions	\$ 14,890,329
Grants	32,495
Total Public Support	14,922,824
Internal Special Events	4,443,463
Less Costs of Direct Benefits to Donors	(923,413)
Total Internal Special Events	3,520,050
Investment Gain, Net	1,769,391
Other Income	145,431
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	2,075,269
<b>Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support</b>	<b>20,357,696</b>



Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York is proud to be an **Accredited Charity Seal Holder with the Better Business Bureau Foundation of Metropolitan New York**. The seal demonstrates our commitment to accountability, ethical practices and an adherence to strong and comprehensive standards.

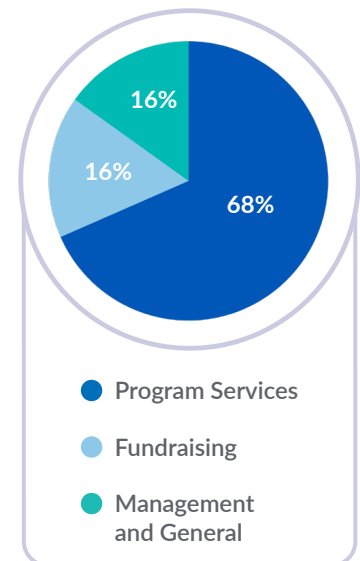
Click the link to review Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York's complete [Fiscal Year 2025 Audited Financial Statements](#).

**EXPENSES**

Program Services:	
Wish Granting	12,343,708
Training and Development	98,885
Public Information	495,995
Total Program Services	12,938,588
Support Services:	
Fundraising	3,079,204
Management and General	2,928,895
Total Support Services	6,008,099
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>18,946,687</b>

<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,411,009</b>
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	24,223,846
Net Assets - End of Year	\$ 25,634,855

Functional Allocation of Expenses



Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York receives no state or federal funding to grant wishes.

**Our work is made possible entirely through the generosity of individuals, corporate partners, community supporters, and foundations.** Their commitment ensures our chapter has the resources to provide life-changing wishes when children and families in our community need them most.

Here are just a few of the ways our incredible community supported our chapter in FY25:



25th Anniversary Long Beach Polar Bear Splash



Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York NYC Gala



Team Make-A-Wish runner at the NYC Marathon



Hauppauge High School Kids for Wish Kids fundraising event



Buffalo Radiothon with 97Rock and News 4



Rochester Wish-A-Thon



Support from Jersey Mike's 2025 Month of Giving



Writing postcards for wish kids at Apollo Global Management



Annual Golf Outing

# Make-A-Wish®

METRO NEW YORK AND  
WESTERN NEW YORK

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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President & CEO

**Anika Daughtry**  
Chief Mission Officer

**Maureen Fitzgerald**  
Chief Development  
Officer

**Rebecca Lee**  
Chief Marketing &  
Communications Officer

**Whitney Viggiano**  
Chief Financial Officer

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**Tracie Rodburg**  
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Global Partnerships,  
National Football League

**Scott Schiller**  
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**Naveen Shahani**  
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Clearlake Capital Group, L.P.

**Rabia Sheikh**  
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Chief Counsel, Global Risk &  
Regulatory Affairs,  
Visa

**Margie Tan**  
Fashion Designer & Philanthropist

**Stephen Thomas**  
Partner,  
Bain Capital, LP

**Andria Trinidad, Treasurer**  
Redding Ridge Asset Management

**Lilian Y. Zhou**  
Investor, Entrepreneur and  
Independent Board Director

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