

# wishful THINKING

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
MAKE-A-WISH® WISCONSIN  
2026 ISSUE 2



## HOPE IN BLOOM ESPERANZA EN FLOR

*Yareli's wish to have a Quinceañera*

### *Wish Night*®

*Granting 125+ wishes  
in just one night!*

Make-A-Wish®  
WISCONSIN



# wishful THINKING

Since 2004, Wishful Thinking has showcased the hope, strength and joy found in every wish story. From the medical professionals who refer a child, to the trained volunteers from across Wisconsin who aid us, to the donors whose gifts fuel our mission, it takes an entire community to make a wish come true for a child with a critical illness.

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[wish.org/wisconsin](http://wish.org/wisconsin)

I have been in the CEO role a little over a year now, and part of this magical mission for almost 15 years, and I can tell you: it's the greatest front-row seat to how the magic happens. I've watched love show up in the form of donors, medical professionals and volunteers who move mountains to make a wish come true. And every time it happens, it's a reminder to all of us that none of us fights alone.

**A critical diagnosis for a child is traumatic. That's what makes wishes so important: A wish has the power to help kids like Yareli (see page 10) overcome the hopelessness, depression and loneliness that often come with a critical illness.**

Together, we have granted over 9,000 life-changing wishes, an incredible legacy to carry on from the people who built this Make-A-Wish chapter in Wisconsin. None of the early Make-A-Wish leaders could have known the impact they would make decades later – the longevity that allows our chapter to serve kids with critical illnesses in every county of our state and decades of support from WishMakers like yourself.

Hope for a wish kid isn't a one-time gift. It's built through our consistency—through each of us choosing, again and again, to stand next to a child and their family. You tell them, in the most tangible way possible, "You matter. We see you. We believe in you." And when a child dares to dream, -- it gives all of us permission to believe in something bigger— bigger than a diagnosis, bigger than the hard days, bigger than what feels impossible. Thank you for your longevity, for your legacy, and for the wishes you make possible.



Wendy Cozzens  
Make-A-Wish Wisconsin CEO



Change a child's life by donating your car, truck, motorcycle, SUV, RV or

boat to our charity car donation program, **Wheels for Wishes.**

The quick and easy process eliminates the hassle of selling your vehicle—they do all the work for you!

For more information, call 855.332.WISH (9474) or visit [wheelsforwishes.org/wisconsin](http://wheelsforwishes.org/wisconsin).

[wish.org/wisconsin](http://wish.org/wisconsin)

*I wish to go to the Florida Keys*  
**Isaiah, 8**  
neuromuscular disorder

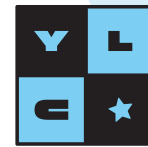




## WORLD WISH MONTH

Throughout April, communities across the world celebrated World Wish Month, giving opportunities to raise funds, awareness, and ultimately more WishMakers. Thank you to everyone who made contributions during this special annual season.

In Wisconsin, our month culminated with Celebration of Stars on World Wish Day, April 29. Wish kids and their families who received their wishes in 2025 came to the Make-A-Wish Wisconsin office to see their names on the Wish Kid Honor Wall. They were accompanied by volunteer wish granters, medical referral sources and donors who sponsored wishes throughout 2025. The event included entertainment, face painting, a caricature artist, food, refreshments, princesses from Friend Like Me and characters from the 501st Wisconsin Legion. See photos of the event on our Flickr gallery at [flickr.com/makeawishwisconsin/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/makeawishwisconsin/)



**Calling all passionate high school students!**

Applications are now open for the Make-A-Wish Wisconsin Youth Leadership Council (YLC) for the 2026-2027 school year.

This is a great opportunity to build leadership skills, earn volunteer hours, and make a real impact all while helping grant life-changing wishes for children across Wisconsin.

Know a student who would be a great fit?

**Apply today at [wish.org/wisconsin/ylc](https://www.wish.org/wisconsin/ylc)**

Questions? Reach out to Jordyn Dutkiewicz at [jdutkiewicz@wisconsin.wish.org](mailto:jdutkiewicz@wisconsin.wish.org)

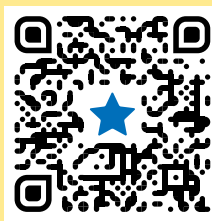
## NON-CASH GIVING

Now that tax season is behind us, it's a great time to reflect on your giving. There are thoughtful, financially strategic ways to help more children experience the healing and hope through the power of a wish, including:

- Donating appreciated stock or cryptocurrency
- Giving from your IRA (if you are 70.5+)
- Making a grant from a Donor-Advised Fund

Make-A-Wish Wisconsin has partnered with FreeWill, making it easy to explore these options and make your contribution in just a few minutes.

Visit our SmartGiving page today to learn more at [wish.org/wisconsin/smartgiving](https://www.wish.org/wisconsin/smartgiving) or scan the QR code.



**SCAN QR CODE FOR INFO**

*I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort*

**Brianna, 18**  
heart condition





# GOLF FOR WISHES

Be sure to save **September 16, 2026** for our annual Golf for Wishes signature event at Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva.

## FEATURED FUNDRAISERS

You can help make wishes come true while enjoying 18 holes on the world-famous Brute or Highlands courses, as well as inspiring moments with wish kids, breakfast, snacks on the course, bloody mary bar, margaritas, old fashioned, silent auction, heavy apps and more.

Secure your foursome and sponsorship today: [wish.org/wisconsin/golf-geneva](http://wish.org/wisconsin/golf-geneva)

For more information, including a complete listing of all golf outing fundraisers, please visit [wish.org/wisconsin/golf](http://wish.org/wisconsin/golf).

### JUNE 2-SEPTEMBER 22 @ EAST TROY, WI LD'S BBQ BIKE NIGHTS 2026

Weekly summer event with food, live music, raffles and fundraising for Make-A-Wish Wisconsin.

### JUNE 10 @ APPLETON, WI LEMONADE FOR WISHES



Fox Cities area wish alum are hosting a lemonade stand at Sandy Slope Elementary to help grant more wishes like theirs!

### JUNE 11 @ APPLETON, WI THE REALTORS ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

Annual Timber Rattlers Fundraising event in support of Make-A-Wish Wisconsin, with wish family stories and a ceremonial first pitch.

### JUNE 13 @ APPLETON, WI TIMBER RATTLERS STAR WARS NIGHT

Special game night fundraiser with themed jersey giveaway and ticket proceeds benefiting Make-A-Wish.

### JUNE 7, JULY 12, AUGUST 9 @ DELAFIELD, WI CARS, CROISSANTS & COFFEE

Family-friendly car show series featuring all vehicle types, makes and models, plus live music and fundraising to grant the wish of a local child. Note, new event location this year in downtown Delafield.

### JUNE 13 @ AT CLARK COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS MAKE THEIR HEARTS SMILE TRUCK CONVOY



29th annual truck convoy supporting wish kids. Registration 8:30am, departure at noon.

### JUNE 13, 2026 @ STEVENS POINT, WI POK A SNOZ ANNUAL FUN SHOW

All-wheeled vehicle show with raffles, food and all ages family fun. \$10 entry, proceeds benefit Make-A-Wish Wisconsin to help grant wishes.

### JUNE 20, 2026 @ NEW BERLIN, WI PAYTON ALEXANDER MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

5th annual golf outing honoring Payton Alexander and benefiting Make-A-Wish Wisconsin at New Berlin Hills Golf Course.

### JULY @ APPLETON & OSHKOSH TENNIE'S JEWELRY - CHRISTMAS IN JULY

In-store promotion to help raise critical funds for local wish kids.

### JULY 18 @ MUSKEGO BOBZ CAR CLUB CAR SHOW

Car show with raffles and prizes. \$10 show car entry; proceeds benefit Make-A-Wish Wisconsin.

### JULY 19 @ BELOIT BORDER BROUHAHA SOFTBALL SLAM

Charity softball game featuring pro athletes and sports legends supporting Make-A-Wish Wisconsin.

### AUGUST 1 @ WATERTOWN COUNTY CLUB KRAEMER WISCONSIN CHEESE GOLF OUTING

Annual golf outing, with raffles, silent auction, dinner, prizes and a wish family story. Contact [megan@kraemercheese.com](mailto:megan@kraemercheese.com) to register.

### AUGUST 8 @ MARINETTE, WI WI/MI WISH RIDE

Pedal with Purpose! Join us for an exciting bike ride to raise funds for children with critical illnesses. More details, visit [wimiwishride.org](http://wimiwishride.org)

### AUGUST 17 @ WALES, WI CARS, CROISSANTS & COFFEE GOLF OUTING

Fun-filled day of golf, raffles, games, and more at The Legend at Brandybrook, all while helping grant life-changing wishes for local children.

### AUGUST 29 @ NEW BERLIN WISCONSIN MOTORCYCLE GUIDE CHARITY RIDE

Fun-filled poker ride starting at Matty's Bar & Grille, with multiple stops, live music and raffles. Proceeds benefiting Make-A-Wish Wisconsin.



The **UWGB Phoenix Women's Basketball Team** partnered with Make-A-Wish Wisconsin again this year with a local wish kid to help raise funds. Sponsored by Bergstrom Automotive, the event included raffles, pre-game wish program, youth jersey giveaway & more, raising \$3,636 to grant a local child's wish.



Wish Alum & Youth Leadership Council member Zack Morehouse hosted **Wishes Cup** to raise funds for wish kids like him. His multi-day fundraiser included a futsal tournament, Milwaukee Wave benefit game and silent auction, bringing in \$17,427 in funds for children with critical illnesses!



The 2025-26 Packers season helped make wishes come true, thanks to Make-A-Wish champion, **Richard Kessler**. For every field goal, Richard donated \$1,000 to Make-A-Wish Wisconsin, raising \$29,000+ this past season. Richard presented a check at Wish Night. We are so grateful for Richard's long-time commitment.



**Wishmakers of Wisconsin (WOW)** hosted their annual Cheers for Wishes Mardi Gras, presented by ORBIS at Saint Kate. It was a fantastic evening with more than 300 guests raising over \$70,000 to help grant wishes for kids battling critical illnesses. Thank you to all who participated, sponsors, volunteers, wish ambassadors, WOW members and donors.

**Save the date for next year's Cheers for Wishes Mardi Gras on February 19, 2027.**



**Culver's** locations hosted star sales throughout April and a Share Day to raise \$13,076 for local wish kids.



The 18th annual **Rock for Wishes**, featuring local bands, auction, raffles & more, raised \$23,146 for local wishes.



**Hortonville Middle School** hosted a benefit concert, with storytelling, raffles & more. They raised \$3,200.



More than 500 students from the Mukwonago community came together and raised \$256,797 through **Mukwonago for Wishes** and their supporting partner, Breakthru. The students broke their record, and they also sailed pass the \$1 million total mark since this event began more than 10 years ago. Thank you Mukwonago community!



**Rhythm & Wishes** was hosted by the St. Norbert Wishmakers on Campus Group. This annual event included an auction, raffles, music & more, raising over \$2,000 for wishes.

Donor Spotlight

# NATE DAX MEMORIAL BASS OPEN



For the past 10 years, wish mom and devoted supporter Joan Dax has worked tirelessly to raise critical funds for local children through the Nate Dax Memorial Bass Open, a beloved fishing tournament held annually in Shawano, Wisconsin. What began as a tribute has grown into a powerful community tradition rooted in compassion, remembrance and hope.

The tournament honors Joan's son, Nate Dax, a charismatic young man born with a critical neuromuscular disorder and heart condition. Despite the challenges he faced, Nate was known for his spirit, strength, and ability to light up a room.

In 2009, Nate received a wish for college tuition—an experience that profoundly impacted his family and sparked a lasting commitment to giving back. From that moment on, Joan and her supporters dedicated themselves to helping other local kids experience the same life-changing power of a wish.

Over the past decade, the event has raised approximately \$150,000, helping grant wishes for children who, like Nate, face the unimaginable. This year marks the final fundraiser, celebrating ten years of extraordinary generosity and a BIG difference made in the lives of wish kids.

We are beyond grateful to Joan and this incredible group for their years of service. Their legacy lives on through every wish granted—bringing transformational hope, strength, and joy to children across the state.

# THANK YOU, DONORS

Our sincere thanks to the donors listed below and on the following pages, who made contributions and in-kind donations to Make-A-Wish Wisconsin between January 1 and March 31, 2026. *We have made every effort to acknowledge these gifts correctly and completely. Please contact us and accept our apologies should any error or omission be discovered.*

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### \$50,000+

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Mukwonago for Wishes  
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*I wish to have a piano*

**Blake, 16**  
lymphoma

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*I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort*  
**Julia, 13**  
cancer

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**\$10,000+**  
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Pfefferle Management  
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Schmitt Music



*I wish to go on a Royal Caribbean Cruise*  
**Mia, 10**  
neuromuscular disorder

# WISH NIGHT LEAVES EVERYONE “FEELING GOOD”

This year's annual Wish Night gala, held at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, was a huge success.

More than 530 guests experienced an evening of powerful stories and inspiring moments, featuring wish ambassadors of all ages.

Chaired by Dr. David and Jody Margolis and Linda Price Topp and Daniel Topp, the event raised more than \$1 million net, which will result in more than 125 wishes being granted for kids battling critical illnesses.

Special thanks to all of our sponsors, including our Platinum Sponsor - Kim & John Schlifske Family Foundation and our Gold Sponsor - Gavin and Terry Hattersley.

The evening was capped off by a surprise performance of "Feeling Good" by 8-year-old Kennedy whose wish to go to Japan was just granted in May.

**Mark your calendars now for next year's Wish Night on April 8, 2027.** Sponsorships opportunities are available.



Watch the videos featured at Wish Night:  
[youtube.com/makeawishwisconsin](https://www.youtube.com/makeawishwisconsin)

View more photos from Wish Night:  
[flickr.com/makeawishwisconsin/albums](https://www.flickr.com/makeawishwisconsin/albums)



## W.I.S.H. AWARD

In 1996, Michael “Mikey” Kovnar received his wish for a basement makeover complete with a big-screen TV, pinball machine and more. Diagnosed with Ewing’s sarcoma, Mikey and his family felt the profound impact of his wish, inspiring him to raise funds so other kids could experience the same joy.

He began fundraising through Walk For Wishes® and even joined its committee. Mikey passed away in 1999. His mom, Susie Gidan, and sister, Sarah, picked up his torch and have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in his memory over the past 27 years.

Susie—a social worker at Children’s Wisconsin—is a wish referral source, volunteer, former Make-A-Wish Wisconsin Board member and current Medical Advisor. She also donates to and attends events including Wish Night, Golf for Wishes, Walk For Wishes, Gourmet Wishes and more.



To honor Mikey’s legacy, the Michael Kovnar Spirit Award is presented each year at Walk For Wishes to the top youth fundraiser. A gecko is also placed on every Walk For Wishes t-shirt in his memory.

We were honored to present this year’s W.I.S.H. Award at Wish Night to Susie and her family for the tremendous impact they have made on thousands of children, families and community members across Wisconsin—all in memory of her sweet son, Mikey.

# THE WISH LIST

Wishes Granted January 1  
- March 31, 2026

## ...to go to Atlantis, Bahamas

### Reagan, 11

Wish Granter: Peggy Van Grinsven

### Connor, 19

Wish Granters: Ashley Thomas & Daniel Rogan

## ...to have a Camper

### Luminara, 4

Wish Granters: Yasari Wolschlag & Larry Levy

### River, 6

Wish Granters: Kimberley Hughes & Lauren Anders

### Raylynd, 7

Wish Granter: Kimberly Wicker

### Madelyn, 8

Wish Granters: Susan Danner-Rivers & Deea Breunig

### Elizabeth, 13

Wish Granter: Carla Grubbs

## ...to have a Custom Wheelchair

### Champion, 16

Wish Granters: Larry Levy & Holly Young

## ...to go on Disney Cruise Line®

### Brewer, 5

Wish Granters: Carolyn Griese & Torrey Calkins

### Dominick, 14

Wish Granters: Traci Steinbach & Lindsey Beattie

## ...to go to Disney on Ice

### Roberto, 9

Wish Granters: Laura Stella-Ames & Sage Smith

## ...to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort

### Denzel, 3

Wish Granters: Maurine Braun, Margaret Walters & Jodi Halpin

### Rahmiyah, 3

Wish Granters: Carly Parker & Jaime Rietveld

### Rowan, 3

Wish Granters: Heather Loughney & Mary Kastens

### Wade, 3

Wish Granters: Jennifer Wenzlaff & Michele Schaetz

### Bennett, 4

Wish Granters: Katie Tobert & Shaneika Baldwin

### Julia, 4

Wish Granters: Patti Dickert & Kelly Wagner

### Oaklynn, 4

Wish Granters: Patty Hanson & Lisa Yursis

### William, 4

Wish Granters: Rosie Miliacca & Donna Neeman

### Wren, 4

Wish Granters: Kelly Bowman & Traci Steinbach

### Gregory, 5

Wish Granters: Lee Dominguez & Brian Lopez

### Kaysen, 5

Wish Granters: Steven Hesselberg & Joy Lancour

### Griffin, 6

Wish Granters: Larry Levy & Jill Patty

### Joniel, 6

Wish Granters: Scott Vrablik & Dana Mejjc

### Anthony, 7

Wish Granter: Jaime Rietveld

### Owen, 7

Wish Granters: Larry Levy & Jill Patty

### Skyler, 7

Wish Granters: Kristin Paul & Kathy Finley

### Zamere, 8

Wish Granters: Alanna Martella-Parman & Patty Hanson

### Zayden, 8

Wish Granters: Jade Pekol & John Litscher

### Fletcher, 9

Wish Granters: Corinne Kennedy & Linda Ryfinski

### Gunnar, 9

Wish Granters: Maurine Braun, Cynthia Seichter & Jodi Halpin

### Oliver, 9

Wish Granters: Daniel Giles & Tanya Davis

### Piper, 9

Wish Granters: Janice Moen & Jennifer Yetter

### Esra, 10

Wish Granters: Traci Steinbach & Marie Waddell

### Ibtisam, 11

Wish Granters: Jeanna & Evan Pagel

### Jillian, 13

Wish Granters: Toni Palmer & Jack Kile

### Lydia, 13

Wish Granters: Joy Cantrall & Ashley TeBeest

### Talita, 13

Wish Granters: Ann Slifka & Dawn Marcott

### Ashton, 16

Wish Granters: Jane Scanu & Jodi Halpin



Special thanks to **The Walt Disney Company** for providing complimentary admission and special perks for every family who experiences a Disney wish.

*I wish to go to  
the Walt Disney  
World® Resort*

**Bennett, 4**  
brain tumor

*I wish to have a Quinceañera*

# HOPE IN BLOOM

## ESPERANZA EN FLOR

*From the moment she was born, Yareli's life has been marked by resilience.*

A routine prenatal visit quickly turned into an emergency when an ultrasound revealed a serious issue. "They saw that her stomach was inflamed," her mother, Norma, recalls. Yareli was delivered at just seven months and soon diagnosed with a condition that would shape her life.

Now 16, she lives with a chronic respiratory disorder, often spending weeks at a time in the hospital. "The older she gets, the more time she has been in and out of the hospital," Norma says—missing school, friends, and everyday moments.

For Norma, a single mother, the strain is constant. "It is hard for me to take care of both my daughters," she says. "It's a challenge." **Still, Yareli held onto one dream: a quinceañera.** But for Norma, it felt impossible. "I did not have the funds," she says.

Through Make-A-Wish, her wish came true. "She was ecstatic," Norma says. What she expected to be simple became a full celebration Yareli will never forget.

"We were able to relax and see our daughter happy," Norma says. "We were able to enjoy time as a family." That was made possible by donors, just like you.

"Do not doubt in making a donation," Norma says. "Without it, I don't think Yareli's wish would have ever been possible."

For families like Yareli's, a wish is more than a nice thing, it's a chance to feel joy, together.

*Desde el momento en que nació, la vida de Yareli ha estado marcada por la resiliencia.*

Una visita prenatal rutinaria se convirtió rápidamente en una emergencia cuando una ecografía reveló un problema grave. "Vieron que su estómago estaba inflamado", recuerda su madre, Norma. Yareli nació con solo siete meses y pronto diagnosticaron una condición que marcaría su vida.

Ahora, con 16 años, vive con un trastorno respiratorio crónico, pasando a menudo semanas enteras en el hospital. "Cuanto más mayor se hace, más tiempo ha estado entrando y saliendo del hospital", dice Norma—echando de menos el colegio, los amigos y los momentos cotidianos.

Para Norma, madre soltera, la tensión es constante. "Me cuesta cuidar de mis dos hijas", dice, "es un reto." **Aun así, Yareli se aferraba a un sueño: una quinceañera.** Pero para Norma, parecía imposible. "No tenía los fondos", dice.

A través de Make-A-Wish, su deseo se hizo realidad. "Estaba eufórica", dice Norma. Lo que esperaba que fuera sencillo se convirtió en una celebración completa que Yareli nunca olvidará.

"Pudimos relajarnos y ver a nuestra hija feliz", dice Norma. "Pudimos disfrutar del tiempo en familia." Eso fue posible gracias a donantes, igual que tú.

"No dudes en hacer una donación", dice Norma. "Sin ella, no creo que el deseo de Yareli hubiera sido posible."

Para familias como la de Yareli, un deseo es más que algo bonito, es una oportunidad para sentir alegría, juntos.



# THE WISH LIST

Wishes Granted January 1 - March 31, 2026 (Cont.)

**Jordan, 17**

Wish Granters: Emily Mayer, Elizabeth Sobczak & Terry and Jennifer Hoepfner

**Miley, 17**

Wish Granters: Henry Reynoso & Patty Hanson

**Brianna, 18**

Wish Granters: Shannon Seymer-Tabaska, Julia Wahl & Michelle Wolfe

*...to go to Disneyland® Resort*

**Jakolby, 6**

Wish Granters: Lisa Steinkamp & Elizabeth Reynolds

**Jared, 6**

Wish Granters: MyHuyen Thi Le & Diana Moreno

**Molly, 9**

Wish Granters: Jaime Mueller, Devin Schiesser & Patricia and Matthew Olsen

*...to go to the Florida Keys*

**Isaiah, 8**

Wish Granters: Paula & Craig Hokanson

*...to go to Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa*

**Finley, 8**

Wish Granters: Tiffany Van Buren & Christie Bartzen

**Sage, 8**

Wish Granter: Linda Ryfinski

*...to go to Hawaii*

**Finley, 7**

Wish Granters: Holly De Long & Patricia Rodencal

**Graydon, 10**

Wish Granters: Sara Suehs & Laura Stella-Ames

**Jessie, 12**

Wish Granters: Lansen Leu & Linda Ryfinski

**Kolt, 12**

Wish Granters: Ashley Kikawa, Jan Berkholtz & Christina Reschke

**Alexa, 13**

Wish Granters: Paula and Craig Hokanson

**Hattie, 13**

Wish Granters: Kayla Duenas, Patty Hanson, Nora Waddell & Marie Waddell

**Daniel, 14**

Wish Granters: Megan Seriguchi, Diana Moreno, Aurora Abracia & Jennifer Harris

**Leia, 16**

Wish Granters: Courtney Matsuki, Lindsie Watt, Shala Brandolini, Kelly Durham & Lynn Wagner

*...to have a Shopping Spree*

**Alisse, 14**

Wish Granters: Mathilde & Rodney Ugent

**August, 14**

Wish Granters: Yasari Wolschlag & Larry Levy

**Demarius, 16**

Wish Granters: Larry Levy, Daniel Rogan & Mariah Abdel-Fattah

**James, 16**

Wish Granters: Larry Levy, Daniel Rogan & Marnia Schatzman

**Michael, 17**

Wish Granters: Patricia Jimenez, Max Goldberg & Judy Bravard

**Treshawn, 17**

Wish Granters: Larry Levy & Mariah Abdel-Fattah

*...to go to the Mall of America*

**Minnie, 5**

Wish Granters: Anissa Johnsen & Laura Vacek

*...to meet JJ Heller*

**Maretta, 8**

Wish Granters: Torrey Calkins & Kiva Grote-Hirsch

*...to meet the New York Knicks*

**Kengi, 12**

Wish Granters: Brandon & Patty Hanson

*...to have a Military Tank Experience*

**Kody, 16**

Wish Granters: Joy Lancour & Steven Hesselberg

*...to go to Morgan's Wonderland*

Delia, 11

Wish Granters: Julie Carr & Kriste Simonson

*...to go to the NCAA Wrestling Championship in Cleveland, OH*

**Blaze, 18**

Wish Granters: Jo Marchionda & Patty Adams

*...to go to New York City*

**Zoe, 15**

Wish Granters: Holly De Long & Patricia Rodencal

**Samantha, 16**

Wish Granters: Caitlin Leal & Lynn Wagner



*I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort*

**Dominick, 14**  
heart transplant

*...to have an Online Shopping Spree*

**Xavier, 6**

Wish Granters: Bryan Nothem & Megan Piton

**Jaxson, 18**

Wish Granter: Meredith McGinnis

*... to have a Piano*

**Blake, 17**

Wish Granters: Jessica Gall, Cheryl Muller & Karen Batz

*...to go to Puerto Rico*

**Jack, 10**

Wish Granters: Kimberly Wicker & Holly De Long

*...to have a Quinceañera*

**Yareli, 16**

Wish Granters: Diana Moreno & Larry Levy

*...to have a Room Makeover*

**Leinny, 17**

Wish Granters: Geet Pandya & Katie Tobert

*...to go on a Royal Caribbean Cruise*

**Mia, 10**

Wish Granters: Patti Gorsky & Michael Pollack

**Samuel, 14**

Wish Granters: Christina Italiano & Esmeralda Perez

*...to go on a Sacramento Train Experience*

**Santiago, 9**

Wish Granter: Patty Hanson



*I wish to go to Hawaii*

**Kolt, 12**  
leukemia



# MAKE-A-WISH VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

Behind every wish are volunteer WishMakers who donate their time and talents to make the impossible possible. The following volunteers have gone a step beyond:

## WHO GETS A WISH?

A child with a critical illness older than 2½ years and younger than 18 years and has not received a wish from any other wish-granting organization is potentially eligible for a wish from Make-A-Wish Wisconsin.

After a child is referred, Make-A-Wish will work with the treating physician to determine the child’s eligibility for a wish, i.e. suffering from a progressive, degenerative or malignant condition that, despite adherence to the treatment plan, is currently placing the child’s life in jeopardy.

These are the only criteria used to determine a child’s eligibility.

If you or your child meets all of the above qualifications, we invite you to begin the process today by contacting the Make-A-Wish Wisconsin office at 800.236.WISH (9474), or refer online at [wish.org/refer](http://wish.org/refer).

Together, we create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. With help from a thriving community of donors, medical professionals and volunteers, we are working toward granting the one true wish of every medically-qualified child!

*Above: 16-year-old Champion's wish to have a custom wheelchair came true this past March.*



**JANUARY 2026**  
**FRANKIE GARR**

Inspired by the strength of wish kids and their families, Frankie believes that “despite everything they’re challenged by, there is always hope.” Frankie chose Make-A-Wish because it lets children “giggle, escape, and just be a kid.” Those moments make a lasting impact for everyone involved.



**FEBRUARY 2026**  
**BARBARA BONGARD**

Grounded by her own family’s medical journey, Barbara volunteers to ensure families feel heard and supported. “I like to be present for the families, because I know how lonely this journey can feel,” she shares. Through Make-A-Wish, she helps bring hope and joy during moments when it’s needed most.



**MARCH 2026**  
**STEVE HESSELBERG**

A volunteer since 2017, Steve finds joy in meeting wish kids and their families and bringing “much deserved joy” into their lives. One of his most memorable wishes—a Princess-themed reveal—reminded him how powerful a moment of happiness can be. “It’s a privilege to listen to their stories and see the joy on their face,” he shares.

## VOLUNTEER MILESTONES

**20 YEARS:** Terry Hoepfner

**10 YEARS:** Thomas Bauer, Danielle Matysik, Resmije Tairi, Jodi Harris, Laurie Wetterau, Peggy Van Grinsven, Donnie Rivera, Michele Rivera

**5 YEARS:** Marie Waddell, Maurine Braun, Susan Lamprich, Torrey Calkins, Lauren Hannes, Bryce Schreiber

## ¿CONOCE A ALGUIEN BILINGÜE?

¡Siempre estamos buscando más interpretes! Si usted conoce a alguien bilingüe que le gustaría ayudar a cumplir deseos, por favor comuníquese con nuestra Gerente de Voluntarios, Ali Schilz al 800.236.WISH (9474) o [aschilz@wisconsin.wish.org](mailto:aschilz@wisconsin.wish.org).

# OUR *wish* COMMUNITY



Ashley Coffey, MSW  
Children's Wisconsin



Roberto Jaimes  
DJ Don B



Pictured left to right: Alex Ayala, Yareli and Yareli's mother, Norma.

*There are many partners who contribute to the impact of each and every wish we grant. Here are some of the people who helped make Yareli's wish (page 10) come true!*

The **Children's Wisconsin** team has played a vital role in Yareli's health. Ashley Coffey, Yareli's Social Worker, shares, "both Yareli and her mother were beaming with smiles while showing me pictures and telling me about the celebration. Yareli looked like a princess on her big day! I found myself smiling with the family. In that moment, I realized just how special this wish that had been granted for Yareli was. **I believe the wishes granted through Make-A-Wish will have a lasting effect on the children who receive them.**"

Culture, community, and connection are at the heart of **DJ Don B**. Owned by Roberto Jaimes, the business first partnered with Make-A-Wish Wisconsin through Yareli's Quinceañera wish. DJ Don B helped bring a deeply meaningful celebration to life that honored cultural tradition. For Roberto, donating his talent was more than a service, it was a way to give back and reflect a strong sense of community.

"I considered this opportunity to donate my service and talent to be a very priceless moment," Roberto shared. "Not only was I able to provide DJ service but I had the network of friends who also donated their service to make this wish come true!" That network played a vital role in Yareli's wish. Through DJ Don B, Make-A-Wish was connected with **Eventerro Events, Choreo** by Alex Ayala, and **Sonido Los Frankies**. Companies rooted in culture and that share a commitment to giving back.

This first wish left a lasting impact on Roberto and continues to shape how he defines success. "Success shouldn't only be measured in a monetary value," he said. "success should also be valued on how a company or whoever can transform a person's life or give an opportunity because **YOU CAN**. It's priceless."

## MAKE-A-WISH® REFERRAL SOURCES

Our thanks to those who referred and treated children with wishes granted between January 1 and March 31, 2026:

**Aspirus Pediatrics:**

Dr. Shelbe Healy, MD; Jolyne Check-Ostrowski, NP

**Children's Hospitals & Clinics of Minnesota:**

Dr. Nathan Paul Gossai, MD; Emily Pozniak, RN

**Children's Wisconsin:**

Dr. Alexis Gumm, MD; Carly Bolli, MSW; Dr. Allison Remiker, MD; Dr. Cindy Schwartz, MD; Dr. Julie An Talano, MD; Dr. Kaitlin Kirkpatrick, MD; Dr. Nikki Singh, MD; Dr. Peter H Shaw, MD; Dr. Peter J. Bartz, MD; Dr. Richard Tower, MD; Dr. Tanyaporn Kaenkumchor, MD; Hillary McCown, APNP; Jill Grevenow, NP; Katy Gallaher, RN; Sheila M Dodds, MSW; Cira Verhage, LCSW; Dr. Danielle Fair, MD; Dr. Elham Abushanab, MD; Dr. Ellen Cody, MD; Dr. Hema Patel, MD; Dr. Kerri Beckett, MD; Dr. Louella Amos, MD; Dr. Michael Burke, MD; Dr. Nathan Schloemer, MD; Dr. Paul D Harker-Murray, MD; Dr. Sarah Rumler, MD; Dr. Siri McCord, MD; Dr. Steven Kindel, MD; Erika Pyzik, NP

**Essentia Health - Duluth:**

Dr. Ross Perko, MD

**Gilette Children's Hospital:**

Dr. Jamie Eskuri, MD

**Gundersen Health System:**

Dr. Whitney Gervelis, MD

**HSHS St. Vincent's Children's Hospital:**

Ashley Thompson, CCLS; Dr. Cathy Long, MD

**Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago:**

Dr. Riccardo Superina, MD; Lisa Keys, NP

**Marshfield Children's:**

Dr. Monica Koehn, MD; Laurie Weber, RN

**Mayo Clinic:**

Dr. Lauren Dalvin, MD

**Mercy Health:**

Dr. Amanda Scheuermann, MD

**Prevea Health:**

Dr. Beth Woods, MD

**SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital:**

Dr. Andrea Rock, MD

**UW Health American Family Children's Hospital:**

Bethany Doherty, MSW; Brittany Storhoff, APNP; Dr. Cameron Crockett, MD; Dr. Christian Capitini, MD; Dr. Christina Amend, MD; Dr. Margo Hoover-Regan, MD; Dr. Megan Yanny, MD; Dr. Rebecca Richards, MD; Dr. Vivek Balasubramaniam, MD; Jill Bowdish, CAPSW; Joyce Kilgore-Carlin, MSW; Kim Sue Lamster, LCSW

## REFER A CHILD TODAY

Make-A-Wish® relies on referrals from caring individuals to reach more kids with critical illnesses each year. Learn more about wish eligibility, who can make a referral and how the process works at [wish.org/refer](http://wish.org/refer).

*Below: Lydia's wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort in February.*

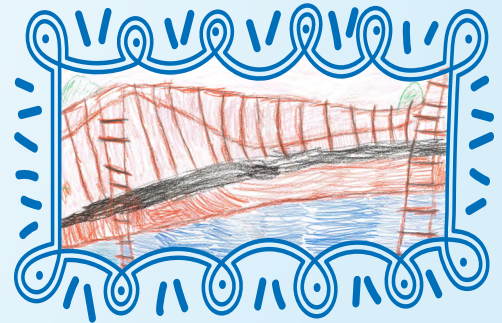


# WISH ART CORNER

If you are a wish kid, a wish sibling, a wish parent or ANYONE who has been inspired by a special wish experience, we want to see your one-of-a-kind art!

Send your wish-inspired artwork to the Make-A-Wish Wisconsin Chapter Office (c/o Wish Art, 11020 W. Plank Court, Suite 200, Wauwatosa, WI 53226). Artists must include their first and last name on the back of their 8.5x11 or 8x10 sized artwork.

Wish art, listed left to right, top to bottom, by the following wish kids: Keanan (Hawaii), Ethan (Playset), Kengi (New York Knicks) and Harper (San Francisco, CA).



## IN HONOR AND MEMORY

Our sincere thanks to everyone who gave gifts between January 1 and March 31, 2026 in honor or memory of the people and businesses listed below. *We have made every effort to acknowledge these gifts correctly and completely. Please contact us and accept our apologies should any error or omission be discovered.*

### IN HONOR OF

Lainey Adams  
Our grandchildren  
Oliver and August  
Anderson, both  
cancer survivors.  
Donna Ayala  
Chiara Bauer  
Mrs. Pauline Beres'  
100th Birthday  
Carolyn Conley  
Susie Gidan and her  
W.I.S.H. Award  
Patti Gorsky  
Rich Henningfeld's  
work anniversary

Jacob Hirschuber  
Jackson Katterhagen  
Mirabel and Lilou Klug  
Joan Korn's birthday  
Dr. David and Jody  
Margolis  
Clients of Markin  
Mickelson Financial  
Group  
Michael's Team  
MaCollin Milbach  
Milisa Miller  
Elise Rowe  
Joie Sager  
Jessie Schwade

Xander Sell  
Happy Birthday  
Barbara Pelton and  
Harriet Smith  
Cole Steffen  
Phillip Wagner's  
70th Birthday  
Benton Whitley

### IN MEMORY OF

Carol Allison  
Jolene Anderson  
Jessie Beitzel  
Don Beufield  
Robert Bezjak  
Marlene Binsfeld

Priscilla (Pug) Brown  
Timothy Dodge  
Devyn Doughty  
Albert and Minnie  
Eckstein  
William Gay  
Georgette Gore  
Amanda Hanson  
Eli Hanson  
Debra, Sue and  
Glen Herman  
Nicole Hirsch  
Ann Horwitz  
Anne Horwitz  
Mark Huber  
Sarah Knezic  
James Korb  
Michael Kovnar  
Daniel Krautkramer  
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Eleanor Marino

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Sue Rigby  
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Greg Von Rueden  
Robert Russell  
Catherine Schroeder  
Zachary Sprader  
Red Steffen  
Rick Theiss  
Robert Tiarks  
Corey Todd  
Edward Tritz  
Dana Michelle Tweedie  
Jacqueline Underkofler  
Ed Uzialko  
Joyce Vorpahl  
George and  
Irene Wilson

*I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort*

**Denzel, 3**  
cancer



# WISH SPONSORS

Thank you to the following sponsors who contributed at least \$4,000 or more to sponsor the wishes granted between January 1 and March 31, 2026.

- |  |   |                                     |  |  |
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| ABC Supply Co., Inc.                   | Design Air HVAC Distribution            | Holidays Pub Sheboygan              | Mars Family Foundation   | Sherry Gage McNally                            |
| Aurora Medical Center Sheboygan County | Encore Limousine and Sedan Inc          | In Memory of Mary Shea              | Michael Fassett  | Shirley Klingbeil                              |
| Badger Mutual Insurance Company        | Engel Tool & Forge Co.                  | In Memory of Mike Johnson           | Mike & Paula Hamilton  | Slayer Sunset Showdown                         |
| Baker Family Foundation                | Escort Limousine Service                | James & Betty Hunter                | Milwaukee Admirals   | Steve and Randi Vicenzi                        |
| Bergstrom Automotive                   | Estate of Dorothy Trump Fizzano         | James Lang                          | Mukwonago for Wishes   | StoneRidge Piggly Wiggly - Round Up for Wishes |
| Breakthru                              | Everything's Possible Foundation        | Jewelers Mutual Insurance Co        | National Exchange Bank Foundation  | Timothy Anderson                               |
| Brew City Charity Open                 | Faith A. Robinson Foundation            | Jimmy John's                        | Nikki Stafford   | Tracy Bohrer                                   |
| Burns McDonnell                        | Fiserv                                  | Joanna Glaser                       | Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsiveness Fund (Greater Milwaukee Foundation) | Thomas Wisniewski                              |
| Caren & Donald Bass                    | Forefront Dermatology                   | John & Linda Hirsch                 | Patricia Groh  | Tim & Lori Stadelman                           |
| Carmex                                 | Gordon & Susan Heule Charitable Account | John Arnold                         | Payton Alexander Memorial Golf Outing  | Wishmakers of Wisconsin                        |
| Central Wisconsin Equipment            | Gregg & Julie Cayce                     | Jonathan Schomberg                  | Piping Systems, Inc.   | WUCA   |
| Chi Omega Nu                           | Gregory Cole                            | K.C. Stock Foundation, Inc.         | Plexus Young Professionals Charity Golf Outing                                 | Yacht Blast for Kids                           |
| Chippewa Falls DECA                    | Gregory Wesley                          | Kaden's Wish Tailgate               | Pok A Snoz Snowmobile Club   | Yellow Whistles for Greg                       |
| Christa Graverson                      | Habush Habush & Rottier                 | Karen Luedke                        | Ralph & Christine Gundrum  |  |
| Chuck & Holly Miesfeld                 | Harrigan for Wishes                     | Kessler's Diamonds                  | Realtors Association of NEWI   |  |
| CoVantage Credit Union                 | Helen Blenker Endowment Fund            | Klumb Family Foundation Disney Fund | Rick Bock  |  |
| Culver's Oostburg - World Wish Month   |   | Kraemer Wisconsin Cheese            | Robin & Terry Van Zeeland  |  |
| Culver's Shawano - World Wish Month    |   | Kristine & Brian Finell             | Running for Wishes   |  |
| Curt & Sue Culver                      |   | Ladish Company Foundation           | Sartori Cheese   |  |
|  |   | Lakeshore ATV/UTV Charity Ride      | Schreiber Foods - In Honor of Mike & Leanne Haddad                             |  |
|  |   | Landmark Credit Union               |  |  |
|  |   | Loren and Helen Walker Foundation   |  |  |
|  |   | Love Always Corp                    |  |  |
|  |   | Maggie's Angels                     |  |  |



*I wish to go to Hawaii*

**Alexa, 13**  
heart condition

# WE REMEMBER

This issue of Wishful Thinking is dedicated to the following wish kids, who have passed:

- ★ Henry
- ★ Equanis
- ★ Ryker
- ★ Sofia

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Wauwatosa, WI 53226

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## Inside this Issue:

**Volunteer Spotlight:** Behind every wish are volunteers who make the impossible possible.

**Donor Spotlight:** This cherished donor has raised over \$150,000 for wishes across the past decade.

**Our Wish Community:** There are many people who contribute to the impact of every wish we grant.

**Cover Story:** Yareli's wish allowed her to escape from the unknowns of her critical illness.



### Help keep our mailing list current!

Report address changes, receipt of multiple copies or cancellations at [info@wisconsin.wish.org](mailto:info@wisconsin.wish.org) or 800.236.WISH (9474).



# SPARK THE *wish* EFFECT

*Register your team. Fundraise. Walk. Spark hope for wish kids.*



Join us at this year's Walk For Wishes® events in Madison and Milwaukee! Online registration is FREE and easy.

The Madison event includes a petting farm along with Bucky Badger, free fun for the whole family, kids dash and 1-mile walk.

The Milwaukee event is at a NEW LOCATION, the Milwaukee County Zoo, and includes fun for the whole family, kids dash and 1.5-mile walk. **The first 500 to register receive free zoo admission and parking.**



### MADISON

McKee Farms Park, Fitchburg  
Saturday, August 22, 2026  
[wish.org/wisconsin/madisonwalk](http://wish.org/wisconsin/madisonwalk)



### MILWAUKEE

Milwaukee County Zoo  
Saturday, August 29, 2026  
[wish.org/wisconsin/mkewalk](http://wish.org/wisconsin/mkewalk)