

Rally Together. Grant Wishes.™

Life Changing Impact Starts With You.



Student WishMakers Fundraising Toolkit

You are here because you believe in using your voice, creativity and leadership to make a difference. As a Student WishMaker, you are part of a nationwide movement of students rallying together to help grant life-changing wishes for kids with critical illnesses. However you choose to show up — one event, one day or a full Wish Week® — your actions matter. This toolkit is here to help you lead with purpose, rally your community and turn your ideas into real impact.

About Make-A-Wish® Northeastern & Central California

Make-A-Wish Northeastern & Central California grants life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses across 28 counties in Northern California, including the Sacramento region, Central Valley, and the North State. Since its founding in 1983, the chapter has fulfilled more than 10,000 wishes, bringing hope, strength, and joy to local children and their families.

As part of the broader Make-A-Wish organization, the chapter is supported by the nation's most trusted nonprofit brand. Make-A-Wish serves communities in all 50 states and nearly 50 countries worldwide. Since 1980, the organization has granted more than 650,000 wishes globally, including more than 400,000 wishes throughout the United States and its territories.

Why Wishes Matter

Every day, 70+ children are diagnosed with a critical illness. We believe wishes are vital to the treatment process. When a wish is granted, a child replaces fear with confidence, sadness with joy and anxiety with hope. Research shows that a wish can help children build the physical and emotional strength they need to fight — giving them a better chance of surviving and thriving.

About Student WishMakers

Student Wishmakers is a customizable fundraising program that partners schools and youth organizations with Make-A-Wish Northeastern & Central California to inspire leadership, service and school spirit through hands-on fundraising. Every dollar raised, and rally hosted, helps grant life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. What you do as a Student WishMaker makes those moments possible.



Where Do You See Yourself?

Student WishMakers is the national identity for youth-led fundraising at Make-A-Wish — bringing together students of all ages who want to take action for wish kids. This includes age-based pathways so every student can get involved in a way that fits their school and community:



WISHMAKER KIDS
Preschool and Elementary Age



WISHMAKER TEENS
Middle and High School Age



WISHMAKERS ON CAMPUS
College Age

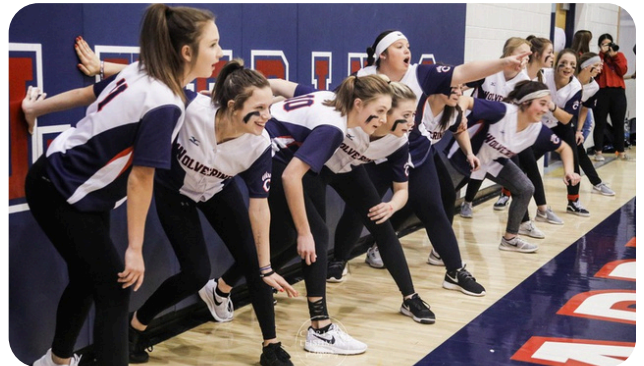
No matter where you start, you are part of the same movement – fundraising, raising awareness, building leadership skills, making an impact and helping grant life-changing wishes.



Youth Livestock Auction



Daycare Learns About Wishes



High School Dodgeball Tournament



Game Day Event



Community Lemonade Stand



Campus Rodeo Event

Student WishMakers is for all youth — not just schools. From clubs, teams and youth organizations to community lemonade stands, 4-H programs and local fundraisers, any youth-led group can rally together to help grant life-changing wishes.

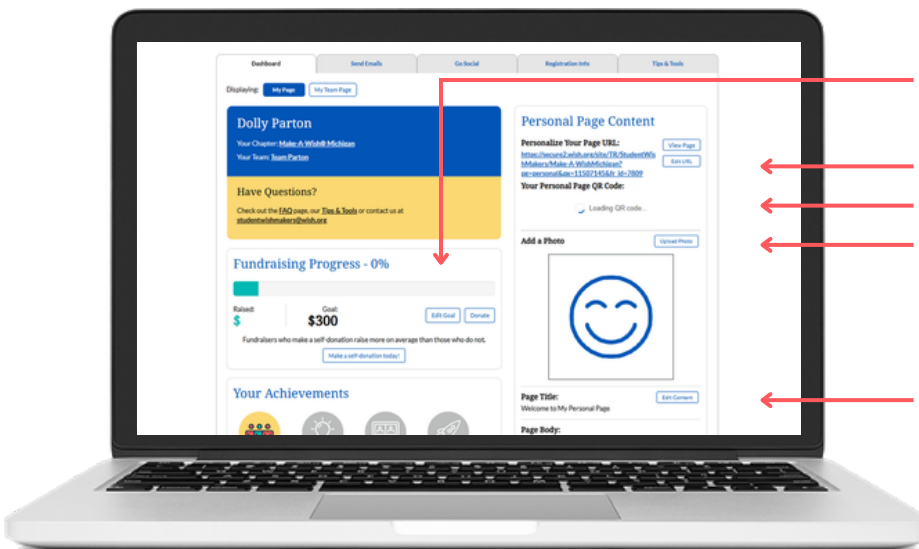
Rally Your Community for Wishes

Becoming a Student WishMaker is easy – and it starts with one step.

- Visit site.wish.org/StudentWishMakersNCC and select “Start a Fundraiser”
- Create your personal or team fundraising page
- Choose your age group path (WishMaker Kids, Teens, or WishMakers on Campus®)
- Set a goal, share why you are fundraising and start rallying your community
- From there, your Participant Center becomes your home base – where you can track progress, download your QR code and share your impact.



How to Use Your Participant Center



TRACK your fundraising progress in real time

CUSTOMIZE your URL

DOWNLOAD your QR code

ADD your photo

Tell people **WHY** you are fundraising

Get Inspired: Connect With The Mission

Let's start off by seeing a successful school fundraiser who then helped grant a child's wish.



Charli's Wish

Arlington High School raised \$12,061 in 2025 and were able to cap off the week by hosting Charli's wish reveal.

Scan the QR code to watch the video:



The Five Main Wish Types



I wish to go



I wish to be



I wish to meet



I wish to have



I wish to give

95%



Of health care professionals surveyed say they believe that the wish experience can influence wish kids' **physical health**.

89%



Of wish parents say that the wish experience helped **relieve** their family from traumatic stress.

99%



Of parents reported that the wish experience gave their children increased feelings of **happiness**.

72%



Of wish parents observed that the wish marked a **turning point** in their children's response to treatment.

95%



Of parents said that the wish **strengthened** their families.

95%



Of wish families observed increases in their wish kids' **emotional health**.

Fundraising Checklist

- ☒ **REGISTER.** Visit site.wish.org/StudentWishMakersNCC to register yourself or your team.
- ☐ **MEET AND PLAN.** Meet with your school or organization's leaders to develop a fundraising plan and timeline. Try to plan your efforts at least 4 to 6 weeks out in advance.
- ☐ **DOWNLOAD APP.** Download the free Make-A-Wish Fundraising mobile app in the Apple Store or Google Play. Use it to easily track your progress, share messages and more.
- ☐ **SELECT YOUR FUNDRAISER.** Choose your fundraising events – see next page for starter ideas.
Pro Tip: Having the same type of fundraising events every year creates buzz and helps with event awareness, leading to higher attendance rates.
- ☐ **PERSONALIZE.** Did you upload a photo and personalize your page? Review your page and get acquainted with the participant center. *Pro Tip: Did you know? Those who personalize their pages are proven to raise more!*
- ☐ **SET A DOLLAR GOAL.** How much does your team plan to fundraise? Be sure to enter your goal on the next page.
- ☐ **SET A DATE.** Pick dates for your fundraising events. Note: Some teams choose to host events in both the fall and spring. *Pro Tip: April is World Wish Month® at Make-A-Wish, hold your spring event during this month for more star power.*
- ☐ **LOCAL CHAPTER.** Contact Nick Dominguez at ndominguez@ncc.wish.org to set up a meeting to discuss your fundraising efforts. He can walk through best practices and answer any questions you may have.
- ☐ **PROMOTE.** Use email, text and social media to spread the word about your events and why you are raising money for Make-A-Wish. Include your fundraising link and/or QR code with your outreach so everyone can easily donate to show their support!
- ☐ **FUNdraise.** Host an incredible event with your fellow fundraisers, build a sense of community and have fun!
- ☐ **QUESTIONS?** Make-A-Wish Northeastern & Central California is grateful for your support and here for you each step of the way.

Use the next few work pages to help you plan this year's fundraising.

Fundraising Ideas

WishMaker Kids



- Coin Wars
- Read-A-Thon
- Art Auction or Coloring Contest



- Lemonade Stand
- Family Fun Day or Carnival

- Popcorn, Ice Cream or Bake Sale
- Pizza Party
- Storytime for Wishes
- Obstacle Course or Field Day
- Stuffed Animal Sleepover

WishMaker Teens



- Sundae or Dirty Soda Bar
- Walk-A-Thon
- Blue Out Game



- Car Wash
- Pet Sit or Babysit for Wishes

- Wish Week or Spirit Days
- Dodgeball or Kickball Tournament
- Teacher vs Student Challenges
- Open Mic or Karaoke Contest
- Gaming Tournament

WishMakers on Campus



- Talent Competition
- Sport Tournament
- Rivalry Game



- Swishes for Wishes
- Mr or Mrs Make-A-Wish

- Trivia Night
- Workout or Fitness Class
- Dorm Wars or Greek Life Challenges
- Finals Week Care Packages
- Parents Weekend Dinner or Gala



Additional Fundraising Ideas & Resources Available in our Student WishMakers Canva Collection

Scan here for guides, templates, flyers, fundraiser spotlights, printables, social media posts, presentation slides and more!

Goal Planning



Featured School

When Highlands Ranch High School in CO decided to hold their first Wish Week, the students knew they wanted to help Make-A-Wish in a BIG way. They added fun group incentives for each fundraising level they reached, like a student vs. teacher dodgeball game and teachers dancing the tango in T-Rex costumes. They even convinced their principal to shave a reverse mohawk! The result? Over \$22,000 raised!



Have a different idea?

That's what is great – make it your own! This toolkit is just to get you started. What other ideas can you think of that would go over well in your community?

Goal Setting

Set a realistic, meaningful goal and let everyone know the goal you are trying to reach. Give updates daily or after major events so students feel connected to the efforts. "We are halfway to our goal of granting two wishes! Continue to give throughout the week and help us reach our goal!"

Track your progress visually. You can create a giant thermometer, or use paper stars to represent each \$100 you've raised. Hang stars/visuals in a place where most students frequent, such as in the cafeteria or by the main office.

Create incentives! At the \$1,000 mark, the Student Council advisor will shave his/her head. At the \$5,000 mark, the principal will dye his/her hair, get taped to a wall, etc.



Sample Goal Setting Formula

Think of the number of students in your school and how much each can give. For example, if you have 1,000 students and each can give \$5, set your goal at \$5,000 and encourage each student to play a part in making an impact!

Team Goal Setting Worksheet

You may not have all the details figured out yet, and that's OK!

Use this to get started and keep the ideas rolling from there!

Team Name:

Team Goal:



Team captains

If you've started a team, use the team link to invite others to sign up so all fundraising is allocated to one page. It may take a few asks and reminders to grow your roster.



As a team captain, it's important to lead by example. Make a donation to help jumpstart fundraising and encourage donors to do the same.

Statistics show donors are more likely to donate once they see your self donation first.



Grow your team! Recruit 10-15 people to join your team and ask them to register on your team page so any donations they raise get tracked appropriately.



Fundraising events are a great way to collect donations. Start talking with your team about what kind of events you would like to hold. Aim for your Wish Week, one big event and 6-8 smaller fundraisers to do throughout the year.

Big Event Ideas:

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Smaller Event Ideas:

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**Sample Wish Week
on the next page**



Once you've picked and scheduled your events, be sure to invite people and spread the word! Use your social media accounts, text, emails and make flyers!

Be sure to download your QR code from your Participant Center to add to flyers and have at in person events to collect digital donations!

Wish Week

Rally Your School for Wishes

—Wish Week is a flexible, high-energy way for schools to rally together for wish kids. Some schools host a full spirit week. Others focus on one big game, one powerful day or a weekend of activities.

However you choose to celebrate, you're part of the Wish Week movement — students coming together to raise funds, build community and help grant life-changing wishes. See samples below.

One school. One rally. Big impact.

Wish Day



GAME WEEK
Blue Out

Blue Out Game



Wish Week



Be sure to include your school's custom donation link every time you share about your fundraiser on social media. Print out QR code from your Participant Center for easy digital donation collection at in person events.

Wish Week Planning

You may not have all the details figured out yet, and that's OK!
The first step is to register and use this checklist to get started.

10 Weeks	Register & Tour Your Participant Center	Upon registering at site.wish.org/StudentWishMakersNCC you can toggle to your Participant Center. Here you can update your photo, share your story and customize your team URL; track your progress and download your QR code to take donations at your event.
9 Weeks	Meet and Plan	Meet with your fundraising committee to begin planning for the school year. Schedule a meeting with Nick Dominguez at Make-A-Wish NCC to go over your goals and plans. Involving your chapter can greatly increase the success of your fundraiser and connect you with wish families. Invite them to your planning meeting.
8 Weeks	Select Fundraiser and Date	Select your Wish Week date and goal! Setting a goal is important and helps you keep your eyes on the prize. Use the Team Goal Setting Worksheet from the Student WishMakers Fundraising Toolkit to help!
7 Weeks	Marketing	How will you promote? Create a highlight reel of past Make-A-Wish fundraisers to show at your kick-off assembly, on video boards at school and on social media. Give a sneak peek of what's to come for your Wish Week! Create flyers for the big game to cap off Wish Week.
6 Weeks	Plan Your Wish Week	Pick a theme and plan the details of each day. Be sure to include a financial component to each fun day and consider adding an outside element in the community such as a fundraiser at a local restaurant for families to participate. End on a big game day!
5 Weeks	Involve Your Community	Don't be afraid to ask local businesses to sponsor your Wish Week or Game Day financially or make a donation for a raffle, etc. Invite your local community to attend the big game by making it open to the public! Ask local establishments to hang flyers.
4 Weeks	Plan Your Kick Off	Start Wish Week off with a Kick-Off Assembly. Plan a fun theme or activity for the assembly, create competition between grades or clubs, include a performance, or invite a wish family. Your local Make-A-Wish chapter can bring a MAW table and help with the wish family.
3 Weeks	Plan Game Day	Ending Wish Week with a big game is one way to make a big impact. Collect donations at entry and concessions, pass a bucket around the stands, include raffles or an auction, have a halftime competition, invite a wish family, have everyone in the stands wear blue.
2 Weeks	Build Suspense	Announce the theme for Wish Week and detail any competitions, spirit days or performances. Build hype for the week and include Make-A-Wish in school announcements.
Wish Week!		Print off your QR code to display around your event for easy donation and most importantly have FUN!

We Can Raise MORE When We All Work TOGETHER.

Host a Wish Week

Sample Raised: \$2,000

Host 1-2 large fundraising events

Sample Raised: \$5,000

Host 6-10 small fundraisers

Sample Raised: \$3,000

Every Ask You Make Can Transform Lives

Six easy ways to ask for donations

1. Email and text your fundraising page URL to contacts
2. Call and leave voicemails
Your name and voice will remind people to donate
3. Write and mail letters
4. Wear the Badge on your email and social media
You can find this in your Participation Center
5. Lean on LinkedIn to rally your professional network
6. Use social media to ask boldly on behalf of wish kids

Try some of these sample social media posts:

- I'm proud to be a Student Wishmaker — rallying my school to help grant life-changing wishes for kids in our community. This matters to me because [your why]. If you're able, I'd love for you to join my rally and help make more wishes come true. [personal URL] ❤️
- Have you checked out my Make-A-Wish fundraiser? 🌟 Make-A-Wish is important to me because [share part of your story]. [personal URL]
- 9 out of 10 wish kids reported that they felt more joyful, confident and hopeful for their future because of their wish. ❤️ Help me grant more wishes: [personal URL]
- I am only \$[XX] away from my goal! Will you join me in granting wishes to give children with critical illnesses renewed motivation to persevere? [personal URL]



How to raise \$250 in seven days

Day 1: Donate \$25 to your own goal.

Day 2: Ask a family member to match your donation — \$25 more!

Day 3: Ask five coworkers for \$10 each — that's another \$50.

Day 4: Send an email to 10 friends asking for \$5 each — \$50 more.

Day 5: Post to Facebook or 'X' (formerly Twitter) and challenge a friend to give \$25.

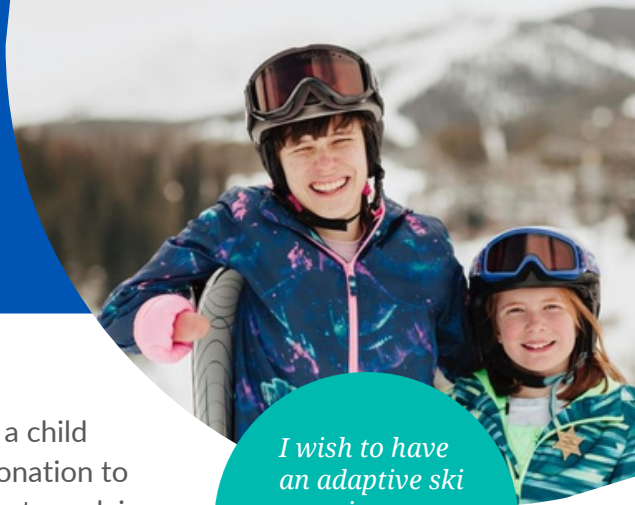
Day 6: Call your two best friends and ask for \$25 each — that's another \$50.

Day 7: Ask your neighbor for the last \$25 to put you over the top!

Every dollar makes a difference! Fundraise as a team and as individuals!

What Your Fundraising Can Do

Make-A-Wish plans every wish with one goal: to transform the life of a child with a critical illness. Care and attention are given to every detail. A donation to your fundraiser supports wish-granting needs and empowers wish kids to reclaim their childhood, restoring hope for today — and tomorrow. Start a fundraiser today and help transform the life of a child who is waiting for their wish to come true.



I wish to have an adaptive ski experience

Grace, 15
kidney transplant

The impact of a wish



A wish can give a child fighting a critical illness the emotional and physical strength to keep going.



A donation to your fundraiser will help Make-A-Wish bring experiences of hope to waiting wish kids who are isolated and vulnerable.



When a wish is granted, a child replaces fear with confidence, sadness with joy and anxiety with hope.



Each donation moves us closer to granting the wish of every eligible child.

Symbolic values*

\$40

could provide a wish kid and their family with a photo book to preserve the memories of their wish.

\$75

could provide fun enhancements for a child's wish reveal.

\$150

can give a child a new outfit to walk the red carpet at a wish to attend a movie premiere.

\$500

may provide a year's supply of food, leashes and bowls for a child's wish to have a puppy.

\$1,000

may provide new furniture and bedding for a child's wish to have a bedroom makeover.

\$3,000

may support a child's wish to go on a shopping spree that exceeds their imagination.

\$5,000

could fund an isolated child's wish to have a gaming computer and accessories to connect with friends online.

*All donations are a gift to the entire Make-A-Wish mission. The needs shown are symbolic of the common wish elements associated with each wish and are only representative of our many wish-granting activities. Gifts made will not actually be used to purchase the item or grant the wish described. All gifts will be pooled to meet the needs of Make-A-Wish.

Frequently Asked Questions

★ HOW MUCH OF THE MONEY RAISED GOES DIRECTLY TO GRANT WISHES?

Typically, 76% of the funds raised are used to grant the wishes of local children fighting critical illnesses.

★ HOW DOES MAKE-A-WISH GRANT WISHES?

A child with a critical illness who has reached the age of 2½ and is younger than 18 at the time of referral is potentially eligible for a wish. After a child is referred, Make-A-Wish will work with the treating physician to determine the child's eligibility for a wish. Once qualified, a team of two Make-A-Wish volunteers visits the child to determine his or her wish.

★ HOW SHOULD WE COLLECT THE FUNDS OUR SCHOOL/GROUP RAISES FOR MAKE-A-WISH?

Make-A-Wish encourages kids to creatively design a bucket or other collection container(s). Most groups find it necessary to have change available for fundraising activities. At the end of the program, the school or organization should submit a check for the total amount raised to Make-A-Wish. Schools can also collect with their fundraising link and QR code digitally/online. QR codes can also be placed on flyers for fundraisers and used to collect at in person events instead of cash.

★ WHO SHOULD COLLECT AND COUNT THE MONEY?

Collecting and counting funds is a great opportunity to involve the student council, key club or PTA/PTO. Cash collected can be deposited into the school's account and a check can be submitted to Make-A-Wish or a donation can be made directly to the school's fundraising link.

★ MAY WE OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT TO CASH CHECKS MADE PAYABLE TO MAKE-A-WISH?

No, you may not open a bank account under the Make-A-Wish name. If participants make checks payable to Make-A-Wish, they should be mailed to the Make-A-Wish Northeastern & Central California office.

Please include your mail in donation form to ensure it gets coded to your school's fundraising. This can be found on your team's fundraising page.

★ WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE CASH FROM THE FUNDRAISING EVENT?

All cash raised the day of the event should be collected and given to pre-designated individuals from the school or organization. These designated individuals should secure and monitor the cash in a safe or locked box until the money can be counted and deposited.

After your fundraiser, checks should be mailed directly to Make-A-Wish; while the school or organization tallies the money and combines the total campaign cash donations in a single check for forwarding to Make-A-Wish.

For accounting and security purposes, Make-A-Wish prefers to receive a check instead of coins or cash. Please ask the event organizer to deposit the coins and send the funds to the local Make-A-Wish office in the form of a check. 100% of the proceeds from the program should be submitted within 30 days of the conclusion of the campaign.

★ WILL MAKE-A-WISH SOLICIT INDIVIDUALS WHO MAKE DONATIONS?

Donors who provide their physical address or email address will be included in Make-A-Wish mailing lists, unless otherwise instructed. Donors may receive Make-A-Wish newsletters, annual mailing appeals, invitations to special events or emails.

★ DOES MAKE-A-WISH TELEMARKE?

As a matter of national policy, Make-A-Wish does not engage in telemarketing or door-to-door solicitation.

★ CAN MAKE-A-WISH SECURE SPONSORSHIPS FOR OUR EVENT?

No. Make-A-Wish is responsible for procuring sponsorship, in-kind goods and services for existing internal fundraisers and for wish-granting purposes only. However, you are welcome to secure sponsorships on your own. We ask that you please contact Make-A-Wish before reaching out to any sponsors for your event or promotion. This will help us ensure there is no duplication of efforts that may be currently under way.

Thank you!

Your support will give a child hope for today — and tomorrow.

★ Website:
site.wish.org/StudentWishMakersNCC

★ Connect with us:
wish.org/ncc

★ Spread the word:



Questions?

Contact Nick Dominguez at ndominguez@ncc.wish.org.

Make-A-Wish®
NORTHEASTERN & CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

STUDENT
WISHMAKERS