



Make-A-Wish Eastern® North Carolina
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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 16, 2026

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WISH BALL 2026 RAISES \$1,000,000 TO GRANT LIFE-CHANGING WISHES ACROSS EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

RALEIGH N.C. - Make-A-Wish® Eastern North Carolina announced its annual Wish Ball, held Thursday, October 15 at Union Hall at Raleigh Union Station, raised more than \$1,000,000 to grant wishes for children with critical illnesses across the region. The event marked the most successful fundraiser in the chapter's 40-year history.

The largest event hosted at Union Station, more than 400 guests gathered to "Cheers to 40 Years," and celebrate the 5000+ wish kids who have experienced the transformational power of a wish since the organization's founding in 1986.

Co-hosted by wish recipients Manny Lee and Rachael Jackson, the night included live music, silent and live auctions, a plated dinner and several wish kids such as wish kid Lachlan, a 15-year-old from Chatham County whose wish to have a custom drum set was featured during the evening.

"We are so humbled to have raised a record breaking \$1,000,000 to create joy for local wish kids. I cannot express the immense gratitude we have for each and every supporter who made Wish Ball 2026 such a success. As a wish family member, I know first hand the lasting impact a wish has on a child and their family, and am thrilled that even more children will get to feel the hope only a wish can bring," said chapter CEO, Mary Elizabeth Bennett.

Funds raised at Wish Ball 2026 will directly support wishes for children throughout eastern North Carolina. A wish can be a powerful part of a child's treatment journey, providing strength and joy during some of their most difficult days.

About Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina

For over 40 years, Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina has been granting life-changing wishes for children aged 2.5–18 battling critical illnesses. From the Triangle to the coast, we've brought hope, joy, and lasting memories to over 5,000 children and their families. As a 100% local chapter, all funds are raised right here in eastern North Carolina through events, corporate partnerships, and generous individual donors. Part of a nationwide network of 57 chapters that have granted more than 340,000 wishes, we are proud to continue giving every eligible child in our 49-county community the chance to experience the transformative power of a wish. Learn more at <https://wish.org/eastnc>.

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