

**Make-A-Wish Foundation®
of America**
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About the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of America

MISSION STATEMENT

We grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

MAKE-A-WISH® PHENOMENON REACHES FAR & WIDE

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is the nation's largest wish-granting organization. It has fulfilled the [wishes](#) of more than 185,000 children in the United States and its territories since 1980. Based in Phoenix, the Make-A-Wish Foundation serves every community in the United States, Guam and Puerto Rico through its 65 [chapters](#). To find the chapter serving your community, go to [wish.org](#) and enter your ZIP code in the "Find Your Local Chapter" box.

BEGINNINGS OF THE MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION

In 1980, Chris Greicius was a 7-year-old boy being treated for leukemia. Whenever he saw a police officer, he saw everything he wanted to be. Law enforcement officers heard about Chris' wish to be a police officer and responded to the call. A police helicopter flew him to headquarters for a tour, a ride in a patrol car and a ceremony making him the first-ever honorary state patrolman in Arizona history. They also presented him a custom-tailored uniform, motorcycle helmet, campaign hat and the motorcycle wings he earned on his own battery-powered bike. Many of those responsible for fulfilling Chris' wish wanted to do the same for other children with life-threatening medical conditions and founded the Make-A-Wish Foundation in November 1980.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

We grant the wishes of medically eligible children who:

- have been diagnosed with a progressive, degenerative or malignant condition that has placed the child's life in jeopardy;
- are older than 2½ and younger than 18 (at the time of referral);
- haven't received a wish from another wish-granting organization.

The child's physician, certified nurse practitioner or certified physician assistant determines whether a child is medically eligible to receive a wish.

FUNDING SOURCES

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that finances its work through the generous contributions of individuals, corporate sponsorships, planned gifts and grants. The Make-A-Wish Foundation **does not** raise funds by door-to-door, telephone solicitation methods or receive funding from federal, state or local

FUNDING SOURCES (cont.)

government programs. In-kind donations of goods and services such as frequent flier miles and hotel loyalty points also help finance the Foundation's mission. More than 76 percent of expenses are devoted to the Foundation's mission – far exceeding the program service allocation standards set forth by the nation's leading charity watchdog groups, including the Council of Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance.

VOLUNTEERING

Nearly 25,000 [volunteers](#) generously give their time and energy to fulfill the Make-A-Wish® mission. Volunteers serve Make-A-Wish chapters across the country in a variety of capacities including wish granting, office administrative support, language translation, special event planning and coordinating, Web site design, fundraising and much more. People can offer to volunteer through the [“Ways to Help”](#) section of the national Web site, [wish.org](#), or by contacting their local Make-A-Wish chapter.

KIDS FOR WISH KIDS®: A number of Make-A-Wish chapters across the country coordinate a Kids For Wish Kids program, which enables children to raise money in their schools to help grant wishes. Kids For Wish Kids is unique because kids themselves manage it. Although each chapter does not have a Kids For Wish Kids program, there are opportunities in every Make-A-Wish community for young people to help make wishes come true.

THE WISH PROCESS

The Make-A-Wish Foundation estimates **27,000 children in the United States** are diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition annually and thus may be eligible for a wish.

Every wish is a memorable experience for the wish kid, the family and those who participate in the wish. The Foundation follows a [process](#) to create memorable wish experiences for each wish kid.

STEP ONE: The Wish Referral

Out of respect for the privacy of the children and families the Make-A-Wish Foundation serves, only these sources may refer a child:

- a medical professional treating the child (doctor, nurse, social worker or child-life specialist);
- the child's parents or legal guardians;
- the potential wish child.

STEP TWO: Determining the Child's Eligibility

Children older than 2½ and younger than 18 (at the time of referral) diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition may be eligible for a wish. The treating physician, certified nurse practitioner or certified physician assistant determines whether a child is medically eligible to receive a wish. A child also must not have received a wish from another wish-granting organization to qualify. There are no other qualifications based on sex, race, religion, socioeconomic status or any other demographic category.

THE WISH PROCESS (cont.)

STEP THREE: Choosing a Wish

Once the child is deemed medically eligible, we send one of our enthusiastic wish teams to learn the child's one true wish. These passionate volunteers help children explore their imaginations for the experience that will thrill and inspire them.

Wishes generally fall into one of these categories:

I wish to have...

I wish to be...

I wish to go...

I wish to meet...

STEP FOUR: Making a Wish Come True

Finally, our wish granters create an unforgettable experience driven by the wish kid's creativity. The experience enriches the lives of the children, their families and sometimes their entire community. All members of the wish kid's immediate family take part in the wish whenever possible, and all wish expenses are fully covered by the Foundation – giving the wish kid and family a respite from the stress of dealing with a life-threatening medical condition. In many cases, the allure of a wish experience is a source of inspiration for children undergoing difficult medical treatments and a positive force that helps them overcome their obstacles.

WISHES BY THE NUMBERS

Since its founding in 1980, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted more than **185,000 wishes**. Today, the Foundation grants a wish **every 40 minutes**. Much like their imaginations, children's wishes cover an almost limitless spectrum. From wishing to be a ballerina to meeting a favorite celebrity, from receiving a new laptop computer to visiting a glamorous destination, wish children have enjoyed unforgettable, inspirational wish experiences around the world.

- In fiscal year 2009 (ending Aug. 31), the Foundation granted **13,465 wishes**, the most ever in its 29-year history. The most popular wish is to visit a theme park, which accounts for more than 40 percent of the requests from our wish kids.

The most requested wish continues to be visiting a Disney theme park: During fiscal year 2008, the Foundation granted more than 5,400 wishes to visit a Disney Park through The Walt Disney Company – Disney Worldwide Outreach. Disney-themed wishes continue to be the most popular requests by children to the Make-A-Wish Foundation with more than 6,000 wishes granted every year, including visits to the Disney Parks, Disney Cruises, meeting Disney Characters, attending sporting events and visiting TV and movie sets.

The average cost of a wish nationwide is **\$7,362** (as of March 2009), which includes cash and in-kind support.

ABOUT THE MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the [wishes](#) of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. Founded in 1980 when a group of caring volunteers helped a young boy fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer, the Foundation is now the largest wish-granting charity in the world, with 65 [chapters](#) in the United States and its territories. With the help of generous donors and nearly 25,000 [volunteers](#), the Make-A-Wish Foundation grants a wish every 40 minutes and has granted more than 185,000 wishes in the United States since its inception. For more information about the Make-A-Wish Foundation, visit wish.org and discover how you can *share the power of a wish®*.