

With Our Best

Wishes

Make-A-Wish[®]
MICHIGAN

SUMMER 2021

I wish to have a shopping adventure

Mailynn, 10
cancer

Mailynn's shopping adventure provides special family time

For Mailynn, 10, her shopping adventure wish allowed her to create a special oasis at home for her and her family. She picked out princess décor as well as several items for a game room including a TV, karaoke machine and basketball game.

After her basketball season was canceled due to COVID, Mailynn was excited to be able to play basketball at home with her dad. It's been a constant source of joy for her family.

"It was my wish come true to see her face light up like that," Mailynn's dad, John, said. "She was overjoyed and was granted more than we could imagine. She sees her wish, and it comforts her when she remembers the harsh process and the road to victory."

Mailynn had to undergo a plethora of scans when she was diagnosed with cancer, and those scans were really scary to her. Her child life team would talk about the Make-A-Wish prize she would get for facing her fears. And just like that, Mailynn would sit still for the scan.

"When Mailynn learned of Make-A-Wish and the possible options, she immediately became motivated to push through the journey and land at such a place," Mailynn's mom, Tatiana, said. "In this instance, it turned out to not be a physical destination; but she arrived at the prize for staying the course and braving the tasks of her treatment. Make-A-Wish also created a light at the end of the tunnel for the rest of our household."

The radiation treatment needed for her cancer required Mailynn to go to a hospital nearly three hours away for eight weeks. Each week resulted in a new hotel stay and very painful treatments for Mailynn. She had open burns on her neck and couldn't eat. When she became her frailest, she talked about her wish and the quality time she would have with her family because of her wish. Focusing on the anticipation of her wish gave her hope and strength when she was at her lowest point during her rigorous treatment.

"Make-A-Wish creates a magically sustaining memory that overshadows the compilation of some pretty tough times," Tatiana said. "The wish that was granted was so personalized and [truly] granted her heart's desires. Honestly, it is a dream come true for her."



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A note from the Board Chair

Dear Make-A-Wish Friends,

It has been my pleasure to serve as the chair of the Make-A-Wish[®] Michigan Board of Directors over the past two years. I continue to be inspired by our courageous wish kids who battle their critical illnesses with resilience and fortitude. I am so grateful for our many volunteers and supporters who make life-changing wishes come true for these children every day.

As Make-A-Wish Michigan has reimagined the way we deliver our mission in these rapidly changing times, one thing that remains certain is that wish kids and families need the power of a wish in their lives. Wishes have the power to replace feelings of fear and isolation with those of confidence and joy. Hope is essential, now more than ever. You have the opportunity to create hope for Michigan wish kids and families through your ongoing support. Whether it's registering for the Virtual Wish-A-Mile[®] Bicycle Tour, becoming a corporate sponsor or signing up to become a monthly donor, your support can make a difference for the more than 800 Michigan kids who are waiting for a wish.

The only way wishes are possible is through community support. We look forward to an ongoing partnership with our volunteers, donors, corporate friends, foundations and community supporters to grant wishes that bring hope and transformation to more Michigan children. Thank you for all that you do to make wishes possible in your community.

With gratitude,



Julie Booth
Board Chair



*I wish to have
a golf cart*

Finnly, 10
nervous system
disorder

Peter soaks his worries away in his hot tub

Peter leaned back in the hot tub, eyes closed and just relaxed as the bubbles washed over him. In that peaceful moment, his brain cancer seemed like a distant memory.

Only a year and a half ago, Peter had an MRI due to nagging headaches and balance concerns. Doctors discovered a tumor sitting right on his brain stem. Following a 19-hour surgery, Peter had to relearn how to walk and talk while undergoing chemotherapy and radiation. The anticipation of his wish and daydreaming about a world of possibilities kept his spirits up during that difficult time.

Prior to picking his wish, the family shared, "The wish process is already having an impact on Peter—he is having a great time thinking of possible wishes and can't wait for wish day!"

When Peter was feeling poorly during his treatment, he would take several baths a day to try to feel better. It appeared to be the only activity that actually brought him comfort at the time. After months of soaking in the bathtub where the water would never stay hot enough for him, Peter realized that he knew exactly what he wanted to wish for.

"I've always wanted a hot tub," Peter said. "I had fun picking out the color."

Peter, 12, will hop in the hot tub with his mom for deep conversations about life or just relax with his dad or older siblings. His wish has brought his whole family closer with all the time spent together in the hot tub.

"We all like to soak," Peter's mom, Lucyna, said. "[The hot tub] has been the best thing ever! It's allowed us to relax and forget about the challenges that Peter still faces."



I wish to have a hot tub

Peter, 12
brain tumor

SIGNATURE EVENT

Prescription For Hope event engages medical panel in thoughtful conversation

Now more than ever, wishes can bring hope, joy and a sense of normalcy back into the lives of wish kids and their families.

Make-A-Wish Michigan hosted the virtual panel Prescription For Hope, presented by Trinity Health, on April 29. The event featured an interactive conversation with local and national healthcare leaders who have all witnessed firsthand the transformative power a wish gives their patients.

"A wish is so impactful to the child, their family and their community," said Dr. Nancy Cutler, one of the panelists and a pediatric cardiologist at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. "The anticipation of daring to dream to the anticipation of making dreams and wishes come true is electric. To see the joy on their faces as they talk about their trip, the treehouse, the dog, the pool, the shopping spree, the day with the Tigers and just having the opportunity to make a choice for themselves rather than others always making that decision for them, is indescribable."

Moderated by Dr. James Fahner, chapter medical advisor for Make-A-Wish Michigan, this free event gave participants the opportunity to learn how wishes bring hope and strength to wish kids and their families, and even inspire their healthcare team.

Thanks to our match sponsor, the Teeny Tiny Toy Store of Saugatuck, donations up to a cumulative \$40,000 were doubled.

To watch the inspiring discussion, visit michigan.wish.org/prescriptionforhope.



PRESENTING SPONSOR



MATCH SPONSOR

MEDICAL IMPACT

Research finds that a wish can potentially help reduce hospital time

"The kids in the wish group compared to those that again, were really similar, but didn't have a wish were either two to two and a half times more likely to save money on their healthcare costs, not have to use the emergency department 12 months following their wish, not have to be admitted to the hospital unplanned, not spend time where they didn't want to be," Dr. Anup Patel shared about his research study. "And where I look at it as they were two to two and a half times more likely to be where we want them to be, home with their family, hanging out their friends, being in school doing the things that kids should be doing a full 12 months following their wish experience."

Anup D. Patel, Peter Glynn, Ashley M. Falke, Megan Reynolds, Richard Hoyt, Allison Hoynes, Melissa Moore-Clingenpeel, Ann Salvator and Jennifer J. Moreland, *Impact of a Make-A-Wish Experience on Healthcare Utilization, Pediatric Research* <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41390-018-0207-5>

WISHFULLY SPEAKING



"It has been a wonderful experience with Dolly. The kids LOVE her (parents too). Louisa has asked a few times, "Do we get to keep her?" Of course! Thank you all for making Louisa's wish come true."

Louisa, 6, heart condition >
I wish to have a puppy and name her Dolly Anna Cupcake



"Every time the [doorbell] rang, he was like, 'Oh, is this for me?' He would be so excited to see his name on the package. Every time an item came, he had a little dance that he did. It was awesome."

< **Tristan, 14, autoimmune disorder**
I wish to have a shopping adventure



"I was very surprised and overwhelmed with joy. When battling cancer and now the ongoing worries about my health and the pandemic, this wish definitely came at the right time, lifting my spirits and having a positive impact. I feel this chapter in my life is a positive one and Make-A-Wish played a big part in helping me feel good about myself."

> **Ryan, 15, lymphoma**
I wish to have a shopping adventure



"My child's life is changed forever! She has access to a sensory and social activity in swimming every day! This wish happening now, in COVID times, has helped her and our family feel less isolated and has brought deep joy for her—and us—daily. Thank you for this amazing wish!"

< **Eliana, 12, nervous system disorder**
I wish to have an above-ground pool



"Words can't describe how grateful and blessed we are by the items purchased for Izzy from all the beautiful donors! These are items that she adores, are helpful to her unique needs, and are making her life more enjoyable on a daily basis. We are so very thankful to Make-A-Wish, eternally so!"

< **Izrielle, 4, cancer**
I wish to have a shopping adventure



WISH STORY

Detroit Pistons team up with Make-A-Wish to create Dylan's custom designs

At the start of the pandemic, Dylan's family thought he was a typical 9-year-old boy with severe ADHD issues. As time went on, Dylan's mom, Elissa, grew concerned. They made an appointment with an eye doctor, who immediately sent Dylan to the ER. An MRI and blood test found that Dylan had a very rare genetic disorder called adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD).

Within a few months, Dylan could no longer ride his bike. In a matter of weeks, he became wheelchair bound, unable to talk and had a g-tube. His condition progressively declined, and the family turned to Make-A-Wish® Michigan.

"When all of this came crashing down suddenly in such a short period of time, [his wish to design custom Detroit Pistons apparel] was the thing that came up for Make-A-Wish because he loved jerseys so much and liked sports, and he can't do it any longer," Dylan's dad, Michael, said. "This was a way to marry the two together."

The anticipation of Dylan's wish helped motivate and encourage him when he was in the hospital dealing with a lot of pain.

"Just talking about [the wish] with him and using the wish as a positive distraction has been so awesome," Elissa said.

The Pistons quickly came on board to help make Dylan's wish a reality and hosted a Zoom call with the family and their designers to talk about Dylan's ideas. Dylan wanted his designs to include a navy blue ribbon on the jersey to raise awareness for ALD along with his nickname Dill Pickle.

"It just went way above and beyond what our wildest dreams were for this wish," Elissa said. "I just can't thank the Pistons enough for what they did for our son and making his wish come true."

A few weeks after the design call, Dylan's wish culminated with a fun fashion show reveal outside the family's home. The reveal featured the Detroit Pistons mascot, Hooper, a dancer and a member of their Extreme Team as they enthusiastically showed off Dylan's custom designs.

"He's had that big smile on his face all morning," Michael said. "Make-A-Wish is an organization that comes out at the worst of times to brighten your day and brighten that period of time."

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Wish mom gives back as Make-A-Wish volunteer

Timerra Brooks knows firsthand how much a wish means to a wish child and family. Her daughter, Shantalle, experienced a travel wish adventure in 2005 after she was diagnosed with heart disease.

"It meant the world to see her smiling, and [she] didn't have to worry about her health for a week," Timerra said.

More than 15 years later, Shantalle is doing well and enjoying the life of a typical 20 year old. The impact of Shantalle's wish inspired Timerra to become a wish-granting volunteer in 2013. Since then, she has helped more than 20 wish kids and their families experience a life-changing wish.

"I hold the organization of Make-A-Wish as a top priority in my life," Timerra explained. "I feel like Make-A-Wish is the glue that I was searching for when I came across the idea of volunteering. I feel so whole when I am doing anything for them."

MAKE-A-WISH MICHIGAN NEEDS YOU!

For every newly referred wish kid, Make-A-Wish needs wish-granting volunteers to support them throughout their wish journey.

Would you like to learn more about becoming a volunteer? Please visit michigan.wish.org/volunteer.

▼ *Wish alum Shantalle (left) with wish mom and wish-granting volunteer Timerra (right)*



Make-A-Wish Michigan is an excellent steward of our donor funds, with an average over the last five years of 77 percent of every dollar spent going toward wish granting and program-related activities. We take great care to safeguard the generous donations made to Make-A-Wish Michigan. In 2021, we were recognized with the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency.

Calendar of Upcoming Events



VIRTUAL WISH-A-MILE® BICYCLE TOUR

Join us for the 34th annual Virtual Wish-A-Mile® Bicycle Tour this summer!

Whether you're a road warrior, leisurely ride on weekends or enjoy rides on your Peloton, you can sign up to ride in Virtual WAM 2021 and fundraise to help grant wishes to Michigan wish kids. There is no registration fee, fundraising minimum, or mileage requirement. Our virtual ride enables you to ride at your own pace and on your own time. Ride and fundraise through August 31 and be sure to register the young philanthropists in your household for WAM Jr.!

Make-A-Wish continues to grant wishes right now, but wishes are only possible through community support. By riding for wishes, you are raising critical funds needed to create life-changing moments for Michigan wish kids this year.

To learn more about Virtual WAM 2021, visit WishAMile.org.



TRAILBLAZE CHALLENGE

The 5th annual Trailblaze Challenge is a one-day endurance event on Saturday, Sept. 11, where participants will hike a 21-mile journey along the Jordan River Pathway.

Hikers will enjoy the picturesque scenery of northern Michigan, challenging themselves physically while raising much-needed funds to grant the wishes of Michigan children with critical illnesses.

Hikers receive a personal training schedule, have the opportunity to participate in bi-weekly training hikes and receive instructions on footwear and hiking gear from seasoned professionals. Make-A-Wish Michigan will make sure that you have every tool available to make you successful on and off the trail!

To learn more about the 2021 Trailblaze Challenge and how to register, visit TrailblazeChallengeMI.org.



VIRTUAL GALA

We invite you to join us for the virtual 2021 gala on Friday, October 15, for an inspirational evening presented by Trinity Health.

Our wish families need hope now more than ever, and you can help grant transformational wishes for children in your community by supporting Make-A-Wish at this event.

A livestream of the program will air on Friday, Oct. 15 at 7 p.m. Witness the impact of a wish come true, participate in the statewide silent auction, and learn more about how the community is coming together to bring hope to Michigan kids.

Consider hosting an in-person watch party and invite guests to support the Make-A-Wish mission.

To learn more, email Erin Ehlers at eehlers@michigan.wish.org or watch your email for exciting updates on our fall event plans.



A virtual walker enjoys a walk through her neighborhood.

SIGNATURE EVENT

Walk For Wishes® raises essential funds for Michigan wish kids

Participants in the 23rd Annual Walk For Wishes® turned their steps into wishes in their respective neighborhoods and area parks on May 1.

Walk For Wishes, sponsored by Planet Fitness, featured an exciting virtual opening ceremony emceed by Alicia Smith of WXYZ-TV with an inspiring story about wish kid Davonte.

Wherever you walked, thank you to the supporters across Michigan who participated in this year's Walk For Wishes and fundraised to make more wishes a reality for Michigan kids with critical illnesses.



LEAD SPONSOR



WHY I SUPPORT MAKE-A-WISH MICHIGAN



“My daughter had a rare autoimmune disorder when she was about two years old, and it qualified her for a wish. I cannot tell you how much it helped her physically and emotionally to know that she had a pending trip to meet the princesses and Tiana—the first black princess at the time. It gave her the strength to keep going, and I can honestly say it gave her that mental muscle to keep fighting. It was a magical week that I will never forget. It’s not a last wish for us. It’s an everlasting wish that we will cherish for years to come. This is why I do this work, so that other children who are battling critical illnesses like Alex’s can experience this unspeakable joy that my daughter had during a really tough time.”

◀ **Donna Doleman Dickerson**
Make-A-Wish Michigan Board Member and Wish Mom

“I’ve supported Make-A-Wish and volunteered at their fundraising events for several years now. It never seemed fair that some children and their families, besides going through the challenges of normal day-to-day life, also have to confront sometimes dangerous health issues. Granting a child’s wish, at the least, takes their mind off their situation for a while, and their whole family can share that feeling. One granted wish spreads a whole lot of happiness, and we can all share in that.”

▶ **Tom Rinehart**
Donor and Trailblaze Challenge Hiker



“This is a cause very dear to our hearts, as we know it brings joy and happiness to many families at a critical time in their lives. The donations we are making today are especially important because many charities like Make-A-Wish are finding it harder as a result of the pandemic to hit fundraising goals. We are excited once again this year to be sponsoring the Walk For Wishes event.”

◀ **Pete Hopkins (far left), Planet Fitness**
Sponsor

“I think we’ve become the de facto treehouse company for Make-A-Wish, and those [wishes] are always really fun projects to do when you’re actually involved in the wish. We’re doing it on nights and weekends, getting to know the family and kid so they can forget about the doctor visits and hospitals. It really gives not only the wish kids but the families just a sense of hope.”

▶ **Tim Porcasi, Pro Home Improvement**
In-Kind Donor and Sponsor





Make-A-Wish[®]

MICHIGAN

Headquarters

7600 Grand River Ave.
Suite 175
Brighton, MI 48114
800.622.9474
michigan.wish.org

Logan, 10, liver cancer
I wish to have a game room

“It is the ultimate, ultimate game room and hangout room. Super excited to have friends over hopefully sometime soon. It’s pretty awesome. Now we can look forward to hanging out together and not worrying about how we’re feeling. We’re just loving life as a family together and enjoying his ultimate Make-A-Wish game room.”

For Michigan children like Logan with critical illnesses, feelings of isolation and hopelessness are all too familiar. In these times, hope is essential, and you can unlock its life-changing power today. By pledging your monthly support, you give these kids so much more than a temporary escape. You give them a wellspring of strength to keep fighting for better days. Transform the lives of kids in your community every month, all year.

Become a monthly donor at michigan.wish.org/donate.



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



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EVERY MILE *makes wishes come true*

HIKE OR BIKE THIS SUMMER & FUNDRAISE TO GRANT WISHES IN MICHIGAN



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