

when wishes come true

Aisha, 7
leukemia

YOUR IMPACT
IN 2023

Make-A-Wish®
RÊVES D'ENFANTS CANADA



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Wish kid Aisha and her brother Zakariya enjoy some fun together before heading out on our 40th Anniversary Wish Trip to Walt Disney World® Resort in July 2023.

OUR MISSION

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

from our leaders

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

As 2023 has drawn to a close, we reflect with both humility and great pride on the significant strides we have made at Make-A-Wish Canada in our mission to grant the wish of every eligible child across Canada.

This year Make-A-Wish Canada celebrated our 40th anniversary, having delivered over 38,856 wishes since the first chapter was founded in 1983. Since that time, our community of supporters has expanded across the country to include thousands of volunteers, donors, community fundraisers, medical advisors and referral partners, board members, chapter advisory board members, staff, and wish kids and their families. Each person involved has played a powerful role in delivering the transformational and therapeutic benefits of a wish, and in turn they benefit from being part of the magic that happens when wishes come true.

With every wish granted, our community of supporters has helped create a turning point in a child's treatment and recovery:

- **90%** of wish kid alumni said that they felt more hopeful for their future after their wish
- **95%** of medical practitioners said that a wish experience improves a child's physical well-being and gives them strength to fight their critical illness

In 2023, we brought those benefits to 1,389 wish kids and their families, which was 44% more than in 2022. These transformational wishes were granted to children in 576 different communities, bringing strength, hope and joy to every corner of the country.

This rapid growth was made possible through the increased generosity of donor support and funds that were reserved from previous years. We are pleased to report total revenue of nearly \$43 million in 2023, a 47% increase over the previous year. Further, we were able to direct 73% of our expenses to fund wishes, demonstrating the efficiency of our operation as we grow the scale of our organization to reach every eligible child.

Despite this exceptional progress, we still have 4,000 kids waiting for a wish and thousands more being referred each year. Our need for your support is constant.

We hope that you see in this report the many lives you've touched and the impact you've made for children and families in 2023. Thank you for your steadfast support in our mission, and for helping to bring strength and hope to children facing critical illness.




Shaun Usmar
Chair of the Board of Directors



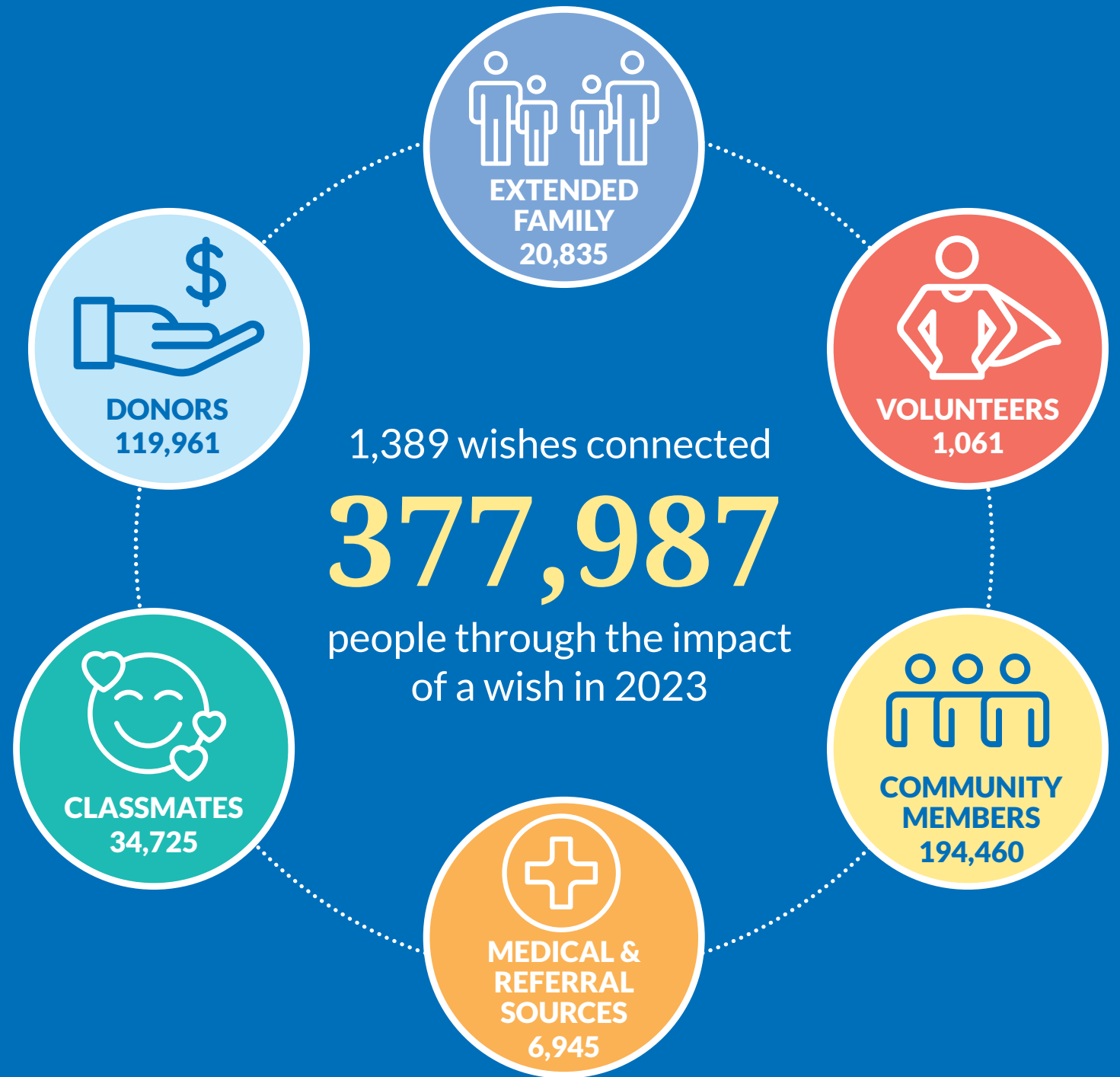
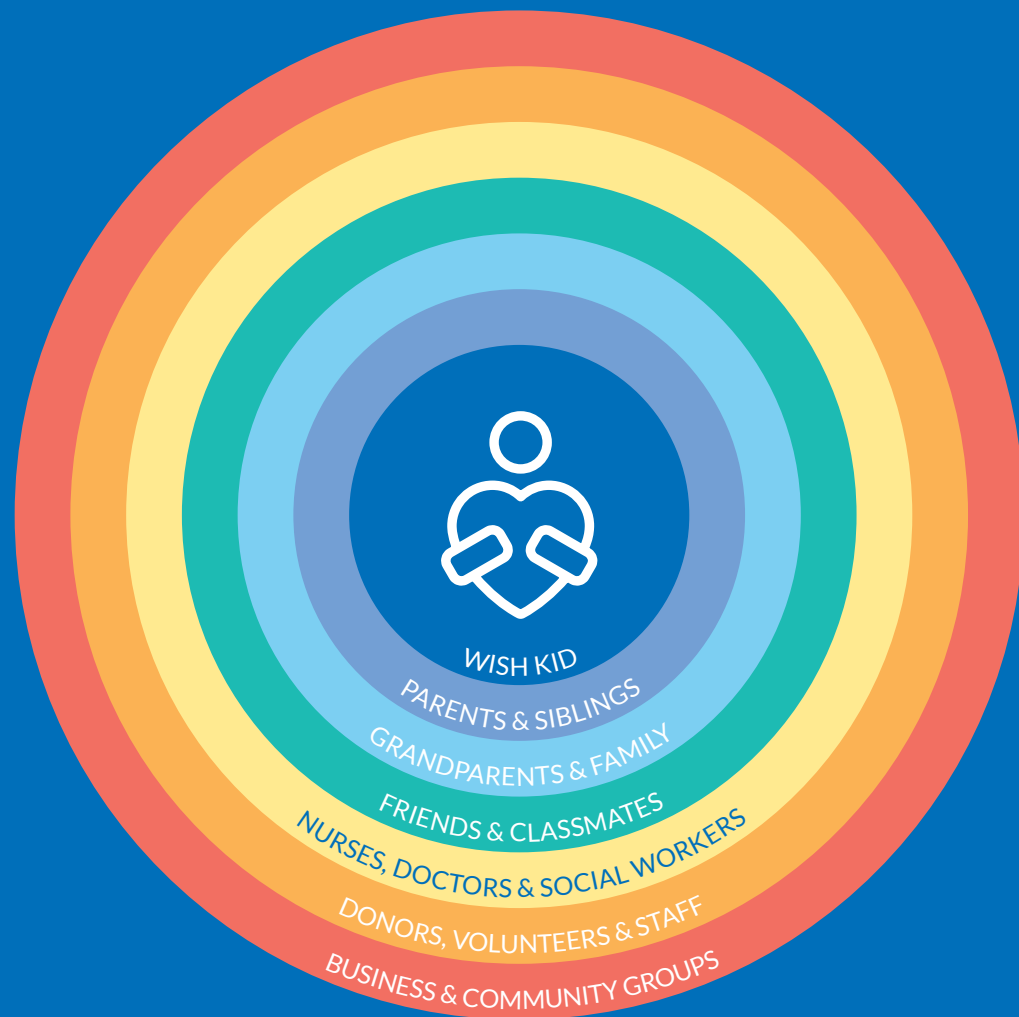

Meaghan Stovel McKnight
Chief Executive Officer

a wish is more than a wish

It's a powerful psychological intervention that strengthens not only the children and parents facing critical illness but everyone connected to that child.



Thank you for helping to create a circle of care around every wish child and their family throughout 2023.



Wishes create *connection*, inspire *imagination*, and empower *action* for hundreds of thousands of Canadians

a wish is more than a moment

It's a carefully curated journey that brings a child's dream alive. From the start of the wish experience to the fulfillment of the wish and long afterwards, children and families move from isolation and loneliness to **connection** and **comfort**; from fear and pain to **confidence** and **hope**; and from loss and sorrow to **love**, **joy** and **lasting memories**.



Nilly Hasanova, a pediatric nurse in Alberta, first heard about Make-A-Wish Canada from her patients. She could hear the excitement in their voices about their wishes, sometimes even years after the wish had come true. "I see the things that those kids go through. I think they just deserve everything good, so I wanted to be a part of their wish experience," she says.

As a wish-granting volunteer, Nilly helps enhance children's wishes by planning the wish reveal or wish celebration party with the child's friends

and family. She loves to make it extra special by incorporating the child's favourite colour, season, treat, or activity into the wish experience – details she learns as she gets to know the child and their family. "Wishes help families to relax, unwind and see their kids happy, even for a little bit," she says.

Nilly has also worked with local businesses in her community for fun additions. For a recent wish reveal, she reached out to a local creamery to provide ice cream for a backyard event. She laughs about how it's often the simple things that kids love most – the tasty treat ended up being the biggest hit at the party.

"Fun is good for you."

Volunteering has deepened Nilly's understanding of the stories she's heard over the years from her patients. "No wonder these kids talk about their wishes for years. No wonder they invite us back for their parties or graduations. It speaks volumes about how much these wishes are appreciated."

each step of the wish journey builds a lasting memory

Each wish starts with a referral and creates lifelong positive effects on everyone involved, reducing the trauma of serious illness, and even improving a child's medical outcome.



"Your donation doesn't just go towards one event. For every dollar you give, you're creating healing, positivity, and wellness for children for years to come."

*Nilly Hasanova, RN
Make-A-Wish Canada volunteer*

a wish makes a lasting impact

90%

OF WISH PARENTS SAID:

- a wish is a necessary part of a child's medical treatment journey
- the wish experience gave their child a better chance of surviving their critical illness
- the wish improved their family's well-being
- their child's emotional well-being improved through the wish experience

90%

OF WISH KID ALUMNI SAID:

- their wish improved their overall quality of life
- their wish improved their well-being
- their wish made them feel more joyful
- they felt more hopeful for their future after their wish

90%

OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS SAID:

- a wish experience improves a child's emotional well-being including alleviating feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, depression and loneliness

95%

OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS SAID:

- a wish experience improves a child's physical well-being and gives them strength to fight their critical illness

100%

OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS SAID:

- the wish experience improves the child's overall quality of life and is a turning point in a child's treatment
- the experience improved their own emotional well-being, relationships with families, and had a positive impact on their work



holding on to joy

Becoming a member of Make-A-Wish Canada's Medical Advisory Committee was a natural extension of Dr. Heather Hodgson-Viden's work as a pediatric palliative care physician. Based in Saskatchewan, she takes care of children with life-threatening and life-limiting illnesses.

"My focus is on quality of life. Children's wishes have always been a part of my treatment plans — I try to make sure that every child I see has applied, been approved, and has gotten their wish," Dr. Hodgson-Viden says. "Even just discussing a wish, you can see a bit of hope in families. It's really amazing to be involved in that process."



Dr. Heather Hodgson-Viden



The Medical Advisory Committee, a group of healthcare professionals with a wide range of subspecialties from across Canada, advise Make-A-Wish Canada on the application of the organization's High Risk, Life Threatening Principles which guide medical qualification for a wish. "Sometimes applications don't technically meet the criteria, but they do have a life-threatening or life-limiting illness," Dr. Hodgson-Viden explains. "We discuss whether they qualify for a wish and we're able to expand our criteria based on that."

"Even in death, or getting close to death, families come back to the wish. They think about the joy it brought them. It's something positive for them to hold on to."

The impact of this kind of advocacy is never lost on Dr. Hodgson-Viden. "With some families and some children, it's talking about how we're going to make end-of-life the best we can," she says.

Reflecting on recent patients' wish experiences, she describes a meeting she had with a kookum (grandmother in Nêhiyawêwin) who was caring for her sick grandchild. When Dr. Hodgson-Viden connected the family with Make-A-Wish Canada, "she couldn't believe this was happening," Dr. Hodgson-Viden says, adding that the family had never left the province before and had already packed their bags in anticipation.

Another family wasn't sure their child, whose health was deteriorating quickly, would make his wish trip. "Even if they're declining before their wish trip, kids always seem to be so much better for that short period of time," Dr. Hodgson-Viden believes. "We got him there and he did amazing. We got him back to the hospital, and let me tell you, he talked about his wish even to his last breath."



covering Canada in wishes

In 2023, Make-A-Wish Canada's generous supporters unleashed 1,389 wish kids' imaginations, giving families the opportunity to build long-lasting memories and strengthening connections in communities across Canada.

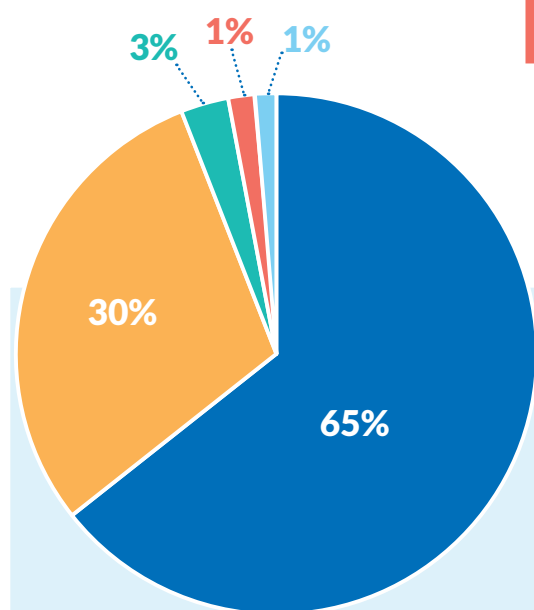

thanks to our supporters, we grew wishes by **44.1%** from 2022

Canada total
1,389 wishes

western region
491 wishes

central region
514 wishes

eastern region
384 wishes



types of wishes

- To Go
- To Have
- To Meet
- To Be
- To Give

what types of wishes did children ask for last year?

40th ANNIVERSARY wishTRIP

2023 was Make-A-Wish Canada's 40th anniversary and we celebrated by delivering our largest wish ever: our **40th Anniversary Wish Trip**. Staff, volunteers, and partners joined together to plan and execute a once-in-a-lifetime trip for 40 wish families to travel to Walt Disney World® Resort in Florida in July.

The trip created an opportunity for wish families from across the country to have a shared experience with others who have faced similar challenges with childhood critical illness, building a stronger wish community of support for years to come.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our partners*, with special recognition to our Diamond Sponsors:

WestJet WestJet generously donated a chartered 737 aircraft, and engaged their ground and in-flight crew to deliver an unforgettable travel experience.

Blue Cross provided comprehensive travel insurance so that each family could enjoy a worry-free vacation. They also hosted a pre-flight departure lounge as families gathered in Toronto to begin their group wish trip.

Sofina Foods' employees rallied together through their annual Dream Builders' Campaign and donated an additional \$150,000 to help make this trip possible.



Members of the 501st Legion brought some magic to our wish kids



Scan this QR code to watch the highlight video or see more at <https://makeawish.ca/wishtrip>



*Make-A-Wish Canada wishes to thank all of our 40th anniversary trip sponsors - please see page 30 for a full list.

★ a wish brings a good surprise



I wish to go to the Walt Disney World® Resort

Jacob, 9
leukemia

“I met new people that experienced the same thing as me. And it was just fun when everyone’s together.”

Jacob

When Jacob was first diagnosed with leukemia, his dad Abu says the family faced a lot of surprises. First it was the call from the doctor to rush to the office. Then it was embarking on Jacob’s extensive treatment plan.

“It was a journey, and we did not fully understand what was going on,” Abu says.

Finding out about Make-A-Wish Canada was the first “good” surprise the family experienced. It made them feel supported. “I was feeling, ‘okay, somebody is caring about the kids going through these challenging diseases and supporting the families.’”

The family was given yet another good surprise when they were invited to join Make-A-Wish Canada’s historic 40th anniversary trip to Walt Disney World® Resort. “I was excited. I started to pack right away,” Jacob says.



“Our [wish trip] was a great kind of healing.”

Abu, Jacob’s father

Jacob, his parents, and his two sisters joined 39 other families on a trip of a lifetime. At one theme park, Jacob got to travel around the world visiting different destinations. At others, he saw animals and sea creatures. One of his favourite memories, he says, was watching a fireworks show behind a castle with his family.

Since their return, Abu has seen big changes in Jacob. He says he is more confident and now has big plans for his future, including doing a lot more travelling.

“These kids are going through really challenging scenarios and it can be highly traumatic. That creates painful memories. [Wishes] make them feel like someone is taking care of them. It’s a dream come true. It changes them psychologically, creates a lot of healing, and gives them optimism,” Abu says.



Dale Ling has been the face of Make-A-Wish Canada in Truro, Nova Scotia, helping wishes come true for over 20 years.



“Every dollar can help give a child and their family memories that will last a lifetime.”

Dale Ling

Make-A-Wish Canada volunteer and fundraiser



“[Wish kids] go through so much. A wish lets them break away from their day-to-day treatment and have fun. They are not a patient; they can forget about the medical stuff and become a regular kid again, doing everything they should be doing at that age. When they look back at their treatment, a wish can take away some of the dark memories and bring a bit of light.”

Holly Paynter, BScN, RN

*Nurse Coordinator, Pediatric Day Unit
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Charlottetown*



finding freedom with a wish

Melodie noticed Valentin's walking issues early on, and after knocking on many doctors' doors and through several evolving diagnoses, he was finally diagnosed with Friedreich's Ataxia, a rare progressive neuromuscular disorder.

"Valentin went from a running and climbing child who used to bike and hike and backpack with us, to us carrying him, to not being physically able to do very much. Now, at 15, he's using a wheelchair," Melodie explains. "We basically live in the hospital and know doctors in every department."

Valentin's disorder affected him physically and strained his mental health. He can be withdrawn and sometimes struggles to express his needs. It's been hard for him to make friends and find the independence that all teens crave.

When Melodie and Valentin first found out that he would be eligible for a wish, Valentin felt discouraged. When he thought about options like going on a trip, he only saw the limitations he would face.

Then Melodie asked Valentin whether he'd be interested in an adaptive trike, which would allow him to get back on a bike. "I started to realize what this wish could do for us as a family. I knew that it was going to be good."

Valentin did some research and selected the model he wanted: a folding, e-assist fat trike. "Once Valentin decided on his wish, he became very determined," Melodie remembers. On the day they picked up the trike he was "grinning from ear to ear," which Melodie hadn't seen in a long time.

"In that moment, he was free."

Melodie, Valentin's mother

Melodie asked if he wanted them to go with him on his first run and he said "No, I want to go by myself." The next day Valentin invited a friend over and he and his twin brother went out for a ride together - and he hasn't stopped since.

"As an active western Canadian family, now we can include him in daily and weekly activities. We've taken family trips to Banff and Canmore and found accessible trails he can ride. He loves it," Melodie says.

In addition to much needed family time, Melodie says that the trike has transformed Valentin's health. Once resistant to physical therapy, he's now exercising four times a week and "is stronger in his upper body than his twin brother."

After spending many winters stuck indoors, Valentin recently decided to take the trike out in the snow. While he was doing joy spins on a trail, a herd of elk appeared from the woods and ran around him. "In that moment, he was free," Melodie says.



"A wish can have an immense impact on a child and the entire family. I've often used wishes to improve a child's mental health. For many, it is a reward to focus on during tough treatments; for others, it is making memories to look back on during challenging times. The wish is part of my therapeutic tool kit alongside medications, and part of a supportive care plan for the children and teens I treat."

Dr. Rod Rassekh

*Clinical Associate Professor
BC Children's Hospital*

*Make-A-Wish Canada Medical Advisory
Committee Member*



"To Make-A-Wish Canada donors, thank you. You provided an opportunity for my child to gain independence and bring joy back into his life."



Inspired by volunteers who helped her when she was a child facing adversity, Samantha Richardson has so far, helped make more than 50 wishes come true in BC.

"We have a certain amount of time on Earth, and when we're gone, what's really going to matter is how we affected people."



*Samantha Richardson
Make-A-Wish Canada volunteer*



I wish to have an adaptive bike

Valentin, 15
progressive neuromuscular disorder

rebuilding family bonds with a wish



When eight-year-old Olivia went to bed one November night in 2020, her mom Renee never expected her to wake up the next morning having turned yellow.

It took four scary months of tests to have Olivia diagnosed with severe aplastic anemia, which means that Olivia's bone marrow does not make enough blood cells for her body.

"She was living on other people's blood because her body was not producing any at all," Renee said. In 2021 alone, Olivia spent 269 days in the hospital and an additional 60 days in a clinic receiving blood transfusions.

A stem cell transplant was Olivia's second line of treatment but unfortunately it led to chronic kidney disease. While she's currently stable, Olivia is in kidney failure and will one day need a transplant.

"It was the best seven days we've ever had in our lives."

Renee, Olivia's mother



Sanju Vashist joined Make-A-Wish Canada as a volunteer in 2018. He appreciates the accountability and transparency of the organization.

"I did a lot of research [and found that Make-A-Wish Canada] was doing a lot of great things. There was a lot of accountability, and great reports about them in the volunteer community."



*Sanju Vashist
Make-A-Wish Canada volunteer*

"It's far from over," Renee explains. "But she's way better than she was, because at one point there was a chance she wasn't going to be here."

During Olivia's health journey, her team referred the family to Make-A-Wish Canada. Renee and her husband Steve started talking to Olivia about her wish to give her something to look forward to.

At first, Olivia dreamed up a big party with all her family and friends. "It was a conversation she looked forward to every day," Renee says. As COVID travel restrictions began to lift, and with Olivia a few years older, a new wish idea emerged. She wanted to meet SpongeBob at Nickelodeon.

Olivia's detailed planning didn't go to waste. Renee pulled her notes from those months in the hospital and, with the help of family, friends and a Make-A-Wish Canada reveal box, incorporated them into the wish reveal party.

"We turned our whole garage into SpongeBob's underwater lair. We had balloon arches and jumping castles and everything Olivia had dreamed about," Renee says.

During the trip, which coincided with her 11th birthday, Olivia and her family went horseback riding, zip-lining, and met SpongeBob and other Nickelodeon characters.

"Being medical parents isn't easy. Being able to go on a trip together and to rebuild that bond and to watch the kids be kids, we needed that," says Renee. "We were celebrating how far we've come. It was a good reset to now continue the journey."

"The wish trip was the piece of normal we needed."



"Hope and optimism have been shown in experiments to decrease cortisol levels. If you decrease cortisol, you decrease stress and improve sleep. They've also been shown to increase the child's production of endogenous opioids, which decreases pain and anxiety. These are physiologically real."

Dr. Jeremy Friedman

*Associate Pediatrician-in-Chief
Chair, Department of Pediatrics*

*Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto
Make-A-Wish Canada Medical Advisory Committee Member*

*I wish to meet
Sponge Bob at
Nickelodeon*

*Olivia, 11
blood disorder*





a focus on hope



I wish to meet my favorite princesses
Annabelle, 8
leukemia

The first sign that something was wrong with her daughter was when Caroline noticed small blood spots under three-year-old Annabelle's skin and that she was acting unusually tired and irritable. After an emergency room visit, Annabelle was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

Annabelle was hospitalized for 30 days and, for the next two years, the family regularly traveled three hours from their home in Quebec for chemotherapy treatments.

"The disease put our life on hold," Caroline says, and affected everyone, including Annabelle's younger brother, Mathis, who accompanied the family on these journeys. "It was not easy for him."

When Annabelle found out that she was eligible for a wish through Make-A-Wish Canada, "she smiled again," Caroline says.

Annabelle's wish was to go to a theme park in Florida to meet her favourite characters from the movies and songs that had accompanied her during the most difficult times of her illness.

"The wish had an immediate effect on us by offering us hope. On a daily basis, it allowed us to focus on something positive. It took us out of the whirlwind of her illness."



Annabelle's wish took longer than expected to be granted because of pandemic travel restrictions. Caroline says it came at the perfect time, just as Annabelle had reached five years of remission. "It was a wonderful way to close the loop," she says. The family had unforgettable moments on the wish trip.

The trip gave Annabelle and her brother time to bond, go on rides, meet movie characters, and get to know families who have been on similar health journeys.

"The wish was a true fairy tale. It's a memory we'll never forget."

Caroline, Annabelle's mother

Caroline believes that the wish helped Annabelle become more comfortable speaking about her illness. "Her wish allowed her to accept this difficult period and to talk about it more easily, since she can relate her cancer to something more positive."

The wish trip also had a positive impact on Mathis, Annabelle's brother. It gave him a sense of "equal footing," Caroline explains, having access to all of the same park experiences as his sister.

"The wish trip allowed us to make peace with the past and all of the challenges we faced since the diagnosis. Today, after five years of remission, cancer is behind us. Annabelle is in great shape and she has long hair – she's proud of that!"



Since Sharon started volunteering for Make-A-Wish Canada in 2017, she's learned how small actions can help make a wish come true.



"Every action that we take in life can change things a little bit at a time. That can make a huge difference."

Sharon Lim
Make-A-Wish Canada volunteer



"Make-A-Wish Canada referrals are so important, and have such a positive impact, that our Complex Care Service has made them part of our consultation templates. It's part of our checklist of things to discuss with the family: sleep, nutrition, other health concerns, and their wish."

Dr. Hema Patel
Director, Division of General Pediatrics,
Montreal Children's Hospital
Make-A-Wish Canada Medical
Advisory Committee Member

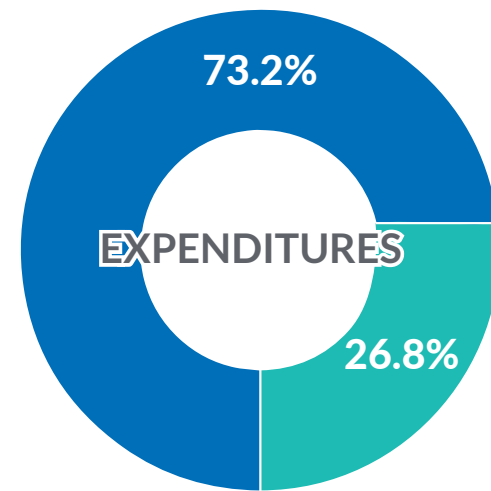
delivering results for children in 2023

Fiscal year 2023 was one of ambitious growth for Make-A-Wish Canada. We were able to add to our team while maintaining operational expenditures under budget and granting 1,389 wishes.

2023 marked the introduction of new fundraising programs including a new national signature community fundraising campaign called *Women for Wishes*, and our fully-digital *Wishes are Waiting* campaign. We also had significant growth in our *Trees of Joy* holiday program, *Golf for Wishes* events, and national corporate partnerships, all of which reflect our commitment to corporate engagement and community impact.

While we increased fundraising efforts, we also strengthened internal operations for greater efficiencies. Our focus on volunteers greatly expanded our capacity to grant wishes.

THANK YOU on behalf of the children and families we support from coast to coast! We are grateful for a growing supporter base and strong reserves to help us grant a growing number of wishes across the country. In 2023 we drew on our reserves to grant more wishes than ever, and our plan is to strategically draw on reserves as we continue to build the fundraising capacity to sustainably grow our wishes annually.



- wish delivery & administration
- fundraising

MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION OF CANADA STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year ended September 30, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
REVENUE:		
Donations and fundraising	\$ 22,421,614	\$ 19,817,526
Donations-in-kind	13,655,544	3,509,795
Bequests	3,589,249	3,062,841
Investment income (realized)	3,228,027	2,800,811
Other	12,524	57,164
	<u>42,906,958</u>	<u>29,248,137</u>
EXPENSES:		
Programs	33,702,218	15,265,577
Fundraising	13,377,120	11,190,801
General and administration	2,810,851	2,288,333
	<u>49,890,189</u>	<u>28,744,711</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses before the undernoted	(6,983,231)	503,426
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	(260,500)	(5,667,185)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ (7,243,731)</u>	<u>\$ (5,173,759)</u>

wishes by the numbers

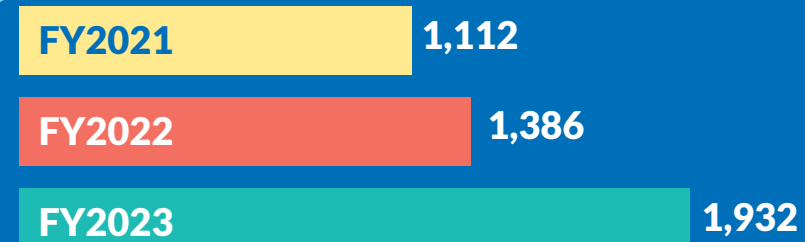
wishes granted year-over-year



4,045

Number of wishes waiting at completion of FY2023

wish referrals year-over-year



576

Number of communities where wishes were granted in FY2023

putting the 'fun' in fundraising!

In 2023, Make-A-Wish Canada and generous corporate partners, communities, and individuals held **106 events** – both 'first-party' (Make-A-Wish Canada-organized events held regionally or nationally) and 'third-party' (fundraisers organized by communities and individuals) raising **\$12,712,769, an increase of 38%** from 2022.

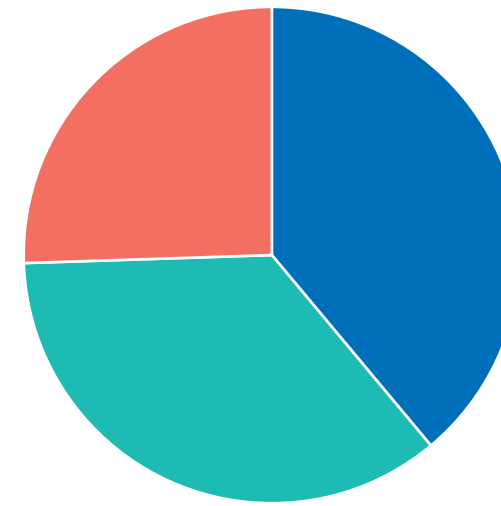
From golf tourneys to gala evenings, lemonade stands to holiday events, bike rides to truck pulls – community fundraising events generate excitement, build camaraderie, and are a deeply valued source of funds to make wishes come true.

Highlights:

- We've seen significant growth in fundraising drives across the country including new events in Make-A-Wish Canada chapters:
 - ◆ *Heroes Challenge* in Northern Alberta
 - ◆ *Trees of Joy* in Manitoba
 - ◆ *Pull for Wishes* in Southern Alberta
 - ◆ an expansion of *Wheels for Wishes* and *Golf for Wishes* in Ontario
- We engaged our Royal Canadian Navy partner in the *Run for Wishes* in PEI and Nova Scotia, and *Run the Rock* in Newfoundland.
- We rallied our partners and communities through third-party fundraising events like *Slo-Pitch for Kids* in B.C.
- We delivered our most successful *48-Hour Ride* in the event's 15 year history, raising over \$3 million and engaging over 2,800 riders in Quebec.



funds raised through first and third-party events (FY2023)



Eastern	\$4,948,501
Central	\$4,520,495
Western	\$3,243,773
Total	\$12,712,769

total donors and event participants (FY2023)

49,950 donors
(+36% from 2022)

5,837 participants
(+37% from 2022)

Thank you to all of our event partners and supporters who have helped us raise-critical funds to grant life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.



Heroes Challenge



Run the Rock



Wheels for Wishes



48-Hour Ride



Slo-Pitch for Kids



Pull for Wishes

giving to the community is in their jeans



Clothing retailer **Warehouse One**, based in Treaty One territory in Winnipeg, MB, and with 115 stores across Canada, is a strong advocate for Indigenous visibility. Warehouse One has raised funds specifically to support the wishes of Indigenous kids and families through a variety of fundraising initiatives. Throughout the year, they offer their customers the option to round up their bill and, during the holidays, to purchase a holiday gift box with the proceeds donated to Make-A-Wish Canada. As a dedicated partner, Warehouse One has raised more than \$1.77 million since 1996. Thank you!



spreading good news across the air waves

Top-rated Toronto radio station **boom 97.3** and its well-known morning show host Stu Jeffries are long-time supporters of Make-A-Wish Canada. Their daily call-in contest, the Thousand Dollar Minute (also known as the Make-A-Wish Minute), gives contestants the chance to answer rapid-fire trivia questions and win cash. The contest is a fundraiser for Make-A-Wish Canada, with boom 97.3 and their listeners regularly donating their winnings. Jeffries also took part in the 40th anniversary wish trip, acting as CFO (Chief Fun Officer) for the event. Boom 97.3 culminates each year with a holiday campaign that, since its inception, has raised close to \$3.5 million dollars towards children's wishes. Thank you to boom 97.3 and Stu Jeffries for their ongoing and enthusiastic support.



pedal power builds community

Many people across Canada know **Desjardins** for their financial and insurance services. As a cooperative financial group, they have deep roots in the communities they serve and contribute significantly to community development. For 15 years, Desjardins has partnered with Make-A-Wish Canada in support of the 48-Hour Ride, which takes place each year at Montreal's Mirabel International Airport. In 2023, Desjardins entered 83 teams in the event and raised \$396,489 – an impressive result built on a foundation of community commitment. We appreciate Desjardins ongoing commitment and support!



leaving a legacy the missing tim fund

Bob and Julie Hamilton's teenage daughter Maggie was diagnosed with brain cancer in 1997. After a series of surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation, Maggie went into remission in 1999. But just after, they lost their son Tim to a tragic workplace accident. Knowing the pain of losing one child and of watching another face and survive a critical illness, Bob and Julie established the Missing Tim Endowment Fund. Now valued at more than \$1 million, it has granted 33 wishes for children and promises to grant many more – a deeply meaningful tribute to Bob and Julie's own children and a deeply valued support to many other families like theirs, for which we are truly grateful.



long-time fundraiser bears fruit for Make-A-Wish

Florence Peach – known as “Mudder” (mother) in her town of just 949 people in Newfoundland – has been inspiring her community to raise funds for Make-A-Wish for over 40 years. To date, Mudder and her family, friends and neighbours have raised an incredible \$1.3 million towards granting wish experiences to kids. We are humbled by and grateful for the dedication, commitment and passion of community fundraisers like Florence.



WOMEN for WISHES

Women for Wishes is a new fundraising program designed to inspire and engage philanthropic women to donate or raise \$10,000 each to benefit Make-A-Wish Canada.

During the inaugural six-month campaign, which ran from April through September 2023, 135 participants raised over \$1 million.



Nicole from Saskatchewan raised over \$76K



Debra from British Columbia raised \$45K



Two wish kids, Maddy (16) and Cloey (13), raised almost \$10,000 each



Wish mom Karen Cunningham knows first-hand the positive impact that Make-A-Wish Canada brings to families with children facing critical illnesses. Her eight-year-old son, Joel, was diagnosed with leukemia when he was just four years old. Joel was granted his wish in January 2023, when his family enjoyed a magical week at Give The Kids The World Village in Florida.

Karen describes their trip as a priceless experience after years of uncertainty, trauma and negativity. "Make-A-Wish does things in a way that families could never do on their own, whether it is due to affordability or that you just wouldn't realistically be able to plan or access the resources to make it happen, like with celebrity meet and greets," said Karen.

Having seen what the granting of a wish meant for her family, Karen wanted to help make a difference for others facing difficult health situations. That's why she took part in the first-ever Make-A-Wish Canada Women for Wishes campaign, with her personal aim to raise \$10,000.

"The anticipation of the wish, and the fulfillment of the wish itself, gives [kids] something to hold on to," Karen said. "Having a child with a serious illness impacts the entire family. Make-A-Wish recognizes that and makes it an experience for everyone."

Karen exceeded her Women for Wishes goal, raising over \$13,000 during the campaign. We are so thrilled for Joel that his wish came true, and we are grateful to Karen for her desire to help grant wishes for other kids just like her son.

To learn more about Women for Wishes or to sign up for our 2024 campaign, please go to womenforwishes.ca.

Trees of Joy began in Ontario in 2016 as an idea brought to life thanks to our current national board chair, Shaun Usmar, and his wife Margot. Since the inaugural event in which eight wish families joined together to delight in the magic of holiday trees decorated in themes of the wish kids' choosing, Trees of Joy has taken root across Canada.

In the 2023 holiday season, we received support from 126 corporate and sponsor teams, and we welcomed 137 wish families at seven events held from coast to coast and raised more than \$1 million to fund wishes for children. Plans are underway to make Trees of Joy 2024 even bigger!



thank you!

We are deeply grateful for the generous contributions and participation of countless donors and partners who make Trees of Joy such a success.

TREES OF JOY

40th anniversary wish trip partners

The unforgettable experience of the 40th anniversary wish trip to Orlando in the summer of 2023 was made possible by Diamond Sponsors Blue Cross of Canada, Sofina Foods, and WestJet, along with 21 Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze and Destination-level sponsors who are supporting our mission to transform lives through the granting of wishes. Thanks to these contributing partners, the trip went smoothly, brought great joy to wish kids and their families, and helped build memories that will last a lifetime.

diamond sponsors



platinum sponsors



gold sponsors



silver sponsors



bronze sponsors



destination sponsors



thank you!

your service makes us stronger

As a national organization with local offices in communities across Canada, we rely on a network of leaders and advisors who volunteer their time and talents to ensure we are operating with the highest standards and best practices of care. This includes financial and governance direction; medical and health oversight and liaison with the medical community; and providing targeted support for operational and organizational strength at a local, regional, and national level. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the Make-A-Wish Canada mission and supported wish kids and their families this year.

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I wish to go to Alberta

Weston, 8
leukemia



Make-A-Wish®

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Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Canada
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Let's make more life-changing wishes come true!
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