



LOCAL WISHES LASTING IMPACT

2025 Ontario Impact Report

With Gratitude: A Letter to You

On behalf of Make-A-Wish® Canada, thank you for the generosity and belief that make our work possible. Your support continues to deliver meaningful impact for children with critical illness and their families across Ontario.

Children facing critical illness endure far more than physical symptoms; they experience prolonged uncertainty, fear, and emotional strain. A wish intervenes at a pivotal moment, providing more than joy or distraction. Wishes help restore hope, strengthen resilience, and support emotional well-being at a time when it is needed most. **Wishes Are Medicine.**

As a supporter in Ontario, you are an essential part of this impact. This report highlights how your generosity translates into measurable outcomes and real experiences for children in your community – from key statistics and insights to stories that reflect the depth of change a wish can create.

Your commitment ensures that more children can access this critical intervention when they need it most. As wish mom, Jessie, shared: “I truly felt [my daughter] had given up on her fight. Experiencing her wish was a breath of fresh air, and post-wish she is happier, more content, and has regained her willingness to endure medical procedures along with a happy spirit that shines so brightly. Having her personality restored is the biggest win I could have ever asked for.”

Thank you for believing in the power of a wish and for helping deliver hope, strength, and healing to wish kids and families across Ontario.

With sincere appreciation,



Meaghan Stovel McKnight
Chief Executive Officer
Make-A-Wish Canada



Karen Shaver
Vice President Mission
Make-A-Wish Canada

ABOUT MAKE-A-WISH CANADA – Make-A-Wish Canada creates life-changing wishes for children diagnosed with critical illnesses. **Wishes Are Medicine** – a vital part of a child’s medical journey that helps restore strength, hope, and resilience. Research shows that prescribed wishes can improve adherence to treatment, reduce emergency room visits, and deliver lasting health benefits.

Make-A-Wish Canada is part of the world’s leading children’s wish-granting organization, serving children in communities across Canada and in 50 countries worldwide. Over the past 43 years, Make-A-Wish Canada has granted more than 40,000 wishes, including 1,835 last year alone.

(On the cover: **Navy, 3**, I wish to go to my favourite theme park)

Not All Medicine Comes in a Bottle

Wishes Are Medicine

Every day across Canada, children face critical illnesses no child should have to endure. In these moments, hope, strength and resilience matter more than ever. With your support, they receive something research shows is a powerful part of their care: a wish prescription that supports their medical journey and reminds them they are so much more than their diagnosis.



“Having a wish to look forward to definitely helped Millie get through her treatments. When she felt like she couldn’t handle another poke or IV, we reminded her of seeing dolphins soon and she would muster up her strength.”

Pamela, Millie’s mom

[Click to watch Millie’s story](#)



95% of surveyed doctors believe wishes improve health outcomes.

Patients who received a wish reduced their likelihood of using the emergency room by half.

95% of surveyed medical providers observed that wishes gave children strength to fight their critical illness.

Medical Advisory Committee



“Wishes are essential. They support a child’s recovery and overall health and change how children move through treatment, giving them hope and something to focus on beyond their medical condition.”

Dr. Heather Hodgson-Viden, Pediatrician, Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital
Make-A-Wish Canada Medical Advisory Committee

[Click to learn more from Dr. Hodgson-Viden](#)



A Resilient Palm, A Healing Wish – Leena’s Wish

Four-year-old Leena is a lively little girl who loves to sing and play make-believe with her mom and dad. Her name, meaning “young palm tree,” was inspired by warm climates, sunshine, palm trees and beaches, images her parents associate with paradise.

While full of spirit, Leena has faced more health challenges than most children her age. She was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer at just 19 months old, beginning a treatment journey that would last more than a year and a half. What first appeared to be a routine illness quickly became a hospital admission the family never expected. Leena underwent five rounds of chemotherapy, twelve rounds of radiation, eight rounds of immunotherapy, surgery, stem cell transplants and more.

“Instead of taking our daughter to birthday parties, park playdates and exploring the world making memories, we were living a very isolated life because treatment made her immunocompromised,” her family recalled. “We never imagined this is what our life would look like.”

During that time, a close family friend shared a message that would become a source of strength. “During a hurricane, the palm tree bends until it’s parallel to the ground. When the storm passes, it rises back up, standing tall. The palm tree is the epitome of resilience.” Leena’s parents often reread those words and, with every hospital stay, drew a palm tree on the window, a reminder to look toward brighter days for their little palm.



Now free from IV machines and tubes, Leena is healthier and happier than ever. She recently enjoyed a wish trip to her favourite theme park, where she met her favourite princess, whom Leena affectionately calls “Punzle.” She received her very own princess wig, twirled and sang, and even hugged her favourite mouse.

“Watching Leena experience such immense joy healed a part of us,” her family shared. “These memories are priceless and give us hope and happiness. She is forever our resilient palm.”

I wish to go to my favourite theme park

Leena, 4
cancer



Sun, Smiles, and Strength – Lincoln’s Wish

I wish to go to Cancun

Lincoln, 9
nervous system disorder

Nine-year-old Lincoln is a sweet and easygoing boy whose smile shines brightest when he’s outdoors or spending time with his family. Despite the many challenges he faces, Lincoln fills his home with joy, reminding his family every day what courage and perseverance look like.

Lincoln’s medical journey began at eight months old, when he experienced infantile spasms. He was later diagnosed with a nervous system disorder. “We were devastated and in shock.

We felt lost, confused and sad. We had never heard of this disorder before, and the thought of our son having it scared us immensely. We knew our lives would never be the same,” said his parents.

Since his diagnosis, Lincoln has undergone two surgeries, multiple medication trials, and the keto diet through a local children’s hospital. Despite these efforts, Lincoln lives with refractory epilepsy, experiencing seizures that are difficult to control. “We are always on edge, hoping for Lincoln to be seizure free. But often, his seizures return, no matter the treatments,” said his parents.

This past March, Lincoln spent two weeks in the hospital in status epilepticus, a life-threatening condition where his seizures would not stop. “We thought we were going to lose him,” his parents said. After receiving a tremendous amount of seizure rescue medication, Lincoln slept for days and had to relearn how to sit, eat, and walk.

Through it all, Lincoln’s bright spirit has never wavered. His school even presented him with the Perseverance Award for facing so many obstacles with strength and resilience. To his family, he is not only a joy but also their greatest source of inspiration. “Lincoln keeps us very busy with his medical needs and constant care, but he means the world to us,” they shared.

Lincoln’s wish to go to Cancun gave his family a chance to step away from medical challenges and simply enjoy being together. “It was a delightful and unforgettable experience, and we’ll cherish the memories for years to come,” said his parents. “Our heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone at Make-A-Wish for everything you have done for our special sweet boy, Lincoln.”



Wishes by the Numbers in Ontario

617

Wishes granted in Ontario in FY25

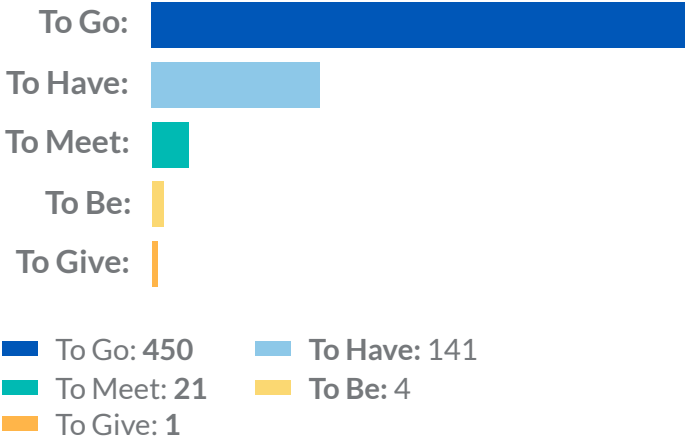
1,835

Wishes granted in Canada in FY25

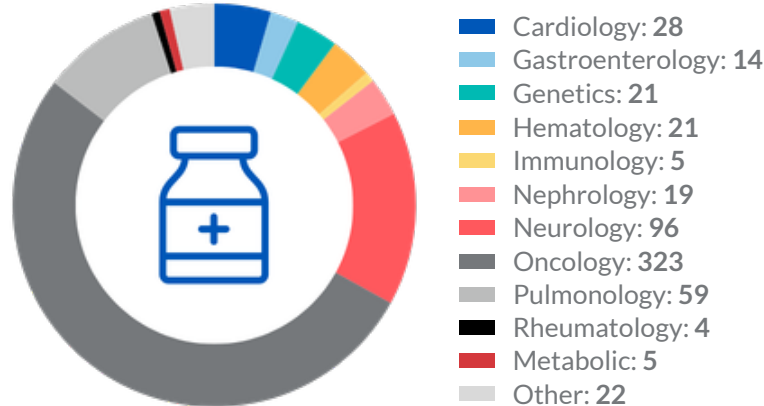
202

Communities wishes were granted in Ontario in FY25

Wishes by type in Ontario: 617



Wishes by Illness in Ontario:



Wish Leadership

Celebrating those who guide, inspire, and support wishes across Ontario.

STARboard unites wish alumni ages 13 to 18 who volunteer to be a voice for wish children. Their advice, event support, and ambassador work help Make-A-Wish Canada better respond to the needs of wish families across the country.

Meet Your STARboard Member: Hannah

“Hello, my name is Hannah, and I’m 13. When I was 11, I was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia after weeks of feeling exhausted and unwell. Treatment was intense, including chemotherapy, radiation, surgeries, medications and eventually a bone marrow transplant donated by my younger brother. I faced complications like neuropathy, steroid-induced diabetes, anaphylaxis and appendicitis, but with the support of my family and nurses, I kept going. Today, I’m in remission.

For my wish, I wanted to do something we could enjoy as a family because they were with me through it all. I chose to go to my favourite theme park, and staying at Give Kids The World made it even more special. The special passes and time with my mom, dad, and brother made it magical and brought us even closer together. That memory inspired me to join the STARboard. I’m excited to give back, be a voice for other wish kids, and help more children experience the same joy and hope that changed my life.”



Hannah
STARboard Member

Every 2 hours...

a child in Canada is diagnosed with a critical illness

3,531

Wishes Are Waiting

in Canada as of October 1, 2025

736 referrals

were received in Ontario in FY25

Want to Learn More?

Click to view our FY25 Annual Impact Report.

Chapter Advisory Board

Ontario’s Chapter Advisory Board (CAB) supports Make-A-Wish in delivering fundraising and wish-granting efforts across the province. We are deeply grateful to the volunteers who share their expertise, time, and leadership.



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|---------------------------|------------------|
| Dave Lacey (Chair) | Jane Chan |
| Christine Crump | Jim Scott |
| David Henry | Matthew Harrison |
| Dennis Fortnum | Nadia Niccoli |
| Dervilla Kelly | Neel Bungaroo |
| James MacQueen | Patrick Robert |

Wish Granting Excellence

Generosity takes many forms. Here's just a few examples of how supporters in Ontario are helping grant life-changing wishes.

Orin Reid Memorial Golf Tournament

For the past several years, Reid's Heritage Homes has supported Make-A-Wish Canada through the Orin Reid Memorial Golf Tournament. In 2025, the event raised \$75,000, surpassing its goal of \$50,000, bringing their total contribution to over \$190,000 since 2021. Their dedication helps provide hope, strength, and unforgettable moments for wish children and their families.



Trees of Joy Ontario

In 2025, Trees of Joy spread joy across Toronto and made its debut in London, touching the lives of 96 wish children and their families and raising over \$1 million province-wide. Personalized trees from corporate and community partners brought warmth, magic, and celebration to every child.



Temerty Foundation

In honour of Melissa Temerty, her family has pledged \$125,000 to Make-A-Wish Canada. In loving memory of their cherished daughter and sister – who supported Make-A-Wish throughout her lifetime – Melissa's family established this gift to help ensure that more children and families can experience the transformative power of a wish during their most challenging times.



Digital Extremes

Digital Extremes deepened its partnership with Make-A-Wish Canada at TennoCon 2025, celebrating wish child James' voice acting journey. They donated \$100,000, hosted a Make-A-Wish booth, and offered an exclusive Ollie Floor plush – all proceeds supporting life-changing wishes. James and his family shared autographs and moments of joy with attendees, creating unforgettable experiences.



Wheels 4 Wishes

For 35 years, Dave Lacey, Jeff Pabst, and the Ontario racing community have supported Make-A-Wish Canada through Wheels 4 Wishes. In 2025, the ride-along raised \$322,000, giving 40 wish families a day full of laughter, excitement, and memorable moments on the racetrack, fueled by community generosity.



Port Stanley Christmas Lights

Dennis and Raymie Jewell continue to brighten the holiday season with their Port Stanley Christmas Lights display. In December, their show raised over \$14,000, contributing to a total of \$139,771 since 2010. Their ongoing generosity and creativity bring joy and hope to children and families across the community, inspiring others to give back.



Ways to Give

Click to learn more about the many ways to support our mission.



Celebration & Recognition

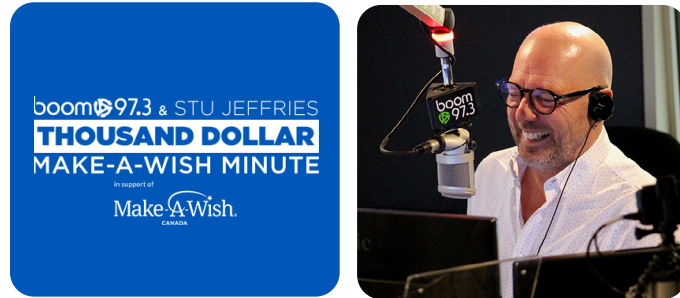
Broadcasting Hope

A decade of healing wishes with boom 97.3

For ten years, Stu Jeffries and the boom 97.3 listening community have shown unwavering support for Make-A-Wish Canada, raising funds to deliver life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. In December 2024, Stu Jeffries' Thousand Dollar Make-A-Wish Minute raised \$650,000, a milestone made possible by listeners, partners and supporters who donated winnings, gifts and their time, alongside generous matching contributions.

Building on this momentum, boom 97.3 also launched the first-ever World Wish Month 50/50 lottery, generating more than \$79,000 to grant even more wishes. These experiences give children moments of joy, strength and confidence during treatment, helping them stay engaged, feel resilient and experience positive emotional and physical benefits.

Through a decade of partnership, boom 97.3 and its listeners have shown how community support can transform lives, giving children and families hope when it matters most. Their dedication demonstrates that *Wishes Are Medicine*.



Number of Active Volunteers in Ontario: 511



Dave Lacey
Provincial Volunteer
of the Year



Lata Wadhvani
Rookie of the Year



boom 97.3, \$1000
Make-A-Wish Minute
Community Impact Award

Thank You for Making a Difference

Click to join our volunteer team.



What Healing Looks Like

Thanks to your support vital wish prescriptions were filled for kids like...



I wish to go to my favourite theme park
Ayia, 8
nervous system disorder



I wish to go to a tropical destination
Benjamin, 6
leukemia



I wish to go to my favourite theme park
Bethany, 10
cancer



I wish to go to the Dominican Republic
Treyce, 11
leukemia



I wish to go to my favourite theme park
Mason, 12
liver disorder



I wish to experience freedom and joy
Misha & Zoey, 5
autoimmia



*I wish to go to my
favourite theme park*

Izabelle, 10
leukemia

Invest in Hope






A gift of publicly traded securities is a meaningful way to help grant life-changing wishes for children facing critical illness.

You may eliminate capital gains tax and receive a charitable receipt for the full value — while granting more wishes across our province.

Learn how you can invest in hope:
makeawish.ca/donate-securities

Imagine Accreditation

Accredited under Imagine Canada's National Standards Program, Make-A-Wish Canada ensures that every donor gift is managed responsibly to create meaningful impact.

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