

Dream Chronicles

MAY 2022, ISSUE 4
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A WISH COME TRUE™



Letter from Colleen Duffy, Board Chair

I have always loved the Spring. It is a sign of new beginnings and growth, and that is exactly what is needed in this world. It has been so exciting to watch the incredible journey of A Wish Come True as the organization continues to plant seeds for growth to meet the many needs of our Wish Families.

This is a special year, as we look back and celebrate 40 years of granting Wishes and helping families that are on a complicated and exhausting journey as they deal with the trauma from having a child diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Close to 1,700 children have been granted an extraordinary Wish over these 40 years. The "Wish" has brought hope and happiness during a challenging time. About 80% of the Wishes are to visit Florida to experience the parks. The biggest surprise is when they stay at Give Kids the World. The Wish Child and their family are treated like royalty, and it truly is an experience of a lifetime. Granting Wishes will always be at the core of what we do.

I am also excited to see us help our Wish Families before, during and after the Wish is granted. I remember the days when my own daughter Meghan was in the hospital with cancer. I was lucky enough to have an incredible support system with family and friends, but we see many of our Wish Families struggling financially, emotionally, and physically as they walk the path on this difficult journey. A Wish Come True has recognized the need. We do more than Wish Granting. We have become an integral part of their lives as we help connect them to the resources they need, and sometimes it is simply to be here to listen.

As we look back to celebrate what we have done, we also look forward to growing A Wish Come True to help support more Wish Families. You will hear more about that soon, but for now, we gear up to celebrate our 40th Anniversary at our special Gala on October 8th and a Wish Family Reunion on October 9th. Our goal is to raise \$400,000 through our 40 for 40 Campaign to help fund 40 Wishes and provide wrap around services to 40 families.

We cannot thank our volunteers, donors, board, and staff enough. Thank you for making dreams come true over these 40 years.

Many thanks,

Colleen Duffy
Board Chair

Message from our Executive Director



Have you ever wondered why the word "change" causes so much stress in our lives? It is something we have all had to experience over the last two years. The pandemic changed our ability to connect, communicate, work, touch and to keep our own energy and spirit positive so we can influence others. It has not been easy for anyone.

But I immediately think of our Wish Families. Imagine how their life "changes" when they hear the news that their child has a life-threatening illness, and that from this point forward the world as they knew it is gone. Go ahead, walk in their shoes for a moment. We have all had to change because of the pandemic, but so many Wish Families would love to be in your shoes, even for just a few moments.

I have truly never been around so many incredible Warriors willing to do whatever it takes to make sure their child or children are given anything that they deserve. I watch these parents give and give and give until their internal bucket is empty and they crash. They do not crash for long; they get back up and walk the challenging journey. When asked how they do it, the answer is simple: "because I have no other choice, I have to, and I will do what it takes."

A Wish Come True is celebrating our 40th Anniversary on October 8th, 2022. So many things have changed since 1982. Most importantly, we see most of our Wish Kids survive their illness, which is incredible news. It also means that there is more stress on Wish Parents as they are now dealing with a life-long illness and its associated long-term challenges. Imagine, no breaks from immunocompromised situations, no breaks from constant doctor appointments, no breaks from waking their child up every few hours for medication and/or treatments, and so much more. Therefore our "change" is occurring now. We are meeting the needs of our existing Wish Families. You will hear more about that in this newsletter and in upcoming months as we prepare to celebrate at our Anniversary Gala.

A Wish Come True is in solid shape financially and we are seeing an increase of 50% in Wish granting this year. We have also seen our Meghan Duffy Hardship Fund requests triple. Our goal is to help Wish Families as they navigate through surviving this terrible journey, to stabilize and thrive in their community. It is indeed a shift, but a needed one. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Mary-Kate O'Leary
Executive Director



21 Volunteers from A Wish Come True Serve 200 Meals to Wish Kids at Give Kids The World, FL

Paula Pais Leach, Kristin Lessard

"I never knew what Give Kids The World was until I became a Board Member at A Wish Come True. I believed the Wish Kids had a trip to "Disney" and that Walt Disney World took care of them, but it is so much more than that," stated Kristin Lessard, iHeartMedia talk show host and Board Member. "So much thought was put into every detail of GKTW Village from the castle to the carousel, to the beautiful pool and Henri's Starlight Scoops, where kids (and adults) can have ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!"

Over 1,700 volunteers are needed each week to make "the village" the incredibly special home for our Wish Families for one week. Tucked away in Kissimmee Florida, GKTW is an incredible village that looks like "candy land" with incredible villas and rides, as well as fun-filled surprises each night. They partner with all the parks and our Wish Families can go to Disney for three days, Universal for two days and Sea World for one day. Most try to go to all the parks, but they find themselves wanting to relax at the pool or enjoy all the activities and rides on the GKTW property. Inspired to give the families hope

through these trying times, Henri Landwirth built this incredible village that has provided magical wishes to over 177,000 kids from all over the world.

"No words can really describe how my heart felt that day, I was sad but happy for them. I was incredibly grateful and humbled to be in the presence of such strong, happy kids. It was amazing to me to hear the excitement in their voices as they described their adventures for the day. I will certainly be back next year to volunteer," stated Paula Pais Leach, SVP Customers Bank and Board Member.

"I must say my favorite part was walking into the castle filled with beautiful gold stars. I had the pleasure of walking in with Mikey (one of our Wish Kids on his trip) and was able to hear/feel his excitement as he went back to find his star placement in the castle. GKTW has certainly demonstrated the importance of helping our Wish kids and their families, they put forth a beautiful "Star" experience for our families," stated Paula.

For more information, please visit our website www.awish.org.



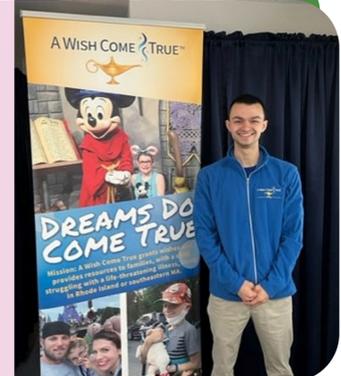
From Left- Paula Pais Leach, Mary-Kate O'Leary, Mikey, Kristin Lessard



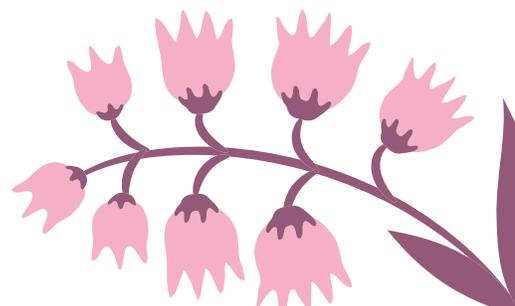
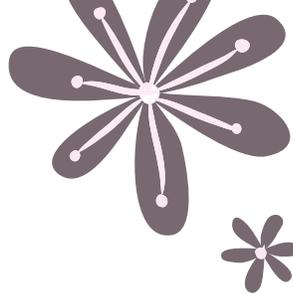
WELCOME JOSEPH ZOCCO

Development and Communications Coordinator

We are extremely excited to have Joe join our A Wish Come True Team. Joe has a wealth of experience in communications and marketing. He has managed social media accounts throughout his career, has been a freelance writer and producer and quickly increased his responsibilities at Launch Trampoline Park as the Office Manager, General Manager and Regional Manager. Welcome Joe!



PAYING IT FORWARD- Interview with Sam Luzzi, Wish Child/URI Student



When were you first diagnosed?

On March 30, 2017, my life changed forever. I was 15 years old, and I was diagnosed with Leukemia. My life as a student and athlete was put on hold as I spent the next month in the hospital to start treatment that would save my life. I was in treatment for two long years and on May 9, 2019, I had my last chemo treatment!

What did A Wish Come True do for you?

I was able to go meet Coach Cooley and attend the PC Friars basketball game. They had us come out on the floor to accept their generous support to sponsor my Wish. It was incredible to feel like part of the team. On May 25, 2019, my wish came true. My family went on a cruise to the Caribbean. It was so great to just enjoy time with my family. We had gone through so much together. It was nice to have time together to laugh and smile. That gift was priceless.

When did you know you wanted to give back to A Wish Come True by running an event to support a Wish?

After the trip we had a celebration party at the office, and we talked about me being an ambassador for A Wish Come True. After establishing myself at URI, I felt as though I was able to help in pursuit of raising awareness and doing a fundraiser for AWCT. Last year I was President of my fraternity, and I knew I had some support behind this.

When did you choose the 4x4x48 David Goggins Challenge for your fundraiser?

David Goggins was a true inspiration to me. I had dreams to attend West Point and my leukemia prevented that from happening. David Goggins is the toughest man alive. He is the only member of the US Armed Forces to complete Seal Training, US Army Ranger School, and Air Force Tactical Air Controller training. He left the Navy Seals when he was diagnosed with a life-threatening and life-long illness. He started the 4x4x48 Challenge to help raise awareness and raise funds for different causes and I was inspired. The challenge was to run four miles every four hours for 48 hours and me and my friend did this on March 4th.



What was your goal for the event?

Initially, I thought I would make a couple hundred dollars for A Wish Come True. I was blown away when we raised \$5,000! I cannot believe that I will be able to pay it forward and have a Wish be granted because of this!

What is next for you?

I want to continue to do this. I want to continue to give back. I do want to be a speaker/Ambassador for A Wish Come True and I want this event to continue next year and be even bigger. I think I can definitely challenge more of the fraternities at URI and when we were invited to speak at the AWCT Board Meeting we challenged the new Providence College Athletic Director, Steve Napolillo, to get students to compete as well next year!

If you are interested in joining Sam or if you want to have your own fundraiser to support AWCT please contact Joseph@awishcometrue.org.



A WISH COME TRUE
Celebrating 40 Years
OF GRANTING WISHES

YEAR TO DATE A WISH COME TRUE HAS...

GRANTED 10 WISHES

PROVIDED **\$27,708.32** OF HARDSHIP SUPPORT TO **22** FAMILIES, WHICH SUPPLEMENTED RENT, BILLS, GROCERIES, HEATING REPAIRS, AND MORE.

ENGAGED A TOTAL OF **405** WISH FAMILY MEMBERS AT EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

HELD PARENT GROUPS WITH **102** PARTICIPANTS

PROVIDED REST AND RELAXATION FOR **59** PARENTS AT RAFFA YOGA

6 MORE WISHES TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF JUNE

A Wish Come True is accepting new referrals, please email Laura at laura@awishcometrue.org for more information.



A WISH COME TRUE[™]

1010 Warwick Ave., Warwick, RI 02888
awish@awishcometrue.org
401-781-9199

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Join Us for our 40th Anniversary Gala October 8th

This is it! It is time to dress up, dance and celebrate! We have granted close to 1,700 wishes, which means over 6,800 Wish Kids and their family members experienced a Wish of a Lifetime! Because of your generosity we have invested over \$8.6 million into families in our community! YOU have helped us make this happen and we want to celebrate! Join us for our 40th Anniversary Gala.

Save the Date

Join us for the A Wish Come True
40th Anniversary Gala

When: October 8th, 2022

6:00PM-7:00PM: *Cocktails & Nibbles*
7:00PM-11:00PM: *Dinner & Dancing Under The Stars*

Where: WaterFire Arts Center
475 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02908

Attire: Creative Black Tie (Optional)

Guest Speaker: Coach Ed Cooley, Providence Friars

For more information, visit awish.org

"If stars could grant wishes, would my dreams come true, to the stars that are listening, these dreams are up to you."

40TH ANNUAL WISH FAMILY REUNION OCTOBER 9TH

Calling all Wish Kids and Families! Join us as we celebrate granting wishes with dancing, games, and food for all. We will have lots of characters and guests from Give Kids the World! We will also have a special tribute for our Wish Angels. For more information see our website www.awish.org or contact Laura@awishcometrue.org.



To donate, visit us on the web at www.awish.org