

# Make a wish foundation essay



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Imagine the joy of finally becoming a parent. All the time, effort and dreams created with each new life. Imagine holding that perfect bundle of joy in your hands and looking into those eyes; seeing all the possibilities and future dreams in that one tiny gift God has given you. Imagine now those same eyes, looking at you from a hospital bed and hearing the doctors tell you that your child, your precious gift, is terminal. At that one moment, how many dreams would come crashing to the ground for both the parents and the child?

Those dreams, those precious few moments of remaining life for a terminally ill child, is why the Make-A-Wish foundation was established. The Make-A-Wish foundation was created to offer life-affirming, hope-giving dreams to terminally ill children who should experience their life long dreams before death. Children are such a precious gift and yet the statistics for mortality facing these children are like a slap in the face. According to the National Cancer Institute, last year in the United States approximately 10, 400 children, under the age of 15 years old were diagnosed with cancer.

Of those children diagnosed with cancer, 1, 545 will die yearly from cancer, making it the second most common cause of death in children. That's not all, according to the American Diabetes Association in 2010 over 20, 000 children, under the age of 20, will be diagnosed with diabetes and it's the 7th leading cause of death for children in America. Finally, according to the American Heart Association, over 2, 000 children under the age of 15 years old will die from heart disease. Heart disease is listed as the 3rd most common from of death in children.

Hearing all these statistics it makes the point that a child's life, every moment of life is precious and should be valued every second. Established in 1980, the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America began granting dreams for terminally ill children, between the ages of 2 ? to 18 years of age. Created with the simple focus to " grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. " A simple vision that has grown this non-profit organization to grant over 13, 007 wishes a year (2007), at an average cost of \$7, 017 per wish (as of March 1, 2008).

Since its creation, Make-A-Wish has become an international charitable organization granting a wish every 40 minutes to a terminal child. How incredible that one boys dream began a worldwide dream fulfilling commitment. In 1980, 7-year-old Christopher James Geiclus dreamed of becoming a police officer while undergoing treatment for leukemia. As Christopher got worse, a day was planed with the Arizona Department of Public Safety to fill his dream. On April 29, 1980 Christopher was sworn in, wearing a custom tailored DPS uniform, as the first honorary DPS patrolman in state history.

Continuing the dream, on May 2 when Christopher was placed back in the hospital, his room was arranged with DPS paraphernalia to keep his spirits high. The following day Christopher passed away, but all who knew him were pleased to see this wonderful boy take with him his wish and dreams fulfilled. That dream was the first of many that Make-A-Wish has made possible over the 31 years of active dream fulfillment.

If wishes were cheap then everyone would have them, but until then Make-A-Wish continues to sponsor the dreams of terminally ill children between the ages of 2 and 18 years old. As of August 2010 Make-A-Wish Foundation can now boast 65-chartered chapters worldwide with over 8.6 million dollars going directly to making children's dreams come true. This means, for every dollar donated to this worthwhile cause, \$.76 of that dollar is directed to filling the dreams of a terminally ill child. As with any worthwhile charity, money is not the only driving force. Volunteers, sometime famous stars, contribute their time and talent to filling the wish of terminally ill children.

For example, on January 25, 2011, Make-A-Wish teamed up with the NFL to provide 13 children, from Belgium and 10 U. S. states their lifelong dream of seeing the Super Bowl. Each recipient, and their families, were provided a jam packed weekend that included time at the Dallas World Aquarium, Cowboys Stadium and finally seeing Super Bowl 45 live and in person. Yet dreams like this take more than just money, they take the time and commitment of many people focusing on the same cause.

As a matter of fact one volunteer, Cindy Sampson knows all about what Make-A-Wish families face, because she has been there before. In 2006 Make-A-Wish granted a wish for her daughter Lois who suffered from a rare chromosome disorder. Cindy said that having her daughters wish granted was a powerful experience and since then she has happily volunteered her time at the Central and Northern Florida chapter helping to bring other wishes to families in need. This generous foundation makes it possible for parents to relax, if only for a moment, and see their child experience pure joy and happiness.

The “ ripple effect” of wish granting is amazing to everyone involved, as Cindy points out that having her daughters wish granted caused her to begin volunteering. May 14, 2011, the North Texas Chapter of Make-A-Wish will be hosting its annual Wish Night. Wish Night is the areas largest fundraising event and the hope is to again raise over \$8. 5 million dollars for our local children’s dreams. Last year, the North Texas chapter granting over 405 wishes and Make-A-Wish never discriminates regardless of race, religion or socioeconomic status.

My hope is that each person prayerfully consider this amazing organization and follow the direction God leads you to give, either financially or by volunteering. Anyone looking to donate money or his or her time as a volunteer need only contact the Make-A-Wish foundation nationally at [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org) or locally at [www.northtexas.wish.org](http://www.northtexas.wish.org). Make-A-Wish continues to focus on the simple vision that “ People everywhere will share the power of a wish,” we just need to be a part of that vision.