

# Wish VOICES

SPRING / SUMMER 2024

YOUR MAKE-A-WISH® UK  
NEWSLETTER



Volunteer  
spotlight -  
*meet Abbie*



Festive teen  
fundraiser raises  
thousands with  
Christmas song

## Wishing in a winter wonderland!



A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER FOR ALICE

Make-A-Wish®  
UNITED KINGDOM

# Wish VOICES

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## Get social

Follow us at [@makeawishuk](https://twitter.com/makeawishuk) for regular updates and announcements.



If you would like a digital copy of this booklet, please email [fundraising@makeawish.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@makeawish.org.uk)

*All information is correct at time of print.*

**Make-A-Wish**  
UNITED KINGDOM

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

## Welcome to Wish Voices!

It's a pleasure to welcome you once again to the heartwarming stories, shared success, and boundless joy that make this newsletter what it is. As we embark on our first edition of the year, I wanted to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude.

Your generous support has been the heartbeat of our mission, creating magic and bringing joy to the lives of children facing critical illnesses. In these pages, you'll find the quiet triumphs, the tender moments, and the subtle miracles that your generosity has made possible.

Each page is a testament to the unwavering spirit of our wish children, their families, and the dedicated supporters and volunteers who make wishes come true.

So, I invite you to join us in celebrating the beautiful stories and the meaningful impact that your contributions have made. Your belief in the power of a wish continues to inspire us all.

With warmth and gratitude,

*Jason*

Jason Suckley  
CEO





## *I wish to go to Lapland*

**Alice, 7**  
neuroblastoma

At just seven years old, Alice has lived most of her life in and out of hospital following a life-altering cancer diagnosis. Whisked away to a wintry wonderland, Alice's Lapland wish offered much-needed respite for her and her family.

At just eighteen months old, Alice was diagnosed with a neuroblastoma, a rare type of cancer, when a tumour was discovered in her abdomen. "Her tumour was the size of three satsumas," explained mum Jen.

Treatment for Alice's cancer was intense, with Alice spending much of her childhood in and out of hospital undergoing chemotherapy. On top of this, Alice still has to take multiple daily medicines and treatments to rid her body of the chemicals that her tumour emitted: "Still to this day we are trying to get rid of the chemicals in her body."

For Alice, Christmas offers time away from tedious doctor appointments and the thought of constant medication. As Mum told us, "She loves the pretty lights and snow. Christmas for Alice means sparkly lights, family fun and getting the decorations up and of course presents!"

It's no surprise then that Alice's wish was to go to and experience Christmas in Lapland!

Whilst on the wish, Alice was able to enjoy thrilling rides with huskies - "Without a doubt that was my favourite part," explained Mum "we were able to steer the huskies ourselves!"

For Alice, her favourite part came when she was able to meet the man himself - Father Christmas. When we asked Alice what her favourite part was, she straight away answered "Santa!" without a moment of hesitation.

The wish gave the family time which they had missed out on during Alice's hospital stays: "One huge thing was to have quality time with her without hospital appointments. Having time away from the medical stuff was amazing."

"To see Alice smile after everything we've gone through was priceless," said Mum "Thank you so much for supporting Make-A-Wish!"





Wishes are waiting in your community and we need your help to grant them!

Our mission is to grant the wish of every eligible child in the UK. To do that we need to find new ways of funding wishes. So, in September 2023, we launched our Community Funded Wishes strategy, where we aim to grant the wishes of 200 children across the UK, purely through communities of volunteers and supporters generating gifts in kind (donations of goods, services and skills) and fundraising. So far, we have granted a fantastic 43 wishes at an average cost of just £70 per wish!

But what's next? We want to grant every eligible wish and to do this we need more wonderful volunteers throughout the whole of the UK. A special community role has been created to tell the stories of our wish children on a local level, inspire people to donate items and services as well as fundraise in their area. We currently have an amazing 52 community volunteers, but we are aiming to recruit another 80 before the end of August.

With a local team of like-minded, passionate volunteers, you could come together to inspire your community to help grant the local wishes that are waiting. This could involve activities such as working together to organise a fundraising event to raise money for local wish children, or approaching local

community groups online to donate their services. You will have the full support of your local leader as well as the wonderful Community and Volunteering team, and the role is completely flexible and designed to work around you and your busy life.

## How do you get involved?

We are looking for new volunteers all across the UK, so if you would like to get involved, head to [make-a-wish.org.uk/volunteer](https://make-a-wish.org.uk/volunteer) and apply for your local region!





# 17,677

the number of wishes  
granted to date  
(as of December 2023)



# 1,202

wishes granted in  
2022/23

*The most we have granted  
in **any** financial year!*



# 500+

incredible  
Make-A-Wish  
volunteers



# 313

brand new  
volunteers  
recruited  
in 2022/23



# £10

could help buy  
cupcakes for a  
child whose wish  
is to have a party



# 871

wish discoveries  
were carried out

*(where ideas for what  
a wish could be are  
explored)*



# £30

could buy a  
costume for  
a child whose  
wish is to be  
a superhero

# £80

could buy a  
sensory toy as  
part of a bedroom  
makeover wish



# £120

could cover a night of  
accommodation for a wish  
child who wants to sightsee  
in London before seeing their  
first West End show!



# £300

could buy a games console  
for a wish child who can only  
connect with their friends  
online whilst undergoing  
treatment



# £2,500

could go towards a custom adapted trike for  
a wish child with restricted mobility - allowing  
a wish family to take a cycle ride together for  
the very first time since diagnosis

**1** person is  
all it takes  
to make a  
difference

You can make more magical wishes come true by donating at [make-a-wish.org.uk/give-now](https://make-a-wish.org.uk/give-now)

# A Night of Wishes



**The annual Make-A-Wish UK Ball has returned!** We are delighted to introduce A Night of Wishes. The event will be held on Thursday 16th May 2024, at the iconic and luxurious Savoy Hotel, London. Guests will be able to step into the wonderful world of Make-A-Wish UK to celebrate the life-changing work our supporters make a reality.

Without the help of our donors, event partners and sponsors, we simply wouldn't be able to put on special events like A Night of Wishes. The money raised at the event will make a profound difference to so many families across the UK and bring the light to those children living in the darkness of a critical illness.

Guests will be welcomed with a canapé reception followed by a delicious three-course dinner with fine wines. Throughout the night, there will be spectacular first-class entertainment, along with a fantastic live and silent auction featuring money-can't-buy prizes. Guests will also have the exclusive opportunity to hear wish stories first-hand and directly fund specific wishes of critically ill children.

Following the success of last year's Ball, raising over £300,000 which has granted over 100 wishes, we are going to make this year's our biggest yet. We aim to grant more wishes than ever before, and we welcome our supporters to join us on this mission. This will truly be a magical evening not to be missed.

To purchase tickets, please visit [events.makeawish.org.uk](https://events.makeawish.org.uk) or to find out more contact [specialevents@makeawish.org.uk](mailto:specialevents@makeawish.org.uk).

*Stephen Mulhern  
hosting the  
2022 ball*



SPOTLIGHT ON...

# Volunteer *Abbie*



I joined Make-A-Wish UK in March 2023 through my employer Disney when they were asking for staff members to become volunteer Wish Makers to help with A Disney Wish - an inclusive wish where children can experience the magic of Disney right here in the UK. Make-A-Wish UK is something very close to my heart, I grew up with cerebral palsy and had multiple operations and procedures growing up. I was given a wish by a different organisation to go to Disneyland Paris with my family. I know first-hand how much a wish can impact the child when they are going through some tough moments in their life. It also has a huge impact on the family as this may be the only time they can spend time together as a family and create magical memories. So, joining Make-A-Wish UK was a no brainer for me.



After I had completed the wishes for a Disney Wish UK, I asked the team if I could stay on as a Wish Maker. I have now completed nearly 70 wishes and counting. Being a Wish Maker for me is the most rewarding experience to be able to give back. The team have also asked me to be a Community Leader which I will be helping to make wishes happen within my region and I am so honoured that the team has asked me to do this.

I am beyond proud to say I am a Make-A-Wish Volunteer.

*Abbie*



## Meet Zac

### WISH STORIES

For twelve-year-old Zac from Aylesbury, his wish to go to Lapland UK offered him the chance to go ice skating, out of his wheelchair, for what may be the last time.

"Knowing that things like Lapland UK are still possible for Zac and that he can still enjoy days out even though his condition is deteriorating, is comforting to know. It's so hard to find things that are accessible for Zac whilst being appealing to his brothers too, and this was," explained mum Sara. "We now have some lovely memories to look back on. Thank you so much! It makes such a difference in people's lives to have such wonderful experiences."





18-year-old Izzy's life has mostly been centred around her greatest passion: dancing. But when the bubbly teen from Doncaster was diagnosed with B cell lymphoma, dance studios and ballet shoes were swapped for hospital appointments and gruelling treatment.

"Treatment put a pause on that part of her life," said mum Karen as she spoke about the impact chemotherapy had on Izzy's lifelong dream of being a dancer. But after having her wish to see the dancers of The Royal Ballet rehearse at the Royal Opera House, Izzy was able to gain insight into the many career opportunities that the world of dance offers, something she missed out on whilst undergoing treatment.

"We were in shock," explained Karen as she recalled what it was like hearing that Izzy had B cell lymphoma - a fast-progressing cancer that causes the lymphocytes (cells responsible for fighting infection) to no longer fight infection, instead growing out of control.

A loss of control was also mirrored in Izzy's life: "She didn't have a chance to make a friendship group in Sixth Form. She couldn't do normal things," said Mum. Following her diagnosis, Karen went into full survival mode, staying by Izzy's side: "Our lives moved round her diagnosis. The full extent of what was happening didn't hit us until it was all over."

This is why Izzy chose to see the dancers of The Royal Ballet rehearse at the Royal Opera House: it would offer her insight into her future career, after being unable to do so during her treatment.

"Dance is her thing, she's been doing it since she was five. It's what she wants to do with her life," explained Mum.



On the day of her wish, Izzy and her family were welcomed in through the stage door of the Royal Opera House and into the ballet rehearsal rooms to see a unique behind-the-scenes view of the show they'd see that night – The Nutcracker. The family sat and watched as Royal Ballet dancers Daichi Ikarashi and Viola Pantuso rehearsed for their parts as Clara and Nephew, followed by Joseph Sissens and Mariko Sasaki rehearsing the Sugar Plum Fairy and Prince.

After rehearsals, the family took an extensive trip around the wardrobe department to see the intricate hand-made costumes from the show, from the hundreds of tutus to the Mouse King! The tour ended with a special meet and greet with Principal dancers Sarah Lamb and Ryoichi Hirano, who would be playing the Sugar Plum Fairy and Prince in the show that Izzy would later be seeing. Izzy was then gifted a goody bag that included a signed programme from the evening's show and a pair of signed pointe shoes from Principal dancer Sarah Lamb.

For mum Karen, her favourite part of the wish was simply looking at Izzy's beaming smile as she watched the dancers rehearse: "I could've cried at that point. It was such a special moment."

Izzy now has a wealth of knowledge to dip into when thinking about her future dance career: "It gave me a chance to know that there are other jobs involved in dance. There are other ways for me to be in that area even if I'm not the person on stage." After being unable to do so whilst receiving treatment, gaining insight into the world of dance was much needed for the future dance professional. As Izzy told us: "Sometimes it

feels like you've missed out on a lot, a wish can give you something that you've really wanted to do that you wouldn't have been able to do whilst undergoing treatment."

For the whole family, including Izzy's brother Samuel, age 16, and dad Daniel, the wish allowed them to make long-lasting memories after being unable to do so whilst Izzy was undergoing treatment. As Mum said "We were able to all take part in Izzy's world as a family. It brought us all together for a lovely magical day."

"I'm so thankful that people have donated to make wishes like mine possible," said Izzy. "Being in the seats we were in watching them rehearse is something we wouldn't be able to do if people hadn't donated - Thank you so much!"



**THANKS TO YOU,  
WE'RE ABLE TO  
MAKE WISHES FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE  
IZZY COME TRUE.**



You can make more magical wishes come true by donating at [make-a-wish.org.uk/give-now](https://make-a-wish.org.uk/give-now)

## We want to shine a special spotlight on 15-year-old Niamh Noade who raised £3,300 for Make-A-Wish!

### On making wishes come true:

"I chose Make-A-Wish UK as my charity for the release of my Christmas Single 'A Christmas Wish' as it helps make wishes come true for critically ill children, and that is what my Christmas song is all about, so I thought it was a good fit."

"I wrote 'Christmas All Year' with another girl called Niamh, so that was really great fun and a new experience for me writing collaboratively with another person. We are now called 'The Two Niamh's', so through my music I hopefully have also made a new friend for life."

This year, Niamh connected with a local family who had the distressing experience of going through cancer assessments for their 11-year-old son, Reuben. Tragically, last year, Reuben was diagnosed with Sarcoma Cancer. However his family received the amazing news that his diagnosis was not as severe as originally thought. While Reuben still attends the clinic, he is reaching full recovery stage. However, he has met lots of children during his journey who are not as fortunate as he has been so Reuben and his family joined forces with Niamh to share their inspiring stories to help raise awareness and create magical wishes for other families.

### Thank you from Niamh:

"I want to thank everyone who has supported me over the years and who donated to Make-A-Wish UK. I also want to thank Reuben and his Mum, Geraldine McNulty, for teaming up with me to increase donations. Reuben was so brave in sharing his story. I also want to say a big thank you to Niamh and her mum Alda who have been fantastic during our 'Christmas All Year' journey. I had so much fun and it's lovely to have met new friends along the way."

*The Two Niamh's*



OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Be a Shining Star

It takes a special person to help grant a wish for a child with a critical illness before it's too late. The magic is in your hands.



You can even give someone special the gift of becoming a Shining Star themselves by dedicating your gift to them.

To choose your gift scan the QR code or visit:  
**shiningstar.make-a-wish.org.uk**

Volunteer

Do you want to have a direct impact on local wishes in your area? By volunteering as a Community Star you can help us raise vital funds and secure gifts in kind to make wishes a reality in your community! For more information please visit:

**make-a-wish.org.uk/volunteer-roles**



Fundraise

From cake sales, sponsored swims or a quiz night with friends, organise your own fundraising event and help us grant wishes to critically ill children. We will be on hand every step of the way to support you with any materials or support you might need, to take a look at ideas or register your event please visit:

**make-a-wish.org.uk/fundraise**



Give now

Donate at  
**make-a-wish.org.uk/give-now**  
or scan the QR code.



Challenge Events

Take on the Great North Run, the world's biggest and best half marathon, on the 8th of September 2024! Famous for its warm Geordie welcome and unbeatable atmosphere, this iconic run from Newcastle to South Shields guarantees you a race like no other. Join the #WishHero team at  
**make-a-wish.org.uk/events**



WISH+WIN LOTTERY



What would you do with £20,000? Enter the Wish + Win Lottery for just £1 per entry per week for your chance to win the jackpot and other exciting prizes! All whilst helping to make the wishes of critically ill children come true.  
**make-a-wish.org.uk/lottery**

Amazon Wish List

If you'd like to support with granting wishes, please see our Amazon Wish List below, where you can see a selection of gift cards that we are in need of to grant our shopping spree wishes!  
**make-a-wish.org.uk/amazon**





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**Ryleigh**



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