

## WISH ORGANIZATIONS

Wish organizations were developed for children with life-threatening medical conditions who are between the ages of 2.5 years and under 18 years of age at the time of referral. Most wish organizations require contact with the child's treating physician to determine if the child is medically eligible for a wish. No child can receive a second wish from any wish organization once a wish has been granted by another organization. Some wish organizations do grant wishes for adults who have six months to live, if they have never had a wish as a child.

As a parent, thinking about contacting a wish organization may be a frightening or heartbreaking thought. A parent might believe that contacting this type of organization means that you must accept the fact that your child is going to die. This is not true! Wish organizations are designed to give a child hope when dealing with medical issues, to give a child a break from the day-to-day medical issues, and to enjoy childhood. Another concern might be that accepting a wish could prevent another child from receiving their wish. Again, not true! Most wish organizations are well-funded and diligently search for children who qualify for their services.

### **Contacting a Wish Organization**

Most wish organizations have websites that, as a parent, you can use to refer your child. A doctor can also refer your child. Once a wish organization receives the referral, it will be processed to ensure the child medically qualifies and to assign them wish granters (note: MPS and ML **do** qualify with most wish organizations). This process can take up to 2 to 12 months, depending on the wish organization.

Once the child with the wish has been medically approved and the wish granters are assigned, the wish organization will contact the parents via mail or phone. The wish granters will then contact the parents to schedule the first meeting.

### **What to expect during the first meeting**

The first meeting should be a happy time for both the child and the parents. Most wish granters are volunteers and are excited to make your child's wish come true. The first meeting is designed to learn about the child and their wish. It is also mainly the paperwork meeting.

Most wish granters will request that both parents attend this meeting. If you are single, divorced, widowed, a grandparent, or have any other special situation, please make the wish granter aware of this. For most wish granters, they have heard it all and will just need to bring a different form; do not be shy about details.

### **If your child can communicate the wish**

Normally one wish granter will help fill out the wish paperwork with your child as the other wish

granter helps you to complete the parent paperwork. This is designed to make the meeting a fun event for the child. Below are questions that might be asked during the first meeting and the documents that will be needed.

### **Questions for the wish child**

*I wish to have:* What makes you want this more than anything else?

*I wish to meet:* Why do you want to meet this person?

*I wish to be:* What is so special that you want to be this?

*I wish to go:* What do you want to do if you go there?

### **Parent information for first meeting**

You will need a list of family members who are under 18 who will attend the wish with your child, their birth certificates, and identifications. Be prepared to share your child's story. Some wish organizations ask you to write something about your child, and some may ask you to tell them verbally about your child. This serves two purposes: it helps the wish granter to learn about your wonderful child and to help fund your child's wish.

### **If your child cannot communicate the wish**

Most wish organizations do not turn down children because they cannot verbally communicate their wish. Wish granters rely on the parents to learn about the child and what their likes and wishes are, so think very hard about what would make your child happy. Let them learn about your child at the first meeting. Share the child's favorite movies or cartoon characters for a better understanding. Your wish granter and you, the parent, will come up with a wonderful wish that will make your child happy!

### **Granting a Wish**

Depending on the wish, this can take months or years. Factors determining the appropriate time include the child's doctor's recommendation, the child's schedule, the child's wish, and available funding. Most wishes are granted within a year.

### **Celebrating the Wish**

Most wish organizations plan a wish reveal event to get the child excited, complete paperwork, and ensure the parents have all the information about the wish. This fun event is normally held one to four weeks before the wish.

### **Wish Day**

If your child's wish includes travel, you know this can sometimes be a complicated issue. Wish organizations would have dealt with most medical issues that occur. Please make sure you read the wish organization travel information thoroughly before departing for any location. Most wish organizations plan for issues that may arise, but they cannot plan for everything. Have your

contact and emergency fact sheet, doctor's information, and all medications prescribed listed and with you.

Remember to take lots of pictures and celebrate the wish! Your child and your family will remember this wish forever. Happy Wish Day!

**Resources**

National Wish Organization for Children: [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org)

National Wish Organization for Adults: [www.dreamfoundation.org](http://www.dreamfoundation.org)

Other organizations may be available within your state



