Molly from Ohio fighting Anaplastic Ependymoma

On Kure Beach, NC: Celebrates turning 19 & finishing treatment!

The day she was to move to college, she was diagnosed with stage 3 Anaplastic Ependymoma. After 7 weeks of proton therapy radiation, for brain cancer, we are waiting on her MRI to be able to celebrate beating cancer.

I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for one of the best weeks of my life!!! I haven’t smiled like that in a LONG time!!!
Love ALWAYS Wins!

Dear Friends,

In 2019 we had delivered 50 wishes, which was more than ever before. So, as 2020 began, our hearts were filled with excitement as we were projecting to deliver 75 wishes! As we headed into our third fundraiser in March 2020, the pandemic hit. The Shamrock Beer 5K would be cancelled, along with 9 other events scheduled for the year. Even more disappointing were the 38 planned wishes that our Wish Makers had to put on hold. Sadly, we couldn’t put cancer on hold too. Despite the challenges, the Nik’s Wish team found a way to bring joy. The team sent out Sunshine Boxes to keep spirits high as wishers waited for trips to be re-scheduled. We pivoted some wishes from travel to virtual meetings with favorite celebrities, awesome gaming systems and computers, room makeovers, weddings and puppy wishes! We delivered 22 Nik’s Wishes in 2020. Even in the midst of a global pandemic, love finds a way to WIN!

The pandemic posed a new challenge for our fundraising efforts. In previous years, the majority of our funding came from event sponsorships and participation. Our all-volunteer team was now facing a year without in-person events. With the uncertainty of our ability to raise funds, we made a very difficult decision to close our Wish Application door. This truly broke our hearts to not take new wishers that really needed this gift of hope. The Nik’s Wish team went to work to find virtual events. The Wine Run 5K was a gift from heaven. Our event partner at Midwest Events Management brainstormed with us to develop one of the first virtual run/walks. The event took off like a storm and brought participants from all 50 states with donations surpassing $40,000. Our friends at Smokin Coops would help us keep our Pork Butt fundraiser alive by offering drive through pickups. The 9th Annual Nik’s Home Run offered both in-person and virtual participation and Grammy’s Auction moved online! Even more unexpected was the outpouring of support from our donors and corporate sponsors. They stepped up their donations so we could reopen our Wish Application door in December, and deliver 5 Holiday Wishes! We welcomed 2021 with hope.

Can you imagine fighting cancer in the midst of the pandemic? Emma shared just what her Wedding Wish meant to her. “Nik’s Wish allowed us to celebrate such a great day, despite COVID and my treatment. We truly will never forget how much this wish meant to us and thank you sincerely from the bottom of our hearts. We thank God for foundations like yours that provide joy in seasons of hardship!”

We thank you for your support to keep Nik’s Wish ALIVE!

Love WINS,
Kelli (Nik’s mom)
NIK'S WISHES BRING JOY!

Just a few of the 22 precious moments of joy delivered in 2020

**Sabrina - age 22, from Arizona**
**Hodgkin's Lymphoma**

The past 3 years of my life have been difficult as I've had to miss out on so much of living by trying to survive.

I’ve been scared and stressed about this process but after having this trip, I’m ready. Thank you to everyone who made it possible for my family and I to have this enlightening experience!

**Melissa - age 24, from Maine**
**Ewing Sarcoma**

After a year of battling cancer and just losing my mom to the same illness, my family were drained on all fronts. We’d forgotten what life was like before and without cancer. This trip to Hawaii gave us the chance to reconnect and to remember what it feels like to live without illness. Cancer taught us how strong we really are and how fragile life can be which is why it is so important to live every day to the fullest.

**Tatyana - age 22, from Alabama**
**CIC DUX4 Sarcoma**

I was enrolled as a full-time college student at UAB majoring in Education. I have a lot of close friends and am in a 9 month relationship with the love of my life. Providing support to my family is very critical to me. I am really focused on making as many memories as possible to leave with my family.

**Demetrios - age 20, from Alabama**
**Hodgkin’s Lymphoma**

I just want to thank The Nik Foundation again for all that you’ve done. This has been a scary journey that we’ve had to face. Times have been very difficult for us financially and this was going to be the first Christmas that I wasn’t able to buy my kids anything so this trip really means the world to us. Thanks so much and God bless each and every one attached to making a dream come true.

**Kyah - age 19, from Illinois**
**Hodgkin’s Lymphoma**

During Covid it was very hard to keep a positive outlook on life. The trip was everything I dreamed of and more!! I got to experience new things that my family wouldn’t normally; jet skiing, parasailing, and doing a dolphin cruise out in the ocean. This trip was just what my family and I needed in this stressful, chaotic time. Thank you again! This foundation truly made an impact on my life!!!
PASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS

Our foundation runs 100% on volunteers who believe that LOVE beats cancer EVERY time!

Nik’s Wish Volunteer, Alison, and her family made Sunshine Boxes for our Wishers!

Cameron made Kelli’s Wish Lamp a reality! The 16’ Wish Lamp, complete with smoke and lights, made its debut with a surprise wish delivery for Bea!

Wish Families competed in our Note Card Fundraiser. Anna’s "Unfinished Flower" & Savannah’s "Paradise" were contest winners!

Over 50 volunteers helped raise over $55,000 at our 9th Annual Nik’s Home Run!

Our youngest volunteer, Frances, shared her golden birthday with us by asking all her friends to give donations instead of presents!

Congratulations to Brian Lyngaaas, our 2020 Volunteer of the Year!
NIK’S WISH funded by
Anna Miller Foundation
In loving memory of Anna
Leah - age 21, from Illinois
Non Hodgkin’s Lymphomia
For my Nik’s wish, I would love to take a vacation with my family to California. I am looking forward to spending quality time with my older sister and parents. Cancer has had such a big impact on me and my family that it would be nice to escape from reality.

NIK’S WISH funded by
Get BUZZED #JE STRONG
In loving memory of Jack
Miguel - age 20, from Illinois
Ewing Sarcoma
I ran track and cross country since middle school up to now. I noticed a little ball in my left hamstring. I found out it was a tumor in my left leg and it was cancerous. From that day on my whole life changed. I had to leave school and running until this nightmare was over. I have stayed really positive and strong despite all the tough days that would push me to my limits.

Past Wish Families give back!

NIK’S WISH funded by Chris T's family
Vincent - age 19 from Arkansas - Hodkin’s Lymphoma
Vincent wished for a MacBook Pro for school & music. I am so excited! I can’t thank y’all enough!

NIK’S WISH funded in loving memory of John
Zachery - age 20 from Georgia - Osteosarcoma
I want to get away from the day to day thoughts and doctors appointments. It would be an amazing gift!

NIK’S WISH funded by Plumber & Pipefitters Local 23
Beatriz - age 24, from Illinois - Breast Cancer
Beatriz wished for a room make over. We delivered her wish with our new Wish Lamp. So awesome! Thank you for giving Beatriz a wonderful wish!

Emma - age 21, from Illinois - B Cell ALL
Thanks to Nik’s Wish, I was able to have the wedding of my dreams at a beautiful venue! We were struggling to find a venue during COVID and cancer treatment; however, this was made possible because of your generous gift!

NIK’S WISH funded by Chemo Cargo
Haley - age 22, from Illinois - Ovarian Cancer
Haley’s wish was to have a puppy to care for. She landed on a breed called a Bedlington Terrier. Jackie, the breeder, who had lost her son to cancer, was happy to help us find a puppy. Currently, she did not have any puppies on the way, but would ask other breeders. The next week, Jackie called to say there was a SURPRISE litter due, which was fantastic news. Just weeks later, the puppies were born on Haley’s Birthday: what a MIRACLE!

Serendipitous Kismet :-}
WHO WE SERVE

2020 Wishes Approved by State

2020 Top Referring Hospitals
- Children's of Alabama
- Arkansas Children's Hospital
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Seattle Children's Hospital
- Riley Hospital for Children (Indiana)
- University of Michigan, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital
- Lurie Children's Hospital (Illinois)
- Northwestern Medicine (Illinois)
- Regional Cancer Center at Swedish American (Illinois)
- OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois
- American Family Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

2020 Cancer Types
- Leukemia 6: 20%
- Lymphoma 7: 23%
- Brain 5: 17%
- Other 4: 13%
- Sarcoma 8: 27%

2020 FINANCIALS (UNAUDITED)

Due to the pandemic, we had a significant drop in revenues from events, but our individual donors more than filled the gap with a 60% increase in financial donations compared to 2019. Because of the circumstances, many wishes were put on hold and our lower expenses reflected this. We hope all those waiting to take their wish will be able to do so in 2021.

2020 Revenue
- Individual Donations $160,585
- Corporate Donations $92,021
- Purchases $24,581
- Event Sponsorship $16,720
- Grants $8,500
- Event Fees $7,121
- Total Income $309,528

2020 Expenses
- Wishes $112,927
- Fundraising $19,146
- Administration $785
- Total Expenses $132,858
WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES WHOSE GENEROSITY MAKE WISHES COME TRUE!

**WISH WARRIOR**
$25,000 and up
Midwest Event Management

**LOVE WINS**
$10,000 -- $24,999
Chemo Cargo
Kerry Inc
National Christian Foundation
Chicago, Gifford Family
 Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
Ritschel Boehle Family

**MEMORY MAKER**
$6,000 -- $9,999
#JE Strong
Anna Miller Foundation

**HOPE HEROES**
$1,000 -- $5,999
Andrews Engineering
Aqua Aerobics Systems, Inc.
Bruce & Sandra Appel
Brent & Lydia Bainter

John Baker Memorial
Tom & Kathy Beatty
Bischoff Dentistry
Brent & Sharon Brodeski
Patrick & Lauren Cogan
CWB Foundation
Exelon Byron Station NAYGN
Foundation for the Carolinas
Jill Gehring
General Mills Foundation
Heartland Charitable Trust
Home Depot
IBEW-NECA
illumination.io
Bill & Jody Kalma
Kelley Williamson Company
Steve & Linda Lennon
Georgia Boyer-Lichhardt
Lois Lutz
Brian Lyngaas
The Medline Foundation
Barry & Caroline Mikels
Northwestern Illinois Building Trades
Nate O’Neill Memorial
OSF Healthcare
Regional Cancer Center
at Swedish American
Rock Valley Credit Union
Rockford Cosmopolitan Charities
Rockford Rivets
Neil Albert Rylatt Memorial
Eric Singer Memorial
Stillman Bank
Stumpy’s Pub
Timonen Family
Townsquare Media
Valli Produce
Walmart
Winnebago County
Winnebago County Sherrif’s Department

EVERY DONATION MATTERS!
THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED MAKE WISHES HAPPEN IN 2020
How you can support:
- Make a monetary donation
- Attend one of our events
- Become an event sponsor
- Donate airline miles
- Donate in-kind gifts or services
- Donate your vacation home
- Sponsor a wish
- Become a volunteer Wish Maker
- Host a fundraising event
- Volunteer your time
- Include us in your estate planning
- Create an online Birthday Fundraiser
- Order online with Amazon Smile
- Follow us, 'Like' & 'Share' on Facebook

Miguel - age 20 from Washington
Fighting Osteosarcoma

Rocco, the Mountain Bulldog, brings PUPPY LOVE to Miguel.

Miguel and Rocco are doing so great! Rocco has brought SO MUCH JOY to Miguel’s life. Honestly, I think Rocco has prolonged his life. Rocco is also bringing a great deal of joy to Miguel’s family.

We just appreciate you so much. You made magic happen, and I am forever grateful.

www.NiksWish.org
The Nikolas Ritschel Foundation is recognized as a public charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code