Nikolas Ritschel Foundation
Take one step...

NIK'S WISH 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

BRINGING HOPE & JOY TO YOUNG ADULTS BATTLING CANCER







"My wish was an incredible experience... This trip allowed me to enjoy some much-needed time away from home and the constant doctor's appointments. I can't thank you enough for this unforgettable gift!" (Hayden, Wish Recipient)

Hayden, who courageously battled metastatic osteosarcoma, received his wish for an unforgettable fishing trip. Shortly after, he passed away, but his story inspires us to continue creating these precious moments of joy for young adults like him.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

2024 - Growing our Mission!



Shaniah from Illinois
fighting Hodgkin's Lymphoma
Wish: Parasailing in Hawaii



Gideon from Illinois
fighting Osteosarcoma
Wish: Gaming Laptop

Dear Friends,

2024 began with stark news from an American Cancer Society survey (published January 17, 2024), estimating that over 2 million people will be diagnosed with cancer this year. That's the equivalent of someone hearing the words, "you have cancer," every 15 seconds. This reality reminds us that the fight against cancer is far from over. With this in mind, we have asked ourselves: How can we ensure that Nik's Wish endures to continue BRINGING HOPE & JOY to young adults battling cancer for as long as this fight continues?

The year also began with a flurry of wishes—a powerful reminder of the impact a wish can have. From computer gaming systems and shopping sprees to hang gliding and beach vacations, 14 wishes and 3 Wish Reveals were delivered in the first quarter of 2024. One of our Wishers, Sezny, shared the emotional impact of her wish, describing it as "joy incarnate!" She said, "Any cancer patient can tell you how omnipresent stress is in their lives. What will the scan show? Will the chemo work? Will the cancer come back? Will I die? What will that mean for my family? But during my wish, these thoughts didn't enter my mind once."

Reflecting on over 380 testimonials like Sezny's, we are more determined than ever to expand our mission and fill the gap in cancer support. We are committed to creating a sustainability plan to ensure Nik's Wish continues as long as there is a need.

Data analysis revealed that in Illinois—our home state—we are currently serving 13% of the 18-24-year-old cancer warriors treated at major cancer centers. There's a 87% gap to fill in the state where we have the most impact. To address this, we've hit the road, sharing our story with corporations, individuals, and clubs, anyone who will give us 30 minutes of their time. We've been met with open arms from many new friends, and our faithful supporters have increased their commitment in light of the rising costs to fulfill each wish.

But the blessings didn't stop there. We received an unexpected call from the University of Alabama. Our Wish Angel, Joe Thompson, a Nik's Wish recipient, had graduated from Alabama and dedicated his final months to making a difference. Joe raised over $30,000 to grant 3 wishes and became a spokesperson for Nik's Wish, appearing on TV and radio shows. Before passing from brain cancer, Joe reached out to his favorite professor. Months later, we learned that Joe had planted a seed at the University of Alabama, where the Joe Thompson Alpha Chapter of Nik's Wish will now be established. Their goal is not only to raise one wish per semester but also to create a playbook for other universities to follow. Though this endeavor will take time, we are filled with joyful hope, knowing that Joe's incredible legacy continues to inspire.

Sometimes, I imagine Nik in heaven, sitting with all the children whose lives were taken too soon, brainstorming ideas on how to help Nik's Wish. I envision them coming up with the wildest, most creative ideas! And then there are total strangers—parents who have lost a child to cancer—who somehow find us, becoming part of our team in ways we never could have imagined. While I may not be able to put this in a business plan, in my heart, I know we have help from heaven. As one of our volunteers often says, "The Lord works in mysterious ways," and we continue to witness that in the lives of our Wishers.

Our events continue to fuel the fulfillment of wishes. Nik's Home Run helped grant 10 wishes, while the Shamrock Beer 5K funded 4. We added a new twist to St. Patrick's Day with local bars and restaurants "Sham-ROCKing" the lives of young adults by making shamrock donations for a chance to win an exclusive bottle of Jameson whiskey from Ireland. Our Nik's Wish Genie Lamp visited all the establishments to thank them for their support.

While we still have a long way to go to reach our goals, we are deeply grateful for your continued support. Together, we've grown our mission and granted 12 Wish Reveals and 54 Wishes in 2024. Since Nik's Wish was founded in 2012, we've granted over 390 Wishes across 39 states—and counting!

#LOVEWONcancerzero

With heartfelt thanks,
Kelli (Nik's Mom)

NIK'S WISHES BRING JOY!

Just a few of the 54 precious moments of JOY delivered in 2024



Forrest from Missouri fighting Ewing Sarcoma
Wish: Family trip to Ozarks



Thank you for making my wish of spending time at the lake come true. This wish couldn't have come at a better time. One week before the wish I was told I would have to have another surgery on my lung.

Every minute I soaked in the time spent with my family meant the world to me. This lake is where I spent my summers growing up.

As I watched the sunset from the dock I felt how truly lucky I was to be loved by so many people. People I have never met made this wish come true. One week after the trip the surgery is done. No cancer was found. LOVE WON CANCER ZERO.

Payton from Iowa
fighting Osteosarcoma
Wish: Alaska

After being diagnosed at 19 years old, I didn't know what the future would hold. I had so many worries, and still do; but my wish let me forget about them. My family and I can't thank Nik's Wish enough. They brought so much joy to my family that has been missing for a couple years. Thank you to everyone who donates and makes wishes possible for people like me, and thank you to Angella and Rosemary for being amazing!

Camryn from Texas fighting Ewing sarcoma
Wish: Hawaii

I want to thank Nik's Wish for granting my wish. My wish meant a lot to me because I got to spend a lot of time together with family making memories that we will talk about in the future. It was nice to visit California, see Universal Studios, and take the Hollywood Bus Tour, it was so good to experience a different place. This has been the highlight of my year of ups and downs. I thank you guys so much!

Cole from Wisconsin fighting Papillary Carcinoma
Wish: Swim with Dolphins (shown in background)

My family was able to spend quality time together that we will cherish forever. My wish and many others' would not have been possible without the generosity of all the volunteers, businesses, and individuals that donate. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!





Jalan from Minnesota
fighting Osteosarcoma
Wish: NY Knicks

I was 20 yrs old when I was diagnosed. 4 months later my leg was amputated putting me in a bad head space. I have always wanted to visit New York and have been a fan of the Knicks since I was little. I even received an autographed basketball. I got to visit the Statue of Liberty and eat all the best NY foods. It was one of the best experiences of my life. I appreciate everything that was done for me, it truly changed my point of view on life. I am back to believing I can do anything I want. Words can't describe how thankful I am.



Luke from Ohio
fighting Hodgkin's Lymphoma
Wish: Hawaii

Two months after graduating from high school, I received my diagnosis, and the journey since has been incredibly challenging for all of us. This trip was the perfect escape, allowing us to focus on creating unforgettable memories together and not on the struggles I've faced. It truly gave a boost to my mental health, and I will forever be grateful for this opportunity. Thank you again for making this dream come true.

VOLUNTEER-POWERED

Nik's Wish Reveals BRING JOY!

The excitement of hearing the words, "YOUR WISH IS GRANTED!" sparked the enthusiasm of many volunteers to help us BRING JOY and show love and support for these brave, young, cancer warriors!



Isabel surprised at Cooper's Hawk Winery





Jet surprised by nurses at UW Madison



Adrian surprised by Naperville Water Polo Team



Camryn surprised by nrses at Texas



Jocelyn surprise



Karen surprised at church



Alyssa surprised at Wildfire



Alexandra surprised at her home



Chase surprised by FL Wish Angels



Cody surprised by TN Vols video message



Abigail surprised At her home!



Golf for JOY IL & FL raised over $67,000





Shamrock Beer 5K & Sham-ROCK raised over $50,000





Nik's Home Run raised over $115,000



DJ Liquor helping Sham-ROCK the lives of young adults fighting cancer



Wish Angel of the Year Madison Ellis from Florida



Wish Maker of the Year Crystal Ballard



Volunteers of the Year Joe & Linda Granneman

HOPE HEROES BRING JOY!

2024 JOY FUNDED BY LOVING HOPE HEROES

ABC Supply Co. inc.

Aiko

Deonte

Lauren

Jadyn

KERRY

Kristin

Jack

Forrest

Napleton SUBARU

Cody

Gideon

Plumbers & Pipefitters LU 23 Rockford, Illinois

Chloe

Keaira

Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Unions

Arlo

Anna Miller Foundation

Peyton

SYDSTRONG forever

Karen

OSF HealthCare Foundation

Steven

HENDRICKS FAMILY FOUNDATION

Hayden

Bergstrom

Eddie

GENE HAAS FOUNDATION

Sam

J&J Ventures

Johanna

pci PHARMA SERVICES

Seth

PGA TOUR SUPERSTORE

Chase

UWHealth

Jaydon

The Wawa Foundation

Cody

Gideon

Gifford Family

Jacob

Ashlynn

Jalan

in Memory of Alexa Kelter

Seth

Madison

Sara

Mikels Family

Makayla



Matthews Family

Hayden

Cogan Family

Edgar

VanFleet Family

Luke

We're honored to have these wish families fund it forward!

Eckholm Family Golf for JOY IL

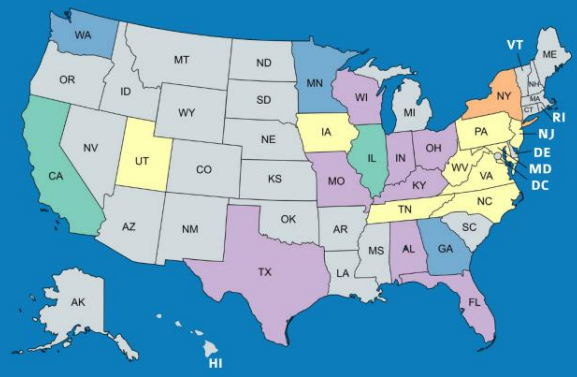
Alexandra

Ellis Family Golf for JOY FL

Chase

WHO WE SERVED IN 2024

Wishes Delivered by State

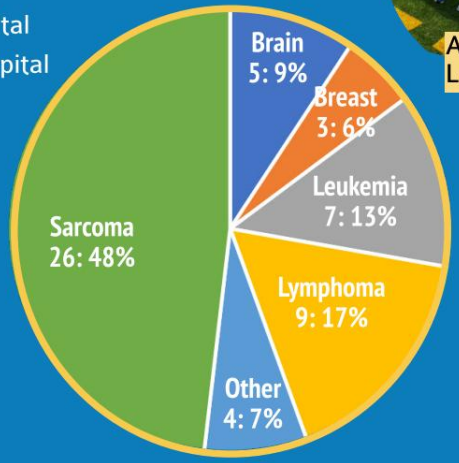


7 wishes | 4 wishes | 3 wishes | 2 wishes | 1 wish

Top Referring Hospitals

UW Health American Family Children's Hospital
University of Chicago Comer's Children's Hospital
University of Alabama Birmingham
Seattle Children's
Riley Hospital for Children
Orlando Health Cancer Institute
NYU Langone Health
Cleveland Clinic
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital

Cancer Types



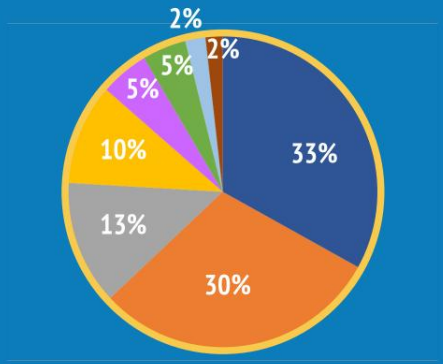


Angel:
LA Chargers

2024 FINANCIALS

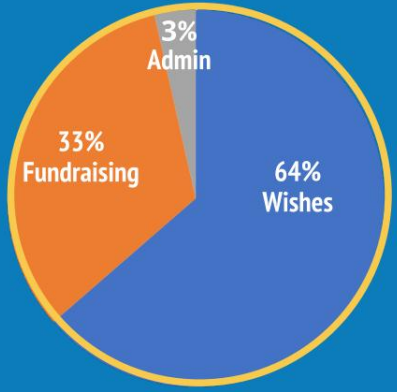
Revenue

Individual Donations	$227,433
Corporate Donations	$205,349
Event Fees	$ 89,111
Event Sponsorships	$ 72,400
Event Purchases	$ 34,974
Grants	$ 31,500
Other Income	$ 14,440
Foundation Donations	$ 12,220
Total Revenue	$687,427



Expenses

Wishes	$394,594
Fundraising	$204,782
Administration	$ 21,956
Total Expenses	$623,332





Arlo:
Legoland Wish

WE ARE GRATEFUL

FOR ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES
WHOSE GENEROSITY MAKE WISHES COME TRUE!

WISH WARRIOR ($25,000 +)

ABC Supply
Gifford Family
OSF Healthcare

LOVE WINS ($10,000 - $24,999)

Anna Miller Foundation
Anonymous Donor
Jacques & June Boudreau
Kerry Inc
Kjellstrom Family Foundation
Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
Ritschel Boehle Family
Subaru of America
UW Health
WAD Productions & Denny's Corporation
Wawa Foundation

MEMORY MAKER (6,000-$9,999)

Ron Lenderman
Barry & Caroline Mikels
Northwestern Illinois Building Trades
SydStrong

HOPE HEROES ($1,000 - $5,999)

3M Dekalb
815 Dental Studio
815 Entertainment
Advent Health
Airgas
Alpine Kiwanis Club
The Altman Companies
Amgen Foundation
Andrews Engineering
Bruce & Sandra Appel
Aqua Aerobics Systems, Inc.
Area Mechanical Inc
BackSwing Golf Events Inc
Brent & Lydia Bainter
John Baker Memorial
Bergstrom Charitable Foundation
Karen Camper
Ceroni Piping
Christine Cardenas
Ernest Ciaccio
Cochran & Mann Inc
Collin Kerrigan
Core and Main
Cosic
Patrick & Lauren Coganl
CWB Foundation
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Philip Fielding
Geronimo Hospitality Group
GROOT
Barb & Ken Hall
Keith Hebeisen
Helm Group
Holy Family Catholic Church
IBEW Local 606
Illinois Licensed Beverage Association
illumination.io
J & J Ventures Gaming LLC
The J Cube Inc
J3 Timing
Cindy & David Jackson
JJ's Deli & Slots
Bill & Jody Kalma
Karen R. Copeland & Associates
Alexa Kelter Memorial
Ann Kossman
Kunes Family Foundation
Lois Lutz
Brian Lyngaas
Mapleglen Care Center
William Matthews
Max Kahler Racing
McKearn Family Foundation
Midland States Bank
Steve Mitchell
Clif Morris
Julia Mothkovich
Nelson Carlson Mechanical
Ortho Illinois
Mike Page
PCI Pharma Services
PGA Superstore
Pieters Family
Prete & Ware
R.S. Hughes
Rock Valley Credit Union
Neal Albert Rylatt Memorial
Schoening's Painting
Taylor Schweinebraeten Davis Memorial
Scotts RV Truck & Auto Repair
Eric Singer Memorial
St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church
Stillman Bank
Stumpy's Pub
Thermo Fisher Scientific
Basil & Natalie Thomas
Timonen Family
Drs. Therese & Scott Trenhaile
Van Matre Encompass Health
Denise VanFleet
Walmart Store #1955
Waste Connections
Diane Windsor
William Charles Construction
Woodman's Markets
Winnebago County Board
Karen Wyman
Gary & Sharon Yunto
Tom & Jody Zhe



Makayla: Disneyland

This trip was incredibly special - it brought my family closer together and filled our hearts with joy. and hope. You've given me and my family memories that we will forever cherish, and for that, I am truly thankful.



Jack: Hawaii

This wish gave Jack a reason to try to get stronger, to get up and out of bed. You have given us some hope when we were lost and hopeless.



How You Can Support Nik's Wish

- 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
- 'Like' & 'Share' us on Social Media

Sam (far left) **from North Carolina** RIP
Fighting Osteosarcoma

Sam has wanted to go ride horses and see the beautiful mountains for a long time and you made his wish come true. He has looked forward to this trip for the last 9 months of treatments and helped our family get through it all. There was no talk of hospitals, treatments, doctors or prognosis on this trip, only lots of joy and happiness! We will always treasure this once in a lifetime experience as a family. God bless you all for everything you do!

Nikolas Ritschel Foundation
Take one step...

www.NiksWish.org

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