Make-A-Wish Foundation® of India fulfils over 5,000 wishes of children with life-threatening illness every year. A few impactful and joyous stories of wishes granted.
Dear,

It gives me great pleasure to share with you the attached “Wish Impact Stories” book.

Thank you for your continued support to our cause, which has helped us grant wishes of 39,364 children diagnosed with life-threatening illness, since 1996.

We are moving ahead with our sincere efforts to accomplish Vision 2020, of granting the 75,000th wish by the year 2020, which would be the 25th year of Make-A-Wish activities in India.

We need your whole-hearted support to help us accomplish the above goal in every way possible, be it with volunteers or with funds. Send an email to Mr. Deepak S Bhatia on ceo@makeawishindia.org and he will be more than happy to suggest the best way to enhance your generous support.

Thanking you in advance for your kind consideration and wish you a happy reading.

Yours truly,

Maneck Davar
Managing Trustee
Make-A-Wish Foundation® of India fulfils over 5,000 wishes of children with life-threatening illness every year. A few impactful and joyous stories of wishes granted.

Launched on

by Celebrity Wish Granter and Cricket Legend

Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar
When 'I Wish' meets 'I Can'…

THAT IS THE HEALING POWER OF A WISH.

OUR GLOBAL REACH

Founded in Phoenix, Arizona in 1980 when a group of caring volunteers helped a young boy fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer, Make-A-Wish is one of the world’s leading children’s charities.

After the start of Make-A-Wish in the United States, interest in granting the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions quickly spread to other nations. In 1993, Make-A-Wish International was officially formed to serve five countries outside the U.S. and now helps to serve children in nearly 50 countries on five continents through its 38 affiliates. Make-A-Wish America grants the wishes of children in the United States through its 61 chapters. With the help of generous donors and over 32,000 volunteers, Make-A-Wish has collectively granted approximately more than 3,50,000 wishes worldwide since 1980.

THE FIRST WISHES

Chris Greicius – The Wish That Inspired Make-A-Wish

The creation of Make-A-Wish was inspired in the U.S. in 1980 by the fulfillment of the wish of a 7-year-old boy with leukemia named Chris Greicius, who wished to be a policeman. His mother, several friends and a group of police officers, with the cooperation of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, granted his wish with a custom-made uniform, helmet, badge and helicopter ride! After the wish, those involved were inspired and eager to bring that same hope, strength and joy they saw as a result of Chris’ wish to more children. Their simple idea led to the continued growth of the world’s largest wish-granting organization, now operating in nearly 50 countries.

Bopsy Salazer – The First Make-A-Wish Child

The magical relationship Make-A-Wish has formed with Disney on a global scale began with Frank “Bopsy” Salazer, the first official wish child of Make-A-Wish. Like Chris, he was a 7-year-old boy in the U.S. who was diagnosed with leukemia and revered people in uniform. Make-A-Wish set out to grant his wish to be a fire-fighter, and thanks to wonderful support from our Disney friends, more fun was in store for his magical wish when he became the first of a long history of wish children to visit a Disney Theme Park.


TWO DECADES OF MAKING WISHES COME TRUE IN INDIA

Make-A-Wish Foundation of India is a non-profit organization registered on 10th March, 1995 as a Trust with charity number E-15573 (Mumbai) under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 through the Charity Commissioner State of Maharashtra.

Make-A-Wish India started granting wishes in 1996 and since then we have fulfilled over 39,243 (as on 31st December, 2015) wishes across 11 divisions in India. The Foundation is dedicated to granting the most cherished wish of children between the ages of 3 and 18 years, living with life-threatening illnesses, irrespective of their socio-economic status, caste, race or religion.

THE FIRST WISHES

Gandhar Joshi

In 1995, our founder Mr. Uday Joshi and his wife took their 10-year-old son, Gandhar, who was suffering from leukaemia for treatment to Duke Hospital, USA. Gandhar agreed to go only on the condition that he would get to visit Disneyland. In the course of his treatment, volunteers of Make-A-Wish, USA met Gandhar and went about fulfilling his wish in a way beyond his imagination.

Gandhar passed away on 20th July, soon after his return to India. Inspired by the joy that the wish experience had brought into their lives in a difficult time and in memory of their son, the Joshis were determined to bring the same wish experience to children with life-threatening illnesses in India.

Thus, Make-A-Wish India was established as an affiliate of Make-A-Wish International and Gandhar lives on in every wish that is granted.

FIRST WISH GRANTED IN INDIA

Janhavi Karkeri

Our first wish was that of Janhavi Karkeri, an 8-year-old girl suffering from stomach cancer. We met her at her residence where she shared her love for Barbie dolls. When asked if she would be happy with some Barbie dolls and accessories, a beautiful smile crossed her face.

On 7th April 1996, Janhavi’s wish was fulfilled at her house. She was very happy to get so many dolls and accessories at once. However, a touch of sadness pervaded the room when Janhavi said, “I have so many dolls but I can’t play with them.” Dear Janhavi didn’t survive long enough to play with her beloved dolls after all. She left this world about two weeks later.

We do not have photos of that cherished day in her life as she didn’t want to be remembered as a young cancer patient with a bald, swollen face. However, we shall always remember her as the bright girl who dreamt of a normal life filled with dolls and games.

To know more about Make-A-Wish India activities, visit https://www.makeawishindia.org.

THE FIRST WISHES

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For children battling life-threatening illnesses, the joys of childhood are replaced with a daily battle for survival, painful treatment and medication and endless rounds of hospitals. The fulfillment of the most cherished wish of a child who has very little hope of enjoying a normal and healthy life not only gives happiness and joy to him / her but also has a therapeutic effect on the child. Doctors have often reported an improvement in the child’s physical condition, after the fulfillment of his / her dearest wish. A wish fulfillment makes a sick child believe that anything is possible – even a future.

Typically children’s wishes fall into four categories:

- **Wish to go**: e.g. to a theme park, a sporting event, the beach, travel within India
- **Wish to be**: e.g. a policeman, a firefighter, a chef
- **Wish to meet**: e.g. a favourite Bollywood celebrity, TV artist, sports person or athlete
- **Wish to have**: e.g. cricket kit, remote control car, kitchen doll set, computer, mobile phone

**POWER OF A WISH**

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**WISHES TO FALL INTO**

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**VOLUNTEERS**

Each year, over 200 volunteers generously give their time, talent and energy to fulfill our mission in India. The need to reach out and identify the wish of every eligible child is far more and thus leads to our constant need for more volunteers.
WISH TO MEET

WISH TO BE
Anivarya Kumar is currently a high school junior (11th grader) at BASIS Ahwatukee in AZ, who enjoys advanced academic courses as well as interacting with the community outside of her school. She is passionate about music and loves singing and composing music along with playing the piano and flute.

Anivarya engages in several community services and more than anything, she is passionate about writing. As a volunteer, she helped edit stories for the Wish Impact Book for Make-A-Wish India, an inspirational storybook to help families with children fighting life threatening illnesses.

Anivarya was born in California and currently resides in Arizona. She is the only daughter of Mr. Ajay Kumar and Mrs. Geetika Kumar who moved to USA in 1997. Mr. Kumar is a CIO and a Global Technology Leader and Mrs. Kumar is a Founder and Managing Partner of an IT software company.

Anivarya hopes to maintain her cross-cultural interactions between India and the U.S. by helping the children of India and tying the strings between the two continents.
SAFETY IS HIS DESIRE

ANIKET | Dreamt of serving the country as a police officer.

Today’s youngsters are very ambitious and try to explore different avenues and choose their careers accordingly. There are some who choose a life of service to society. Our wish child, Aniket, too wants to dedicate his life as a policeman.

Aniket Parmar, a 14-year-old lively boy staying in Ahmedabad, is a happy, fun-loving and responsible child who was always regular with his academics. His father, Naranbhai, works in a private firm while his mother Tulsiben is a housewife. He is very attached to his younger sister Gayatri and is, not surprisingly, very protective of her.

In 2012, Aniket was diagnosed with a life threatening illness and was admitted in the GCRI Hospital under Dr. Nitin Joshi. His parents were not ready to believe that their son was suffering from such a grave illness. Their initial shock and sorrow turned into a quiet determination to fight it out and this greatly helped Aniket.

The Make-A-Wish India volunteers of the Ahmedabad division, Kashmeera and Anjita, met Aniket in the hospital and found him to be a very attentive and mature boy. Upon being asked about his wish, Aniket confidently said that he wanted to be a police officer. His eyes shine with excitement as he explained his dream of serving the country by making Ahmedabad safe for everyone.

To fulfil his wish, we contacted the Police Commissioner’s office and the Assistant Commissioner of Police temporarily by the Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner in the presence of 500 policemen, media, our staff and volunteers!

During the day, he gave orders, shared his ideas and explained how he wanted the country to be a safer place. He was then driven in a police car to the Mehaninagar police station where he dutifully attended to a noise pollution complaint and gave orders to stop the noise immediately.

Later, Aniket interacted with the press by posing for pictures and interviews. Aniket was so overwhelmed that he kept thanking the Make-A-Wish India team repeatedly. His parents watched ecstatically as their son’s face shone with joy and life. They had not seen Aniket so lively since his diagnosis.

From there, he was directly taken to the hospital where he underwent chemotherapy and received congratulations on his day as a policeman. Finally, we met Ms. Pooja, the principal of Evergreen school where Aniket studies. “Before this experience, Aniket was very shy and his confidence levels were low. But, ever since having his wish, he is very studious and regular,” she said.

Aniket has recovered now, but has to undergo tests every 3 months to monitor his health. He is very determined and brave; attends his school regularly and even plays football and cricket.

In just a matter of two months, the Make-A-Wish team, along with the help of the police staff, Assistant Commissioner, and the Commissioner, was able to make Aniket’s dream come true in a way that his family could never have expected.

Who knows, this wish granting may bless Aniket with the hope, strength and joy to someday become an actual Assistant Commissioner of Police!
Wishes are special and unique and they mean a lot to our children. Some wishes are so distinctive that the contentment of the heart is far superior to the fulfilment of material desires. One such wish unfolds through a very special child, Ameya Chavan.

At the young age of 17, Ameya was moved from one hospital to another for his treatment. His illness brought on severe vomiting and headaches but that did not hamper his spirit. Ameya had lofty dreams and was different from other patients.

Sparred on by a desire to study, he completed his HSC an excellent score of 66% and didn’t stop there. He took up a three-year graduate course in science (B.Sc) in Ruia College, Mumbai and began his first year with gusto. Against all odds, his innate desire to learn pushed him to take up physics, mathematics and statistics as his subjects.

When Sunita, a Make-A-Wish India volunteer of the Mumbai division, met Ameya and asked him what his wish was, his reply took her by surprise. Any teen of Ameya’s age would wish for a bicycle, a cricket set, or a mobile phone, but Ameya seemed to be from a different world. He pondered for a while and then expressed his wish to meet Swami Radhanath, a great spiritual leader of the ISKCON. Sunita was taken aback and filled with admiration for Ameya and his unique dream.

Ameya, being an ardent follower, was aware of the Swami’s schedule and details and even kept track of all his visits to Mumbai. He knew that Swami Radhanath travelled to Mumbai once a year and informed the Make-A-Wish India team of the same. The team wasted no time in getting in touch with Swami Radhanath and informed him of Ameya’s cherished wish. Impressed by the devotion of such a young child, the spiritual leader who in general does not meet with his disciples accepted the request put forth by the organisation.

Young Ameya’s joy knew no bounds when he was informed that he would finally have his wish.

October 18, 2012 was the day Ameya was to finally meet his role model, his guru! He was so full of excitement that he had butterflies in his stomach and he couldn’t sleep the previous night.

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He shared that although his father religiously worked at the ISKCON temple, he had never been able to fulfil his wish, and so he always thought that his wish would remain unfulfilled. But, due to the efforts of the Make-A-Wish India team, Ameya spent precious moments with Swami Radhanath, received autographed books and created memories that would last a lifetime. In essence, the experience was akin to a lost soul attaining fulfilment. Ameya was spellbound and imbied positive energy from Swami Radhanath and was convinced that he would soon recover from his illness.

Although, Make-A-Wish India has not healed Ameya physically, the organisation’s simple act has encouraged Ameya spiritually. His willpower was boosted by the fulfilment of his wish and he is now equipped to face life’s obstacles. Ameya’s life has a deeper meaning for him with the inner peace he acquired from his guru. Today, he teaches mathematics to young students and hopes to be a mathematics professor one day. We truly hope the best for our dear Ameya.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards Make-A-Wish India by writing a letter full of genuine emotion and sincerity. It expressed his personal feedback on the work done by the organisation for him. His letter evocatively brings out his feelings when embraced by his icon, Swami Radhanath.

“I cannot explain my happiness in words. I am very thankful to you because I think I won’t get this chance again in my life. Your work is so wonderful, not only for me but many patients like me. I forgot my pain only because of you,” he wrote.

In a Bengali novel known as Chaitanya Charitamrita, a beautiful quote reads, ‘Lavamatra sadhu sange sarv sidhi hoye’ meaning ’Simply by a moment’s association with a sadhu, one can attain perfection.’ Although, Make-A-Wish India has not healed Ameya physically, the organisation’s simple act has encouraged Ameya spiritually. His willpower was boosted by the fulfilment of his wish and he is now equipped to face life’s obstacles.

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This is the wish fulfillment story of a 13-year-old boy who managed to stay enthusiastic and optimistic in spite of all odds. Arnav Bansari and his family live in Bangalore where his father operates a small business. He has a younger brother, Manan, with whom he enjoys playing.

ARNAV | Wished to ride in the supercar.

Make-A-Wish India’s Bangalore division volunteer, Dhivya Mohra, met with Arnav at the Manipal Hospital on 3rd October 2014, where he was being treated for a life-threatening illness. Arnav instantly opened up to Dheera by sharing his interests, hobbies, and dreams. He spoke about his fascination for supercars and of his dream of opening a big car showroom. On probing further, he said, “My ultimate thrill will be to go on a drive in a Lamborghini—the perfect combination of speed and style!”

And so began the back-end process of his wish fulfillment. Through various networks, Make-A-Wish India’s Bangalore team managed to connect with the Country Head of Lamborghini, Pavan Shetty. He was amazed with the work done by Make-A-Wish and Arnav’s wish. Although, Mr. Shetty’s location of work was outside Bangalore, he was kind enough to agree to fly down to Bangalore and be a part of Arnav’s day.

The initial plan was to surprise Arnav with his wish on his birthday, but unfortunately, a Lamborghini was not available that day. But another surprise was lined up instead! Mr. Jacob, Business Head for South India at Lamborghini decided to visit Arnav at the hospital and present a cake emblazoned with a Lamborghini logo along with a scale model of a Lamborghini supercar. Along with the hospital staff, Mr. Jacob danced to a birthday song and distributed return gifts to the hospital staff. Thanks to Mr. Jacob and the Lamborghini team, Arnav’s birthday was filled with merriment and cheer.

But nothing could prepare Arnav for the thrill that was awaiting him on his wish fulfilment day. A sleek and shiny Lamborghini picked up Arnav and his family on 28th October, 2014. The excited bunch couldn’t wait for the day to unfold. They asked the driver where they were headed, but he simply answered with a broad smile, adding to the mystery. While on the way, Arnav suddenly realised and said, “Mamma, Lamborghini showroom is this way,” and within seconds they reached the showroom.

Arnav and his family were welcomed by the staff and walked up the showroom ramp like celebrities. Arnav was mesmerised by the fabulous cars around him and was thrilled when asked to try sitting in each car. Mr. Shetty then met with Arnav and his parents and explained the features and functions of the cars and answered Arnav’s questions. The delight on Arnav and his family’s faces was wonderful to witness.

Mr. Shetty then told Arnav, “Select the one you really like and let’s head out on the road.” Arnav couldn’t believe his ears and he reconfirmed it several times. When he realized that he was about to have his dream, Arnav couldn’t help dancing in joy and expressing his thanks.

Mr. Shetty then said, “Mast hai, Lamborghini is the car I am going to buy!”

Arnav could not find words to express his feelings and was not ready to leave the Lamborghini showroom. The happy family took photos of themselves with all the staff and cars in the place Arnav termed paradise.

Many beautiful gifts were showered upon Arnav by the Lamborghini team, after which he spent another hour talking to them about the business of the showroom and the sales. A keen learner, he acquired tremendous knowledge that day about supercars.

Upon his return, Arnav narrated every detail of his fantastic day to his friends, relatives, and the hospital staff. All of them were delighted for him. This experience helped Arnav and his loved ones forget his illness and enjoy the little things in life again. Our special thanks and appreciation goes to the Lamborghini team for making this significant change in a young boy’s short life.

Although Arnav is no more, his parents still call and thank Make-A-Wish India for the happiness they brought into Arnav’s life. They reiterate that they will forever cherish the photos of that beautiful day in their beloved son’s short life.
SISTER ACT!
AZRA and ARSHEEN | Were given something they always wanted—a pretty pink frock and an Indian salwar suit.

Azra and Arsheen are two beautiful and intelligent sisters who live in Hyderabad with their family consisting of their father, Aleem Baig, who works hard on his interior designing business and their mother, a homemaker. Azra is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Osmania University. She is a gold medallist from Koti Women’s College where she did her post graduation. Her academic achievements are extraordinary especially when you consider the adversities she has faced in life.

Arsheen is a second year B.Sc. student studying nutrition in the Royal College of Hyderabad. She loves participating in sports and drama competitions. Both sisters suffer from a life-threatening illness. But instead of allowing their illness to thwart their progress, they chose to excel in academics. What struck us as extraordinary is that they used their understanding of their illness to empathise and provide greater support to others facing similar trauma.

A young Arsheen would often get frightened of the routine blood transfusions that she and her sister had to undergo. She once asked her mother, “Will there be any end to this pain and infection?” However, their mother Abida remained undaunted. She often counselled her daughters that they were no different from other young girls. They simply had to be a little more careful about their health, hygiene and environment.

When volunteers Sudha and Bhagyakalakshi of Hyderabad division of Make-A-Wish India met these two lovely sisters in the hospital where they had come for treatment, they began by talking to them about their general likes and dislikes. At first, the children were reticent but gradually opened up. Azra said she loved playing board games with her cousins. Every evening she eagerly watched the popular television show, Son Pari. On inquiring a little more about her future plans, her face shone with hope and she said, “One day I will build my dream home—a lovely villa by the sea.”

Arsheen was an outdoor soul who loved extra-curricular activities. She liked playing with her friends outside and also kept up with the latest trends in fashion and style.

The girls admitted that their illness had stunted their growth. Therefore, they sometimes felt awkward in school and around other girls their age. They also felt quite guilty about burdening their parents with the expense of having to compensate for their sadness by buying pretty clothes. A new outfit was always the happiness solution! A smiling Azra told our volunteer that a beautiful Indian salwar suit would do the trick while Arsheen wished for a pretty pink frock, one that would make her feel like the cute girls in the movies.

The Hyderabad division of Make-A-Wish India immediately set upon the task of getting two fancy dresses for the young lasses. They took their mother into confidence regarding their shopping endeavours to make sure the girls would be pleased with the results.

Finally, the big day arrived. A grand event was organized by the governor’s office at Rajbhavan. Twenty other families and our volunteers accompanied the Baig family. The air was charged with hushed excitement.

The governor himself was handing out presents. When he called upon Arsheen to receive her gift, she accepted it shyly. She walked down the stage hurriedly and opened her gift and shrieked with joy when she saw her pink frock. She immediately began plans to wear it, hugged her parents and thanked us profusely.

Azra went up next and she was asked to speak a few words. There was quiet courage and determination in her voice. Midway through her speech, she choked on her words as she recounted the numerous medical procedures she had undergone. She spoke of an inner strength that pushed her to do her best, and in doing so, she unknowingly inspired other children to do the same.

Later that day when Azra wore her salwar suit, she confessed, “I have never felt this feminine before.” Arsheen pranced about in her dress all day while blissfully ignoring her mother’s chiding to save the dress for a special occasion.

The staff and volunteers of the Hyderabad division went home proud that day! However, they took home much more than a sense of pride. The girls had taught them a value of life, a value that made one’s daily struggles seem paltry and suddenly no aspiration seemed too big. This wish fulfilment left us with an everlasting impact and gave us hope to live life Azra and Arsheen size!
A LIFE BRIGHTENED
BY MOVIE MAGIC

HARSH JOSHI | Wanted to meet his idol—the Big B.

October 22, 1989, was an auspicious day for the Joshi family as their first son Harsh was born on that day. Mr. Upendra Joshi worked in a government laboratory and his wife, Mrs. Dharmishta Joshi was a housewife. When Harsh turned five years old, the family realized that he found it increasingly difficult to walk. His parents tried to understand the reason for their son's difficulty. After visiting various hospitals and consulting numerous doctors in Vadodara they discovered that Harsh had a life-threatening illness.

Despite this, Harsh had an optimistic outlook. He learnt to manage his physical discomfort and even completed his education till 12th standard, while passing with flying colours. He liked reading religious books and enjoyed Ramayana the most. He also loved watching movies. He was a hardcore Amitabh Bachchan fan and absolutely adored his idol. He had watched the movie ‘Chupke Chupke’ almost 100 times!

Not everyone knew that Harsh maintained a diary, where he would pen his views and personal notes on Mr. Bachchan’s movies. It was only when his cousin Aparna, who was extremely close to him, noticed this habit did the whole family learn about Harsh’s love for his idol.

Aparna knew at once what she had to do to make her little cousin’s wish come true. Sometime ago, she had read an article about Make-A-Wish India in a newspaper. She called up the Make-A-Wish office in Ahmedabad, where she was explained the wish granting process. Harsh was then introduced to the Make-A-Wish India volunteers, Susan and Vinod. Susan and Vinod started chatting with 17-year-old Harsh and identified his wish, which was to meet Mr. Amitabh Bachchan.

Since it was taking the team a while to fulfil his wish, he was asked if he had another wish instead, but he was adamant and replied that he had no other wish. “If it is written in my destiny I will surely meet my hero. If not, maybe in my next birth,” he said.

On the 10th of October, 2009, he received a call from Make-A-Wish informing him that his wish was soon going to turn into a reality. He would meet his hero on the 28th of October, 2009!

And so, the preparations began. Soon the family arrived in Mumbai from Vadodara. The meeting was arranged at J.W. Marriott hotel in Mumbai. It was the day that Harsh had been eagerly waiting for. Harsh loved watching movies. He was a hardcore Amitabh Bachchan fan and absolutely adored his idol. He had watched the movie ‘Chupke Chupke’ almost 100 times!

Harsh stood speechless as his hero, Amitabh Bachchan, was standing right in front of him. He was taken on stage and he was the hero for the day.

Mr. Amitabh Bachchan arrived at the hotel and waved to the crowd. He came to Harsh and greeted him with a “Hi”. Harsh stood speechless as his hero was standing right in front of him. He was taken on stage and he was the hero for the day.

Harsh presented him with his diary as a gift. It was that very same diary which he kept with him, ever since he had started watching his idol’s movies. Mr. Bachchan was glad to receive this gift and told Harsh that he would keep that diary with him, and in return he gifted Harsh with a signed copy of his autobiography and other books.

After their meeting, Harsh returned to Vadodara with his family where he kept talking about his meeting that left a lasting impact on his mind. In the next few days that followed, Harsh had turned into a celebrity himself! He met people from all walks of life, who came to visit him. He met many people from the media who interviewed Harsh and asked him about his entire experience.

His parents thanked Make-A-Wish India with gratitude for fulfilling their son's wish and bringing a smile on his face. Harsh passed away in the next six months. During the time until his death, he watched the entire video of his meeting with Mr. Bachchan repeatedly. His memory is kept alive by his cousin, Aparna, who joined Make-A-Wish India’s Ahmedabad division as a volunteer, as well as his parents who donate some amount each year to fulfil the wishes of chronically ill children.
What's so special about birthdays? The charm of a birthday might fade as you grow older but for a child, it is a day to celebrate and cherish life! 16th June was one such special day for 11-year-old Kasturi Panjiyar, a young girl who lived with her parents and brother Yashbardhan in a tiny house. Her father struggled to make ends meet with a meagre monthly earning of around `7,000 to 8,000. The family's financial position made birthdays, gifts and parties unattainable dreams. Kasturi and Yashbardhan would look at others enjoying celebrations and wondered if they would ever get to experience such things.

Their situation became worse when Kasturi was diagnosed with a very serious illness and admitted at the Institute of Child Health in Kolkata. It was a very tough time for the family as her medical expenses had to be met as well. Despite her circumstances, Kasturi had always been a happy, spirited child. She would never let the hardships of life affect her. Even now, when she was fighting a severe illness, she bravely smiled and tried to be happy.

But a beacon of light was about to enter Kasturi's life. On 5th June 2015, Himanshu Sutradhar, a senior volunteer of Make-A-Wish India's Kolkata division, came to Kasturi's bedside and started a conversation. Kasturi enthusiastically told him about her hobbies, her interests and her favourite cartoons. Himanshu then started telling her about Make-A-Wish foundation and explained how they would fulfil her wish. She smiled broadly, as she spontaneously announced, "I want to celebrate my birthday in a fun way!"

Himanshu was surprised. He thought to himself, "Why would she request such an ordinary wish?" Kasturi intuitively answered his unsaid question. "I have seen others celebrating their birthdays—wearing new clothes, inviting their friends, cutting cakes and having a great time. People do this every year, but I never had the opportunity. I want to call my friends and cut a cake. I want to wear a pretty dress and look beautiful. I want to celebrate my special day and feel like a queen!"

Understanding her dream, he asked her, "What gifts do you want on your birthday?" The excited girl couldn't decide and said that she would let him know later. Touching by this exceptional wish, Himanshu said goodbye and promised to meet her soon.

16th June, 2015 was coming and the Make-A-Wish team started preparing for Kasturi's birthday bash. We arranged for Kasturi's gifts from her list of wishes and packed them in one big box. Meanwhile, another team from Make-A-Wish took up the task of decorating her home and filled it with colourful balloons and decorations. A big chocolate cake was ordered. Everything was set for the perfect birthday!

It was finally time for the celebrations to begin! Kasturi had long waited for this day and dressed herself in a pretty dress. With a beautiful smile on her face and excitement in her eyes, she looked every bit like a happy birthday girl. Kasturi's brother and all her friends started gathering for the party. The cake lit with beautiful candles was brought forth. Kasturi rapturously blew the candles and cut her cake. The room filled with strains of birthday music and wishes. Everyone savoured a piece of the delicious cake. And then there was music and dancing. Everyone joined in to dance their hearts out. Kasturi was lost in all the celebrations, and for that moment, forgot her woes.

It was time to open the gifts. One by one, she opened all the gifts. A huge teddy bear, a kitchen set, a toy bus, a pretty doll, binoculars and lots of other toys filled her with astonishment and joy.

When our team asked her about the gift she loved the most, she immediately pointed to the big teddy bear. The party was a huge hit, but what really made it memorable was the smile on Kasturi's face. She said to us, "This is the best birthday of my life, and spending it with you all has made it extra special and unforgettable."

It was a special day not just for Kasturi but for us too. It reminded us that the things we take for granted in life could be unattainable dreams for others. We realised that birthday celebrations are not just about new clothes, parties and gifts, it is an opportunity to share joy with friends and family. It is an opportunity to celebrate life!
When you want something with all your heart, the universe conspires in helping you achieve it. This is something thirteen-year-old Oraya experienced and started believing after her wish was fulfilled.

ORAYA | Dreamt of learning the art of baking.

On 15th October 2011, Oraya lay quietly in her hospital bed with her parents beside her. She was confused and didn’t know what was happening. At 13 years, all she wanted was to go home. Suddenly, she spotted a couple of young people chatting with some patients. Gradually, they came to her bed and introduced themselves as volunteers from Make-A-Wish India’s Delhi division. They asked if they could spend some time with her to discover if she had any wishes that could make her happy.

Volunteer Ambika Ruia spoke to Oraya at the hospital in which she was being treated for a life-threatening illness. A resolute young girl, Oraya spoke to her about her passion and how it inspired her daily. She conveyed how her recent happy moments had been in the kitchen with her mom. The art of baking fascinated young Oraya and she expressed a wish of learning to bake cakes, cookies and other recipes.

An amused Ambika left Oraya’s bedside that day with a promise of astonishing her. On 9th May 2012, Oraya’s long-standing wish came true at the Radisson BLU hotel where a day-long bake session was exclusively organized for her with the head pastry chef. Oraya was sent a private car with the hotel’s front office staff to escort her and her mother to the hotel. As soon as she got in the car, she was greeted as Chef Oraya by the chauffeur and this salutation followed throughout the day. She had never been treated this royally in her life before!

Her journey of happiness had just started. She was given a warm welcome by the hotel’s General Manager, Human Resource Head, Executive Chef and staff. She and her mother were offered a welcome drink and the hotel’s hospitality was evident in this simple gesture. Oraya walked around like in a dream. She was given her own chef’s coat, a chef's hat and the hotel’s chef’s badge before proceeding to the mighty bakery kitchen. Her happiness was now beyond expression. Dressed in her uniform and accompanied by the Executive Chef, Mohit Khanna, Oraya’s joy knew no bounds as the chefs greeted her with respect.

Chef Shantanu from the bakery and his whole team not only took out time to teach Oraya to bake cakes and cookies, but also patiently answered the many questions from the aspiring patissier. Oraya’s first cake rose beautifully in the oven and she proceeded to decorate it with circles and hearts. Then she started on the cookies, which were crisp on the outside and soft inside—signs of a job well done. Chef Shantanu and his team were very pleased with Oraya’s skill in handling kitchen equipments and in preparing the dishes.

At the end of the baking session, a delicious eight-course lunch was served to Oraya and her mother, the hotel team and the Make-A-Wish Delhi staff. After lunch, they were led to a tastefully decorated suite where they were asked to rest and freshen up for evening tea and a photo session with the press. Overwhelmed by the attention, Oraya exclaimed, “I have been made to feel so special after a very long time!”

That fateful day gave wings to Oraya’s passion for baking. She had found her calling. Today, at the young age of 17, she has her own business called Oraya’s Oven, which she actively promotes through social media. From superman and minion cupcakes to edible flowers and white butter cream rosette cakes with silver dusting, her mouth-watering offerings have Delhi licking their fingers and asking for more.

Oraya’s perseverance and courage in facing her trials has made her the strong young girl she is today. Her most cherished dream gave her the optimism to pursue her ambition of baking for the world, a vision whose foundation was laid by Make-A-Wish three and a half years ago.

“It’s in the kitchen where the warmth of shared memories, laughter and life create recipes that span generations,” says Oraya. Sweet Oraya can’t thank Make-A-Wish India enough for making her dream come true, but it is us who can’t thank her enough for showing us the impact of a small wish come true!
This is a story about how Make-A-Wish India recognized and fulfilled a beautiful 5-year-old's wish.

Pranali was a happy-go-lucky child, living and enjoying her carefree childhood days in Pune with her parents and younger sister, who she loved immensely. Her regular days included going to school, playing and spending time with her family. At the age of 5, the only thing that ever bothered her was having to wake up early for school and doing homework. Little did she or her family know that it was never going to be the same for her, as God had other plans.

Pranali and her family’s life turned upside down when she was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness at a tender age. It was during her treatment at Sassoon hospital in Pune that a Make-A-Wish India volunteer, Mitalee, visited Pranali. Mitalee recalls that the first time she met Pranali, she had been crying continuously. All attempts to strike a conversation or cheer her up went in vain. The otherwise chirpy and talkative Pranali had now become very quiet in the hospital.

Mitalee visited Pranali again at another time and eventually won Pranali’s trust. Pranali’s parents informed Mitalee that she had always been a very talented and soft-spoken girl, but the illness, medicines, hospital visits and simply being away from her real life had started taking its toll on her. Mitalee also learned from Pranali’s father that the illness had rendered her very weak due to which she had to spend most of her time indoors.

Mitalee learnt that Pranali loved listening to stories and so she started narrating the story of a king. Listening intently to the story, Pranali inquired if she could narrate the story of a pari. Mitalee asked her what a pari was. Instantly, with the help of her father, Pranali recited the Cinderella story. Her eyes shone and she couldn’t stop smiling as she described how pretty Cinderella was and what a wonderful gown she wore to the magnificent Prince’s ball. Never had Mitalee seen her so happy.

So Mitalee asked, “Do you want to be a pari?” to which Pranali replied, “I wish I could be Cinderella.” She animatedly started spelling out the similarities between Cinderella and herself, which included that both of them love pet animals, both love new dresses and both have sisters. She also talked about her love for Cinderella movies and cartoons.

“So this cute little girl’s wish to become Cinderella was identified.”

On 22nd January 2014, Pranali was called to a mall, where she was told her wish was to be fulfilled. When she reached there along with her father, she saw a beautiful large palace replica set up in the mall. She was royally welcomed by three Disney Princesses—Cinderella, Rapunzel and Ariel. Seeing this, she was utterly at a loss for words and cried tears of joy. She was given her own magnificent Cinderella dress and taken for tiara and make-up.

The Disney Princess Cinderella looked exactly like the ones she had seen in her story books—tall, fair, with long golden hair. She looked really pretty herself but the reason was neither the dress nor the make-up—it was her electrifying smile.

There was one more similarity between Cinderella and Pranali. Both of them took pleasure in small things, even when greater things crumbled. And that’s what we all should learn.

God gives his hardest battles to his strongest soldiers and, without a doubt, Pranali being one of them, knocked down the pressures of her illness with her positivity and determination.

She is doing so much better now and has started going back to school. It has been one and a half years since then but Pranali still remembers every minute of that day very vividly. She is often overjoyed when she tells everyone about the best day of her life.

Make-A-Wish India wishes that Pranali continues to rise, shine, and smile... and is very proud of its association with The Walt Disney Company and sincerely thanks the team at Disney India for the support extended to make such special wishes come true.
Rahul Jediya has been suffering from a life-threatening disease and is being treated at Nair Hospital, Mumbai. A big fan of the great legend master blaster Sachin Tendulkar, during one of Make-A-Wish Foundation’s wish-granting sessions at the hospital, our volunteers spotted Rahul as a smart and brilliant kid. He was very friendly and got comfortable with the volunteers of Make-A-Wish India, Mumbai division, without any hesitation. He didn’t require any coaxing and was always active and on his feet for any activity, especially cricket! Cricket was, is and will be Rahul’s favourite sport. He loves to play cricket with his friends. ‘Life looks positive for those who never lose hope’, is his matured thought at such an early age.

When our volunteers asked Rahul what he would wish for if a genie suddenly appeared in front of him, his instant reply was that he would wish to meet his role model and the god of cricket Sachin Tendulkar. Rahul had always dreamed of being like Sachin, and meeting him would boost his aspiration and encourage him in life.

Just a few days before his operation, on February 24, 2014, Rahul was picked up from Nair Hospital by the staff of Make-A-Wish India and taken to Sachin Tendulkar’s residence in Mumbai. Rahul was very excited to meet the person he had only seen on television. He had never thought that he would get a chance to meet his hero at such an early age. He had so many things to tell Sachin and was completely prepared with everything that he wanted to ask the cricketer.

When he met Sachin Tendulkar, his happiness knew no bounds. He was on cloud nine. His dream had come true and he couldn’t believe that his lifelong hero was right in front of him. He spoke to Sachin for nearly two hours, talking and sharing his thoughts. Apart from playing cricket, he wanted to know the things Sachin did so he too can develop leadership qualities like him.

Meeting Sachin was the best thing that ever happened to him. His happiness knew no bounds and the pain of the surgery he was to undergo was already over.

Rahul is currently studying in the 9th standard and met his icon Sachin Tendulkar once again on August 14, 2015 at Sachin’s residence along with the other kids. They all played cricket for hours together. Rahul was overwhelmed as his role model had now become his friend as he enjoyed his favourite sport with his favourite batsman.

He was glad to meet Sachin and had a broad smile on his face. He was grateful and thanked everyone with all his heart for turning his dream into a reality. All the kids were gifted a bat, a ball and a T-shirt autographed by Sachin Tendulkar himself, as a memory to be cherished. SachinTendulkar tweeted about this event on his twitter handle saying “#HappyIndependenceDay to all of us! Spent the eve with young citizens from @MakeAWish India. They have great hope and positivity. Enjoyed the evening chatting and playing cricket. Picking up a bat for these children was special!”

This meeting with Sachin gave Rahul a new perception of life. It helped him see the side of life beyond his illness. His dream had come true and this gave him the assurance that his other dreams in life can be fulfilled too. It also gave him the courage to undergo his treatment and face the odds. Rahul still smiles whenever he recollects this meeting with SachinTendulkar and the time they spent playing cricket.

A HERO MEETS A SUPERSTAR

RAHUL JEDIYA | Dreamt of meeting his favourite cricketer, Sachin Tendulkar.
Oscar winning composer, A.R. Rahman, is an idol for most music lovers and meeting him is beyond an ardent fan’s imagination. Our wish child, Rishab, a resident of Chennai, dreamt of such a meeting and Make-A-Wish India made it come true.

RISHAB | Dreamt of meeting his inspiration and icon, A.R. Rahman.

Rishab, a 17-year-old boy studying in the 11th standard, was being treated at Apollo Speciality Hospital in Chennai for a life-threatening medical condition. His family consists of his father who owns a textile shop, his mother and two elder sisters with whom he shares a close bond. One sister is studying medicine and the other is finishing her biotechnology degree. The youngest of the lot, Rishab is also the naughtiest.

Rishab has always had a passion for music which translated into composing melodies, singing and playing the keyboard. Rishab’s greatest inspiration was none other than A.R. Rahman and he hoped to learn under the great maestro’s tutelage.

Our Chennai division team led by Francis, first met Rishab at Apollo Hospital where he was being treated. After an engaging conversation, Francis asked Rishab about his most fervent wish. Without any hesitation he replied, “To meet my idol, A.R. Rahman!” Pleased with Rishab’s devotion, Make-A-Wish India’s Chennai division set out to make this unique wish come true.

After substantial efforts and a long wait, they got an appointment with the great musician. Mani Ratnam, the renowned film director, helped considerably in the endeavour. Rishab’s wish was now to turn into reality.

When Rishab heard that his wish was about to be fulfilled, he couldn’t believe it. The young boy was so astounded at the fact that he was going to meet his icon on his birthday that he kept reaffirming the truth of what he had heard. He was besieged by doubts regarding what to wear, what questions to ask, etc. His inquisitiveness imbued him with life and energy.

On the day of the meeting, Rishab’s excitement was rewarded by Rahman who greeted him with a serene smile. The maestro discussed his aspirations and let the enthusiastic boy play music on his personal piano. He also signed autographs and posed for pictures with Rishab, his parents and the Make-A-Wish India team. Rishab’s curiosity soon got the better of him and questions flew from his mouth. Rahman answered all the queries patiently and confessed that he had loved music since he was Rishab’s age. When asked if he could train under him, Rahman gave him his music school’s address where Rishab could enrol. The celebrated musician also regaled everyone with a song and gave Rishab some handy tips on singing. He also showcased the generosity of his spirit when he gifted Rishab with a Samsung Galaxy S3 smartphone uploaded with some exclusive previews of his unreleased videos.

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When Rishab related his experience, he told us that he didn’t have to think twice before he decided upon his wish in spite of having no hopes of it coming true. He said he was speechless after meeting Rahman, and in spite of preparing questions, he was left awestruck. Rishab and his family expressed their gratitude towards the Make-A-Wish India team and couldn’t stop thanking us for making his dream come true.

Dr. Revathi Raj, Rishab’s doctor, had a few words to say after his wish was fulfilled. “Rishab has had a long journey with his disease. His battle to overcome it was met with great courage and when the same illness struck again, he was completely devastated. His special meeting with A.R. Rahman has transformed him and has given him fresh enthusiasm to face life. Now, he shows up for his treatments with increased courage and hope. Thanks Make-A-Wish India!”

On the 1st anniversary of Make-A-Wish India’s Chennai Division, Rishab played the keyboard and also shared his experience with the audience. He sang his favourite A.R. Rahman songs which left the crowd mesmerised. He evocatively portrayed his gratitude to Make-A-Wish India for making the 6th of October an unforgettable day. He also shared his photos and autographs of A.R. Rahman with the crowd.

Rishab is now in 12th standard and can’t wait to complete his education and join Rahman’s music school. The new Rishab is confident and vivacious. The image of a jubilant Rishab, atop the stage recollecting his most ardent wish that was fulfilled six months before, have shown us the lasting power of a simple dream come true.

Rishab’s meeting with A.R. Rahman transformed him and gave him fresh enthusiasm to face life. Now, he shows up for his treatments with increased courage and hope.
Ruby Sohan Singh, a 15 year old, lived with her parents in a beautiful village in Punjab, a state in Northern India. A bright, ambitious Class 10 student, she grew up amidst the beauty of fruit orchards that her father owned. She played with animals on the farm and enjoyed farm activities. It was her love for animals that gave birth to her dream of becoming a veterinarian one day. She was ready for all the hard work and dedication required to get her an admissions into veterinary college. Life was beautiful and full of dreams until the day she fell ill. Then started a series of hospital visits and Ruby was forced to take a break from her studies for a year.

“Good morning, Ruby”, said a chirpy voice breaking the silence in the hospital room. It was Smita Shah, a dedicated and committed volunteer who had been working with Make-A-Wish India’s Jaipur division for several years. She had come to visit Ruby through a doctor’s reference from the J. K. Lon Hospital in Jaipur, where Ruby was being treated.

Smita introduced herself, the foundation she was representing, and explained the social cause of the foundation, Make-A-Wish India. Ruby was curious to know more and listened attentively. Smita, removed a knowledge book and handed it over to Ruby, saying it was a small gift. Ruby looked at the book, smiled, and then looked at Smita with a puzzled expression. She was both surprised and excited to receive this unexpected gift. She thanked Smita and both of them continued their conversation. Ruby enthusiastically spoke about her keen interest in studies, how much she enjoyed them, and how disappointed she was since the treatment had disturbed her studies. They spoke about various other things. Ruby also told Smita how much she loved animals and that she wanted to be a veterinarian one day. Just the thought of having a laptop brought a smile to her face. That smile gave Smita the idea of a wish Ruby would really cherish.

Smita and the Make-A-Wish India team immediately started working towards fulfilling Ruby’s wish. By selecting the finest model with the latest technology, the best laptop was arranged for Ruby in just one week. The team requested Ruby’s father to get Ruby over to their Jaipur office so that she could receive her surprise. On 10th October 2013, Ruby was at the Make-A-Wish India office in Jaipur along with her father. She received a warm welcome from Smita and her colleagues, but she had no idea what was in store for her. Smita noticed that she had become seemingly more weak and dull in just one week. She and the others gathered around Ruby and surprised her with her wish. She thanked everyone and posed excitedly for a photograph. Ruby was on top of the world; exploring the laptop and learning through a new medium kept her occupied and happy. She had found a way to do something she absolutely loved. She now spent her time studying instead of thinking about her illness. Despite the break of one year from her regular school, she did not miss her studies. Even though she wasn’t attending regular school, she could get help from her friends through email. She continued her studies online and finally appeared for her board exams. All her hard work paid off when she scored 92% in her exams. Ruby had overcome so many hurdles and achieved a milestone in her life.

It’s been two years since Ruby started her fight against a life-threatening disease. Today her health is absolutely fine and she undergoes check-ups every three months. Once, during her visit to Jaipur for her check-up, she met our volunteers at the hospital and was extremely happy to see them.

Ruby still loves to play with animals. Today when NRI guests visit her family at their home, she proudly takes them to visit her farm. She also milks cows and then gladly serves them some fresh milk. They love to talk to her. Her father’s eyes light up with tears of happiness and with pride when he sees her conversing in English with their NRI guests. Ruby speaks fluent English thanks to the exposure she has had to the internet in the last couple of years. She is also pursuing her studies at a college. A talented and brave girl like Ruby is an inspiration to many in her village.
Where there is a will there is a way!

In the Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu lived a little girl with big dreams. Her name is Sakthi Jeevitha and she lives with her parents and younger sister, Dharanya. They live in a small home and do not have the best amenities or luxuries. Her father works as a mill worker and mother is a daily wage earner. They are very simple people and not very well educated. Daily life is a struggle but their daughter, Sakthi, has big dreams for the future. She is studious and ambitious and wants to be a Collector one day.

Sakthi is a smart girl and works hard to accomplish her dreams. She is very active in school, where she loves English and Social Science the most. She participates and has excelled in every competition at her school. She speaks well and is great at sports and has won many prizes. A bright student, she does well in school.

Sakthi is 14 and is studying in class 10, in which she worked very hard to score good grades. Her future seemed bright until the ill-fated day when she was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.

In October 2014, the volunteers from Make-A-Wish India met her at Ramakrishna hospital in Coimbatore. Sakthi is an exuberant and talkative girl. She immediately started speaking to the volunteers and told them how many prizes she had won. When one of the volunteers asked her what she liked apart from studying, she replied “sports”. She loves sports and has won many awards. But due to her illness, she is unable to play anymore. Sakthi was upset with that but she quickly shrugged away her sadness and continued talking.

The volunteers asked her about her wish. She was happy to share her wish of having a laptop which would help her in her development and in her studies. She continued to speak, “I want to be a District Collector one day. I would love to meet Mrs. Archana Patnaik, who is our District Collector and interact with her. It will be a privilege to meet her.” The volunteers promised to return soon. With that, they left the hospital and began preparing for the wish fulfillment process.

Sakthi's wish was not an ordinary one, but neither was her dream. It had to be fulfilled in a grand manner and for that, an event had to be organized. The Make-A-Wish team started working towards the wish fulfillment.

14th October, 2014, was to be a special day not only for Sakthi but also for Make-A-Wish as on that day Make-A-Wish program was to be inaugurated at the Ramakrishna Hospital. Sakthi was asked to give a speech. She was very excited about that and started preparing her speech for the inauguration day immediately.

Finally, the day arrived. Mrs. Archana Patnaik, the District Collector, was also attending the event. When Sakthi reached the venue, many people were gathered for the inauguration. It was an important day for the hospital too. The event began with the CEO of Make-A-Wish India, Mr. Deepak S. Bhatia welcoming and felicitating the Collector. Then the process of wish granting began. Sakthi was called on stage and Mrs. Patnaik handed over the laptop to her. Sakthi's happiness knew no bounds. She was not just excited to receive a laptop, something that she had dearly desired, but was very happy to be receiving it from someone she respected and admired so much.

During the speech, she shared her joy with everyone and expressed her gratitude towards Make-A-Wish Foundation. She said, “I thank Make-A-Wish Foundation from the bottom of my heart. We all have dreams but everyone’s dreams don’t come true. It is only some lucky people like me whose dreams are fulfilled. Thank you Make-A-Wish for giving wings to my dreams.” It was a beautiful speech that touched everyone’s heart.

Sakthi has passed her class 10 exam and is now studying in the 11th grade. She stays in a school hostel and is enjoying every bit of her life. She continues to be a bright student and she still excels in her exams. In her recent SSLC exam, held in March 2015, she scored 414/500 (83%). Her school principal, too, is very supportive of her and encourages her to achieve her dreams.

She loves the laptop and has joined a short-term computer course. The next step is to continue with higher studies and work towards being a Collector one day!
AN ARTIST PAINTS HIS DREAMSCAPE

SMITH | Had his second wish of owning a laptop come true.

Art is a form of self-expression that manifests itself through beliefs, ideals, and perception, and Smith Vohra’s love for art is no different.

Smith, a 15 year old, is a simple and humble young lad suffering from a life-threatening illness who is undergoing treatment in Hinduja Hospital. He lives in Ghatkopar with his family and he is an only child. He studies in 10th class, but like any other teenager, he is good at drawing and loves drawing a variety of pictures. He loves to play cricket and football, and he has represented Maharashtra State in a football match in 2014.

One day, two volunteers from Mumbai division of Make-A-Wish India approached him and inquired about his wish. They asked him many questions to discover his personality and figured out that Smith is a talented boy who enjoys painting and photography. They learned that Smith wanted to visit Kerala to paint a picture of the backwaters and beaches. He likes taking pictures of everything that inspires him and then paints them, but his doctor denied a fitness certificate because of his health condition.

Make-A-Wish India worked on fulfilling his second wish of owning his own laptop so he could use Photoshop to develop his artistic skills. With access to the internet, he would be able to search up art that would inspire him to paint and colour. In a few days, Make-A-Wish India granted his innermost cherished wish by giving him a laptop which made Smith and his family overjoyed. Today, the laptop allows Smith to do anything he wants and helps improve his painting skills. Smith is now able to showcase and sell his paintings in exhibitions. This keeps him occupied and maintain his focus on his studies and paintings and forget the pain of his illness.

Smith is so grateful to Make-A-Wish India for impacting his life that, in return, he gifted them a large photo frame! Make-A-Wish India hopes that Smith can pursue his passion and that art finds a place in his heart like we have with him.
SULAGNA | Dreamt of being a princess who lives in a royal palace for a day!

Like every girl who grows up listening to fairy tales, Sulagna also grew up listening to one every night. But fairy tales have their share of problems too and thirteen-year-old Sulagna’s life was no different. She was suffering from a life-threatening illness.

Sulagna was a happy little girl full of life and dreams. In spite of being severely ill, she was always smiling. She did not give up hope of a beautiful future and always dreamt of being a princess. She was interested in fashion and admired fashion designers. Her favourite fashion designer was Manish Malhotra, so she dreamt of growing up and wearing dresses designed by him.

When our volunteers, Sushma and Sunita met Sulagna at the hospital where she was receiving her treatment on 23rd October, 2012, and was preparing to undergo a long surgery procedure, she shared her dreams with them. They told her that her dream would soon be a reality.

Sulagna had a successful surgery and was very excited to hear that her dress is ready and couldn’t stop smiling. She eagerly waited for that special day when she would get her princess dress. The massive preparations began about 15 days in advance to her wish fulfillment day. Her dress measurements were taken, accessories were bought that perfectly matched the outfit and the smallest of details were taken care of, right from her make-up to footwear that she would adorn on the day of her wish fulfillment.

On the eve of World Wish Day, 28th April 2013, Sulagna’s wish to have a princess dress designed by Manish Malhotra was ready to be fulfilled. The Make-A-Wish India team decided to make this a grand event for her—one that she would cherish for the rest of her life.

A princess has to look her best, so special arrangements were made to dress her up for the day. Sulagna was finally ready and turned to look at herself in the mirror. She couldn’t believe her eyes. “Is that really me?”, she said in awe of the pretty princess she saw in the mirror.

It was time to leave for the venue. The moment she stepped out of her house, there was a royal vintage car waiting to receive her. After all princesses drive around in royal cars, don’t they?

Tata Theatre at the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai was chosen as the venue for the event. To make it extra special, all people who were an important part of Sulagna’s life were called—her parents, grandmother, her treating doctor, her family, friends, other friends, the Make-A-Wish team from International and India office and other well wishers.

The moment she reached the venue, she was welcomed with flower petals. As she got out of the car, a group of young girls took her photographs and autographs, thus giving Sulagna a feeling of being a celebrity. On that day, she was truly a celebrity.

She walked through the enormous stairway of the theatre lobby and this moment was no less than walking through a palace. A beautiful royal couch was arranged and readied for her, just the way a throne is readied for its queen. She sat on that couch feeling every bit like a princess. Gusta came and greeted her one by one. The beautiful decor and the ambiance resembled a royal courtroom where the courtiers met their princess.

Sulagna could hardly believe the events that were happening and she was extremely elated and excited. But this was not all. There was one more grand revelation in store for her—the arrival of her idol the one and only Magical Manish Malhotra! The moment he arrived at the venue, Sulagna jumped off the couch and almost ran to greet him. She could not believe her eyes. She presented him with a bouquet and a card that she had made for him.

A beautiful 3-tier cake was then brought in. It was a lovely pink coloured cake with a crown on it, and it was perfect for a princess! She joyfully cut it and shared it with everyone present there.

Sulagna was truly in very high spirits that day. It was her day. The day when her most cherished wish came true. She met her idol. She celebrated and had fun with family and friends. Her beautiful smile conveyed how ecstatic she was. Another feather in the cap for Make-A-Wish.
Sunita’s nature was true to her name. Sunita meant well behaved and polite. She lived in a beautiful village in Bihar with her parents, a sister and a brother. She was the eldest among three children. Her father was a local businessman with monthly earnings of ₹9,000 which wasn’t enough to suffice for a family of five people but he worked hard to make ends meet. Sunita had a sense of responsibility from a very young age; she learned sewing and handicraft work from her mother. She started stitching clothes to help her family and it was something she loved doing.

Things became difficult when Sunita was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Noisy days filled with laughter turned into depressing silences. On one hand it was difficult to manage day-to-day expenses and, on the other hand, there was a growing expense for Sunita’s treatment. Her father started working harder but that wasn’t enough. Sunita did not give up; she continued to support her Baba even through her illness because she didn’t want to leave him alone in a difficult time. She wanted to help for her treatment in whatever way possible. She would often speak to her mother about how the family’s expenses had drastically increased due to her treatment. “Ma I want to get well soon. It hurts me to see Baba and you all in this state. Once I am fine I will work hard and all our troubles will vanish”. Her mother would hide her tears and continue to encourage her daughter.

Sunita was receiving treatment at RTIICS (Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences) in Kolkata, where she had undergone a surgery at the hospital and was now recuperating. The surgery had made her weak and pale, but she was trying her best to cope with the pain. Her father would look at his daughter and wonder where her lovely smile had disappeared.

Soumi was a dedicated volunteer with Make-A-Wish India and had been working with the foundation since a few years. Soumi visited Sunita and told her about Make-A-Wish India foundation and how she was there to know about Sunita’s wishes. Sunita politely replied to Soumi’s questions with a little hesitation since she was not the kind of girl who opened up to new people instantly.

Soumi could sense her discomfort so she spoke to Sunita about various light-hearted things to make her relaxed. She asked her about Kolkata, whether she liked Kolkata, and if she had seen any interesting places in the city. Sunita said she couldn’t visit any place because of her illness.

Soumi asked Sunita about her wishes, if she wanted something or if she had any dreams. She was hesitant to share her wishes with Soumi, but her Baba gave her a reassuring look, and so she started opening up to Soumi. She told her that she loved to sew clothes and wanted to start her own business. So it was logical that a new sewing machine would fulfill that dream.

Soumi was very impressed with the positive attitude of a girl who was fighting a life-threatening illness, and she wanted to fulfill Sunita’s wish as soon as possible. Soumi, on the other hand, had started making plans of what she would do when she would receive a new sewing machine. How will she start her business? How will she run it? She wondered if she would be able to make that beautiful dress from the magazine that she wished to make. She could hardly wait for her gift. Although for a short time, thinking about the plans made her forget the pain. She had something to look forward to.

26th May 2015 was the big day—the day when Sunita’s wishes would be fulfilled. Sunita was so excited to see them that she sat up in bed and welcomed them. Finally, Sunita’s gift was handed over to her and she couldn’t wait to open it. A twinkle appeared in her eyes the moment she saw her sewing machine. It was better than what she had expected. Her face had a big smile. She opened the manual to see if it was the latest model and had all the technical features and tools that she wanted.

Her parents could not hide their excitement either. They were so happy to see their daughter smile after such a long time. Sunita couldn’t stop smiling and couldn’t stop thanking everyone.

Stories like Sunita’s are a constant reminder for the hope, strength, and joy of a cherished wish-come-true.
A DAY AS A PASTRY CHEF

SWAPNIL | Dreamt of baking desserts like a real chef.

The word hospitality means generous and friendly treatment of visitors and guests by providing them food and drinks. With the growth of the food network, more people than ever are interested in fine dining and in the people who create that experience.

Swapnil Mukadam is 14 years old and is at the Sion hospital being treated for a life-threatening medical condition. Swapnil is mature beyond his years and he made interesting conversation with Make-A-Wish India volunteers. He mentioned that he is passionate about cooking and stays glued to the TV to follow culinary shows. When he is not in front of the TV, he is hovering around his mother helping her cut vegetables and assists her in the daily cooking routine.

Swapnil indicated that he wished to own an oven toaster and griller (OTG) or a bakery kit. He said he is fascinated by baking and is keen on learning the process. He asked Make-A-Wish India if anyone would teach him to bake cakes and cookies because he dreams of making these desserts for his family and friends.

On 27th January 2015, Swapnil’s wish to own an OTG was fulfilled in Leela Mumbai, a 5-Star Hotel near the Mumbai International Airport. He could not contain his excitement and it showed on his face. He was in a state of disbelief that his wish would have so much fun and drama attached to it. He and his parents were warmly welcomed like VIPs with a ceremonial Tilak and garland in the main lobby area, and were overwhelmed because this was their first time out of the hospital. Swapnil was then led to a fancy hotel room to change into the Pastry Chef’s uniform where he donned the chef’s cap and apron, and all this seemed like a dream to him.

Swapnil was once again warmly welcomed into the pastry kitchen. As the kitchen was readied for this little chef, he discussed his wish to make a strawberry dessert cake, cookies and a basic pound cake. The pastry kitchen staff was impressed with the amount of knowledge Swapnil already had about baking. The Pastry Chef gave him a live demo and got him to work alongside him as they made the strawberry dessert cake. The Chef on duty also taught him to do the actual plating in order to make it appealing to the eyes of the diner.

After Swapnil received his OTG at the Leela Mumbai kitchen, he said, “This was the most outstanding day in my life and this is an experience that’s unforgettable”. He was very eager for his parents to taste his cakes and cookies, so while they were sampling his cakes and cookies, he looked at them expectantly for their comments. Everyone appreciated his baking and told him that one day he will be a great Chef. After thanking everyone at the Leela Pastry Kitchen and Make-A-Wish India, he asked the Leela Mumbai’s Marketing Head, Ms Shiraz, if they would employ him when he grows up and becomes a Professional Pastry Chef and Leela Mumbai promised that they would love to have him work as their Pastry Chef.

Swapnil’s energy was revived, and his smile showed us that the only wish Make-A-Wish India has for Swapnil is that he keeps smiling.

THE PASTRY CHEF GAVE HIM A LIVE DEMO AND GOT SWAPNIL TO WORK ALONGSIDE HIM AS THEY MADE THE STRAWBERRY DESSERT CAKE.
VISHAL | Dreamt of experiencing the wonders of the sky.

For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream,” a famous artist once said. Yes, the sight of the stars can make some of us dream and little Vishal was one such dreamer.

Vishal was from a village in Karnataka where his father owned a small business. Growing up, he was fascinated by the sky and all the things that adorned it. He would lie on his bed by the window and watch the stars till he fell asleep. The night sky filled with stars transported him to a different world, perhaps a world of his dreams.

As Vishal grew older, he was introduced to books. It was through books that he learnt of the solar system and outer space and was awed by its magnificence. He would look at their pictures for hours and ask his mother if those wondrous pictures were indeed real. “Yes they are. But, they are far away from us, somewhere in the wide sky,” she would reply.

Vishal’s newfound knowledge egged him on to see these wonders with his own eyes. Sensing her son’s wish, his mother would tell him that a telescope was necessary to experience them. “I want a telescope so that I can see them all, mummy,” Vishal would request his mother.

Vishal was eight when he was diagnosed with a life threatening illness. His parents had to take him to Bangalore for treatment. Unfortunately Vishal’s illness was in an advanced stage and his condition was very serious. Due to his condition, the family left their home and rented a small house near the hospital.

Vishal missed his home, but most of all, he missed his bed by the window. “Mummy, I can’t see the stars anymore,” he would tell his mother. She would try to comfort and lull him to sleep. Vishal’s mother knew that her son’s dream of enjoying the view from his beloved window might never be possible. Vishal’s health was rapidly deteriorating.

One day, volunteers from Make-A-Wish India visited Vishal. He was very weak and could hardly speak. The volunteers tried to joke around and soon little Vishal forgetting his pain laughed along. He happily spoke about the stars and the sky. When he was asked what his wish was, he said, “I want to be there, amongst the stars and the solar system. I want a telescope too, to see the wonders of the sky.”

When the volunteers promised Vishal’s parents that they would fulfill his wish, Vishal’s father suggested they do it quick. The dejected father continued, “I want a telescope so that I can see them all, mummy,” Vishal would request his mother.

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Vishal’s wish was taken up as a Rush Wish and the team started planning his wish fulfilment in earnest. On the day that Vishal was slated to return home, the volunteers reached his house and started work quickly.

Two hours later, Vishal was home. As soon as he entered the house, his mouth opened with astonishment. The only word he uttered was, “Wow!” Vishal was in his dream world. The sun was shining bright and the planets were rotating. He was also given a baby telescope. His eyes gleamed with excitement. “Mummy, I can see the planets and the galaxy! I can see them all!” he cried in joy. His parents were happy to see delight and excitement replace the weariness on Vishal’s face.

The volunteers used an LED projector to project moving stars and fixed up a solar system that worked on remote control. The sun could be lit up and planets would rotate around it. They put up huge LED stars on the bed sheets and pillow covers and radium stars were put up on black curtains.

Vishal and his family forgot their pain and enjoyed the special moment. It was probably their last special occasion together as a happy little family.

Savio, one of the volunteers cherishes his experience and says, “I can never forget the smile on Vishal’s face. For a little while, it looked like he had regained his strength. Such is the power of a wish come true.”

Although Vishal is not with us anymore, perhaps he is somewhere up there, in his favourite place, the sky. One amongst the many stars, we like to think that he is looking down upon us and letting us know that he is happy.
Make-A-Wish Foundation® of India would like to thank all its dear readers and the people who helped grant these unique wishes.

Wish Impact Stories is the result of the prayers and efforts of not only the team at Make-A-Wish foundation but also all the stakeholders involved in the wish process—starting from a doctor who refers the child at an appropriate time, to volunteers who selflessly take the time to understand the innermost wishes of the child, to parents who allow us to interact with the child. People from professions as diverse as the armed forces personnel and celebrities collaborated with Make-A-Wish to make the wishes of children diagnosed with life-threatening medical conditions come true. There are four wish categories—wish to be, wish to have, wish to meet and wish to go. The police department, the medical fraternity, school teachers and the parents of the children themselves made the kids’ “wish to be” come true. For “wish to have”, we would like to thank all our vendors, online and offline, who supplied us with quality products on time and at reduced rates. Also, several celebrities, including Sports and Bollywood superstars took time out from their busy schedules to meet the wish kids in “wish to meet” and made the meetings memorable. We thank all media and celebrity managers without whose support this would not have been possible. For “wish to go”, we would like to thank Cox and Kings for being our premier partner to make as many travel wishes come true. Also, we are very grateful to the people who adopted the wishes and gave us donations to grant all these lovely wishes. Finally, we would like to give a special thanks to the children whose wishes were fulfilled by Make-A-Wish Foundation® of India—it was their enthusiasm and joy which made this whole venture worthwhile.

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The Make-A-Wish Foundation® of India’s Adopt-A-Wish Program offers the ultimate connection between you and a child’s heartfelt wish.

☐ Yes,

enclosed is my Adopt-A-Wish Program gift to make wishes of Indian children come true.

☐ Rs. 25,000 for computer / laptop / Xbox wish

☐ Rs. 15,000 for mobile / iPod wish

☐ Rs. 7,500 for bicycle / an electronic item wish

☐ Rs. 5,000 for cricket kit / kitchen doll set / shopping spree / celebrity meeting / theme park visit

☐ Other: Rs. __________________________

Total gift by donor: Rs. __________________________

Donor information: (details essential to help us send you a receipt, tax exemption for donation within India and wish fulfillment details)

Name:

Address:

City: ______ State: ______ Pin: ______

Phone: __________________________

Email id: __________________________

Enclosed is my gift cheque made in favor of Make-A-Wish Foundation® of India.

The details are:

Cheque number: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Amount: __________________________

Name of issuing bank

Bank branch address: __________________________

Signature: __________________________

Thank you for your gift to fund Indian children’s dreams! Your support will fulfill wishes and create lasting memories for Indian children and their families during their time of greatest need.

Thank you for Sharing the Power of a Wish. Please fill this form and send it along with your gift cheque made in favor of “Make-A-Wish Foundation of India” and send to the head office address shared alongside.

All donations made within India are eligible for 80 G tax exemption.

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GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

If Wish Impact Stories struck a chord with you do write to us with your feedback. Your favourite Wish Impact story will inspire us further and we will carry on our good work with renewed enthusiasm.