

A Special Wish CHRONICLE

A publication of A Special Wish Foundation, Dayton Chapter

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Our Mission

To grant the Special Wish of a child/ adolescent, birth through 20 years, who has been diagnosed by a physician as having a life-threatening disorder.

Did you know?

The Dayton Chapter of A Special Wish Foundation is the **ONLY** local wish granting organization and over 90 cents of every dollar is used to grant the wishes of our local children.



Thanks to the generosity of the Dayton community, the Dayton Chapter of A Special Wish Foundation has been able to grant special wishes to local children for over 25 years.



Cooking Up Memories with Paula Deen

Everyone knows that cooking can be therapeutic and food can be healing, but a local teenager found meeting a world famous food hostess and her family satisfying to both the taste buds and to the spirit. A trip to Savannah, Georgia to meet Food Network Star Paula Deen helped 16-year old Aaron Whitmer and his family realize the importance of cherishing each and every day. With the help of A Special Wish Foundation in Dayton, Aaron was able to meet his idol and experience her positive message.



“It was so much more than we expected,” Donna Whitmer said. “Paula was very kind, gracious and concerned about Aaron.” The Deen family, which includes Paula’s husband Michael, and sons, Jamie and Bobby, invited the Whitmer’s into their home and spent nearly six hours sharing memories, laughter and conversation. Deen’s sons cooked dinner for everyone. “They really went out of their way to make us feel welcome,” Donna stated.

During Aaron’s stay in Savannah, the Whitmer family was able to tour Savannah and be personal guests at Paula’s restaurant *The Lady & Sons*. “It was an unbelievable experience,” Donna said. “Aaron requested the wish because of the positive influence Paula had on him while watching the Food Network. Meeting her in person and seeing how gracious she really is was a moving experience for everyone.”

Spelling S-M-I-L-E-S with Vanna and Pat

As one of the longest-running game shows in television history, “Wheel of Fortune” commands millions of viewers every evening. One of the

game show’s biggest fans is 10-year-old, local wish child Alexis, who calls it “my show” hosted by “my Pat” and “my Vanna”. Every evening at 7:00 P.M. Alexis heads straight to the closest television to play along, guessing letters, groaning when someone loses a turn and clapping when someone wins big.



When approached by A Special Wish Foundation, Alexis had one place in mind for her special wish, meeting Pat & Vanna up close and personal. “The Special Wish folks asked what Alexis would enjoy more than anything in the world, and we said she would love to see ‘Wheel of Fortune’ in person,” stated Alexis’ mom. “In two weeks the wish was approved and before we knew it we were on our way to Hollywood where Alexis’ wish came true.”

A Home Run with Ken Griffey, Jr.

Thirteen-year-old Andy had only one person in mind when A Special Wish offered to grant his wish. “Nobody but Ken Griffey, Jr.,” states Andy. A Special Wish was able to arrange the visit during the 2008 Red’s Spring Training in Sarasota, Florida. Griffey participated in batting practice, then joined Andy and his family near the Reds dugout for the next two hours. A wide smile never left Andy’s face! Andy handed Griffey a stack of index cards with questions, and Griffey shuffled through them, answering every question, most of them with an abundance of humor. After receiving Griffey’s game bat and batting glove, Andy topped off his day by throwing out the game’s



first pitch. Andy said, “I’ll root for whatever team he is on. That was an amazing experience; he is such a great guy.”

“Lost” in the Woods

When local 17-year-old Dayton Shawen woke up one morning in October 2006 with a severe headache, it was the beginning of a nightmare for both Dayton and his family. Dayton was diagnosed with a life-threatening arachnoid brain cyst, and in the days and months that followed he had to endure several surgeries and stays in hospitals in Ohio and Maryland. “It was a shock to us all,” said Dayton’s father, Gregg Shawen.

It’s not a surprise then, that when Dayton was approached by A Special Wish Foundation, he was eager to make his dream come true. With the foundation’s help, Dayton was able to “get lost in the woods.”

Dayton, an avid hiker and explorer, was able to spend six-nights at Olympic National Park. The Shawens toured the Quinault Rainforest, hiked through Queets Valley, stayed two days near Mt. Rainier, and received a private helicopter ride over Lake Quinault. Dayton said it was all possible because of the generosity from both the Olympic National Park staff and A Special Wish Foundation.

“After such a very trying year for Dayton, we’re all greatly humbled and thankful for everyone who went out of their way, as well as those in the community who donated money to A Special Wish, to give our son a jaw-dropping, awesome trip,” Gregg Shawen commented.



Hugs with Woody

Imagine a whimsical village where one can eat all the ice cream one wishes and play worry-free among princesses and cartoon friends. For ten-year-old Arrianna, her wish to visit such a place came true this year. Arrianna and her family traveled to Orlando, Florida for a Disney World vacation where they enjoyed a week-long stay at Give Kids the World Village; a magical, non-profit resort dedicated to serving children with life-threatening illnesses. It was Arrianna’s time to be a princess and take a break from hospitals and doctors. Over the week, Arrianna was able to visit Disney World, Sea World and Universal Orlando, making sure everyone was able to see her smile and receive a hug.



A Special Wish Foundation never uses phone solicitation or professional fundraising organizations!

Ways You Can Help

A Special Wish Foundation is making a difference here in the Miami Valley— granting wishes to children in Montgomery, Greene, Darke, Shelby, Mercer, and Miami counties. Together, we can grant the wishes of every eligible child in the Miami Valley. Ways you can help:

Refer a Child – Anyone can refer a child for consideration by A Special Wish. Call 937.223.WISH

Make a donation* – your gift is tax deductible. Please help us by sending your donation to: **A Special Wish Foundation, Inc.**
436 Valley Street
Dayton, OH 45404

Volunteer – We invite you to join us as we continue to grant special wishes.

Enroll in Dorothy Lane Market’s Good Neighbor Program and choose *A Special Wish Foundation* as your charity of choice.

Host a fundraising event.

**Donations can be anonymous. Please contact the Special Wish office at 937.233.WISH*

Celebrations

A Special Wish Takes Flight with the Dayton Air Show

All eyes were to the skies this July, as the Vectren Dayton Air Show teamed up with A Special Wish Foundation for an extra special celebration.

As they warmed up for the Dayton Air Show, the world famous F-22 Raptor, F-16 Fighting Falcon and USAF Heritage Flight generously dedicated their practice run to the children of A Special Wish Foundation. Special Wish families watched in amazement as the revolutionary stealth fighter, the USAF F-22

performed amazing maneuvers for the first time in the beautiful Dayton skies. The power and maneuverability of the F-16 was demonstrated, as well as USAF's history in flight as the F-22 and F-16 flew alongside the P-51 in a moving performance. To cap off a beautiful afternoon, A Special Wish families received a surprise autograph session with the Misty Blues, the famous all-women skydiving team.



local children with life threatening disorders. Many of the wish children and their families, as well as donors and board members, came to enjoy the fun-filled evening. The children were all smiles as clowns made balloon animals and painted faces, jugglers entertained, and a magic show took center stage. In addition, crafts, karaoke, caricatures, and pictures with Santa were also available. Before leaving the party for the evening, each child was able to choose an age-appropriate gift from a large selection of toys.

Jeffery and April Plummer, whose son JC is a wish child, expressed their gratitude for the party. "We love bringing JC to this party," said April. "He has such a good time, and we can't thank A Special Wish enough for all that they have done."



Holiday Open House

Santa Claus, clowns, food and music filled the Wright State University Student Union last November when the Dayton Chapter of A Special Wish Foundation held its annual Holiday Open House. This annual event is our way of thanking individuals and organizations who have helped grant the wishes of

Special Volunteers

Many people contribute time, energy, dedication and heart to A Special Wish Foundation. Although we value all our volunteers, there have been a few who stood out in 2008 by going above and beyond our highest expectations.

The **West Carrollton Middle School Rocket Team** was awarded the 2008 Lowell E. Baker Outstanding Organization Award for the 5K Rocket Walk/Run in memory of Teresa Bosticco. The Rocket Team has been a supporter of A Special Wish since 2000. Over the last nine years, the Rocket Team has raised over \$35,000 and sponsored nine Special Wishes. The run serves as both a philanthropic event and a learning experience for the students.

Connie Watson received the 2008 Thomas D. Dovel Volunteer Award in recognition of her

continuous help as A Special Wish SWAT (Special Wish Airport Team) Coordinator. Connie tirelessly volunteers her time, energy and generosity to make sure no wish child and their family leaves the Dayton airport without the appropriate Special Wish send-off. Connie is also active with delivering wishes and assisting with events.

The prestigious 2008 David M. Lantz Service Award was presented to **Bob Quire**, the official "A Special Wish Santa". Bob has been making smiles and creating magic for our wish children over the past 20 years. Bob embodies the love and care that are A Special Wish Foundation. His jolly spirit creates magic everywhere he goes.

Thank you all for your help in putting millions of smiles on the faces of our Special Wish children.

Thanks to our All-Volunteer Board of Directors

Gary Auman	Judi Newell
Michael Babb	Tom O'Neill
Shirley Haeuptle	Wanda Priester
James Haubrock	Dr. Rick Smith, MD
Susan Hoying	Mark Walsh
Esther Judson	Ruth Wiles

Did You Know?

The Dayton Chapter of A Special Wish Foundation...

- Has granted over 1300 wishes to children living in a six-county area: Montgomery, Mercer, Miami, Greene, Shelby and Darke.
- Is operated by local Volunteer Ambassadors, has only two full-time employees and one part-time employee, and is guided by an all-volunteer local Board of Directors.
- Is funded through the generosity of Miami Valley residents and organizations.
- Is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization and a member of the Better Business Bureau.
- Is the largest Special Wish chapter in the nation.



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Dayton, Ohio 45404

www.aspecialwish.org

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
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Dayton, Ohio
Permit No. 1058

Interested in Referring a Child, Volunteering or Donating?

For more information call 937-223-9474 or 1-866-414-9474 or e-mail us at aspecialwish@childrensdayton.org

