

## **CHILDREN'S WISH FOUNDATION**

### **Who we are**

The Children's Wish Foundation is a grassroots charity dedicated to providing an once-in-a-lifetime experience to children diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses. Established in 1984 on the kitchen table of an inspired and committed volunteer, Children's Wish has grown into a national organization with chapters in every province. To date we have worked with over 16,000 families from coast to coast.

Our Alberta/Northwest Territories chapter office is located in Calgary with subchapters located in Edmonton, Cold Lake, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Yellowknife. We have granted more than 1,300 wishes for children and their families and currently fulfill more than 120 wishes annually – roughly one every 3 days. Each wish an individual adventure, carefully structured to meet the needs of each particular child.

### **Magic of a wish**

Once a child is referred to Children's Wish and the case medically approved, the child is asked to make an important decision. *What would bring him or her greatest happiness?* For many children, the process of narrowing down the possibilities to one wish can be the most exciting part of the wish experience. They can choose literally any wish imaginable, without regard to cost or logistics, provided their health and safety is not jeopardized.

For a child whose wish is about to be granted, the pain and discomfort of the illness and often harsh treatment regimes somehow become more bearable. The excitement of planning and anticipating their dream has a dramatic effect on the healing of many children. These courageous youngsters often experience a renewed sense of energy and hope as they see a different kind of light at the end of the tunnel.

A wish is a temporary relief and much-needed distraction from the endless procession of doctor's visits, tests, reports, treatments and hospital stays.

A wish is about precious time with family -- planning, enjoying or reflecting on the special magic of the moments.

As more children survive life-threatening illnesses, a wish can also be about memories, pictures and videos the family will treasure for a lifetime, sometimes in the absence of the child.