

we give  
kids hope

The  
Rainbow  
Connection  
kids • wishes • hope



WHEN THEY NEED IT

the most

Impact  
Report 2020



# Our Mission

The Rainbow Connection grants wishes to Michigan children diagnosed with life-threatening medical conditions. In addition, we provide support services to our wish families experiencing financial difficulties.

## From Our Executive Director

I am excited to report that The Rainbow Connection (TRC) was able to continue our mission and even prosper during a global pandemic. We experienced growth and new exciting energy thanks to so many supporters including individuals, corporations and foundations. TRC knows our donors and sponsors are the driving force that allows us to carry out our mission. In an effort to convey our appreciation, and gratitude, we continue to share more wish stories to expand our presence and visibility across the state. We firmly believe that every wish is worth the investment, because every wish changes a life.



For the past 36 years, The Rainbow Connection has been granting wishes to children suffering from a life-threatening illness. I understand firsthand, because of my own experience with my daughter Mandy, when a child is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, a family's world is turned upside down. For many, what was an organized life now becomes one faced with unimaginable obstacles including medical tests, doctors' appointments, hospital stays and often overwhelming expenses. Unfortunately, the endless worry is what really impacts everyone. A wish provides hope and anticipation for better days ahead. Our goal is to put smiles back on everyone's face to inspire them to continue their journey.

This was a year in which we hit the proverbial jackpot in securing grants and foundation awards. In total, TRC received over \$230,000 in grant money to support our Special Response Program, for families experiencing financial difficulties, as well as capital improvement dollars for making necessary repairs to the TRC office exterior. What better time to secure more resources for our Wish families than during a worldwide pandemic. This is what allows TRC to stand out from all other wish granting organizations - our ability to assist our Wish families before, during and after a wish.

Thank you once again to my supportive Board of Directors as well as the individuals who serve on all of our sub-committees. You are at the heart of everything we do. I am so proud too of my staff. Especially this year when we had to pivot so many times, due to the pandemic, in order to stay on track. Together, we remain dedicated to infusing hope, creating lasting memories, and improving the quality of life for children and their families experiencing life-altering situations.

Thank you to all who support us in one way or another.

# 2020 Wish Statistics

70 wishes granted

## Our Kids' Ages



30 kids  
2-7 years old

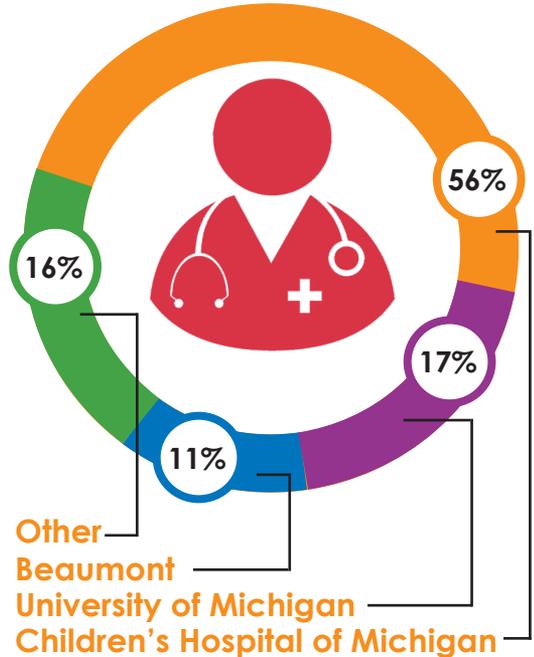


13 kids  
8-12 years old



27 kids  
13-18 years old

## Referring Hospitals



## Where Our Kids Live *by county*



19% Macomb

22% Other

26% Oakland

33% Wayne

## Boys vs Girls



32  
girls



38  
boys



Our daughter, Greta, had a fast and furious cancer treatment protocol. Without any notice, we were thrown into a world of high dose chemotherapy and we never really had the time to process how life changing her diagnosis was for our family. The Rainbow Connection was a bright light that we kept as our north star throughout her entire treatment and recovery. Beyond a wish, they came to the hospital bringing piles of gifts and offered our family many thoughtful community events. With their generous guidance, we kept moving towards a healthier and happier future. During Greta's wish, we saw our beautiful daughter belly laughing again. We witnessed the wonder coming back into her life. While on the wish, we experienced Greta's resiliency, strength, and joy. The Rainbow Connection provided our family so much more than a wish. They gave us our hope back.

-Greta's Mom

# More Than A Wish



When the pandemic rushed into our lives in early 2020, we all dealt with many challenges. For our Wish Families, however, the pandemic compounded the challenges they were already facing in battling their child's life-threatening illness. Our staff got to work right away to reach out and see where we could help.



Our Wish Team worked tirelessly to put together very special enhancements in order to lift the spirits of our families. We hosted: drive-thru ice cream socials, cider and donuts, and Holiday parties. We also held a drive-in movie, special virtual raffles, ZOOM experiences and socially distanced Santa visits!



In 2020, The Rainbow Connection continued its competitive Scholarship Program and awarded 11 Wish Children with \$1,000 scholarships for higher education.



The Rainbow Connection did not stop there. In 2020, TRC qualified for grants that allowed us to further assist Wish Families in need. With grant funding, TRC distributed more than \$114,000 through our Special Response program. Families in need received food boxes, utility payment assistance, housing assistance, funding for transportation to hospital appointments and more. Overall, 882 Wish Family members were impacted by this program.



965

wish families  
enjoyed our  
enhancements

In fact, more than **4,454** family members enjoyed this special outreach program, built to bring joy throughout a most challenging year.

11

scholarships  
awarded to  
Wish Children

We are honored to continue helping Wish Children reach their dreams through our annual scholarship program!

"We received Kroger gift cards and are so grateful! The generosity of Impact 100 Oakland County is amazing and the fact that our family was chosen is a blessing, and quite honestly a life saver, especially given the current climate of the world and needing to be quarantined. Please pass our sincerest thanks to Impact 100 Oakland County! Thank you again, this gift came at the most opportune of times!"

- Julian and Family



"Two years ago I found out of my son, Devin, had cancer. What started as the hardest time of my life was made easier by The Rainbow Connection. Immediately, I was contacted and offered not only a wish for my child, but I was assisted with rent and bills. While trying to wrap your head around a diagnosis of cancer, especially in the same sentence with my child's name, was overwhelming. I was stressed, fatigued, fighting for my child and unable to work due to hospital stays and doctor's appointments for Devin. The Rainbow Connection helped make our lives a bit less hectic at a time when we certainly needed the support. I will forever be grateful for them!"

-Devin's Mom

209

Wish Families  
received  
assistance

Through grant funding, more than **\$114,000** was dedicated to helping Wish Families cover essential needs like food, utilities, and housing.

## Special Response Grant Dollars

**\$48,352**  
in food assistance



**\$54,157**  
in housing aid

**\$6,034**  
paid utility bills



**\$6,025**  
other essentials

# 2020 Financial Report

## Funding Sources

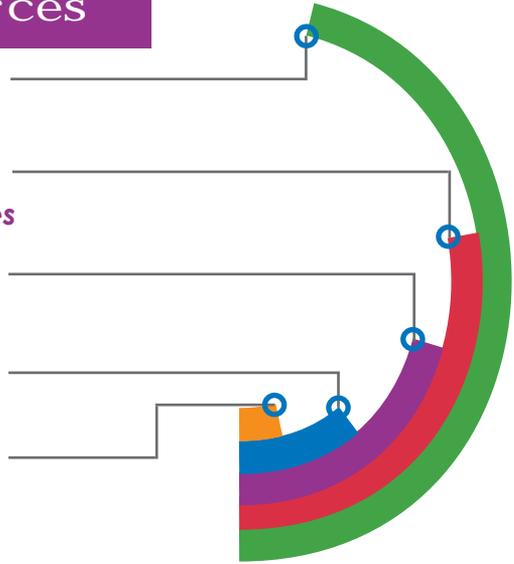
**\$1,052,573 (46%)**  
Fundraising

**\$610,066 (26%)**  
Donated Goods and Services

**\$389,375 (17%)**  
Contributions

**\$210,350 (9%)**  
Grants

**\$43,669 (2%)**  
Other Income



## Allocation of Funds

**\$1,648,596 (86%)**  
Mission

**\$129,734 (8%)**  
Fundraising

**\$81,110 (6%)**  
Operations



The Rainbow Connection has been awarded the highest ratings of two leading non-profit evaluators. This is TRC's 9th consecutive year receiving a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, placing TRC among the top 4% of evaluated charities nationwide.



# 2020 Major Events



Our 6th Annual **Dream Makers Ball** was converted to our first ever VIRTUAL EVENT. Thank you to all of our incredible supporters who tuned in and helped us raise more than **\$255,000** to grant wishes!



Postponed until September, the 2020 **Dobson Open** brought more than 150 golfers back to the course, followed by a lively auction! In total, the event raised more than any other year on record **\$269,000!**



The Detroit Wine Organization once again partnered with TRC to host a one-of-a-kind **Detroit Uncorked** event at Jimmy Johns Field. Limited guests joined us for an in-person tasting, while others purchased "Uncorked Collection Crates" to enjoy at home, raising **\$53,000!**



Our 2020 **Celebration of Dreams** took more than a few pivots in its planning. Guests drove through The Village of Rochester Hills and received a delicious Kruse and Muer meal. Supporters were able to watch our heart-warming Wish Child Fashion Show from the comfort of home. The evening raised **\$167,000** for wishes!

# 2020 Volunteers

82  
volunteers



2976  
hours of service



## Volunteer of the Year



We are proud to recognize Shelleen McHale as our 2020 Volunteer of the Year! She has been an outstanding volunteer for more than a decade!

Shelleen shares her many talents with us by serving on our Marketing Committee. She also spends time helping to solicit auction items, participating in fundraiser events, and making connections with valuable professional resources.

Shelleen tells us that along with working side by side with TRC staff, her favorite part of volunteering is learning the stories of the Wish children we serve.

When we asked what she would tell others considering volunteering with TRC she said, "If you want to make an impact immediately and for a cause that will affect an entire family - The Rainbow Connection is for you." She also warns, "Once you start...you can't stop! It is infectious and an organization that will become part of your life!"

# Thank You to Our Major Donors

Advent Home Medical  
Advicare Pharmacy  
Michael and Mary Anne Alioto  
Alan and Donna Asp  
Bank of America  
Barton Malow Foundation  
Robert and Joanna Bava  
Benzinga  
Stephen and Kaitly Bronzovich  
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Bushido Martial Arts Kick-a-thon  
Brad and Mallory Byrnes  
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Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan  
County of Macomb  
County of Oakland  
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Golf Against Childhood Cancer  
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The Willis Foundation  
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Tom and Cindy Vella  
Tom and Kris Vermeulen  
Janet Dobson Vernier  
Walmart Foundation  
Jeff and Jeannie Welker  
Sue Welker  
Wishes Can Come True  
William and Vivienne Young

*\*The donor list above represents supporters who contributed to The Rainbow Connection between January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020. We have carefully reviewed these names. However, if you find an error or omission, please accept our apologies and contact us.*

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