

Meijer, Make-A-Wish® Michigan Join to Make Teen's Generous Wish Come True

Diagnosed with brain cancer two years ago, 17-year-old Jude is always thinking of others. When Jude found out that he was eligible for [Make-A-Wish® Michigan](#), he didn't want to go on a trip or meet a celebrity. Instead, the Kalamazoo teen wanted to do something to lift the spirits of other children undergoing treatments for critical illnesses.

"I know what it was like to be in the hospital for cancer, feeling alone and feeling like it might be the end," he said. "It was the scariest time of my life. I thought the Christmas in July idea was a perfect way to give back to the kids in the hospital."

Jude is now cancer-free after undergoing two surgeries and two years of chemotherapy, and Make-A-Wish® Michigan is taking his wish to the next level. In addition to buying gifts for children receiving care at Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo, where Jude was treated, the organization is bringing [Jude's wish](#) to patients at children's hospitals around Michigan. During a recent visit to a Meijer store, the Make-A-Wish® and Meijer teams filled 20 carts with toys for these children.

"I'm also thankful for the Make-A-Wish® Michigan Foundation that made this all possible," Jude said during a recent wish reveal. "I'm thankful for the doctors and nurses and everybody who has helped me along the way on my journey. I can't wait to make the lives of all the kids going through cancer better with your help."

The Make-A-Wish® Michigan team surprised Jude by recreating Santa's workshop, with staff and others dressed as Santa and his elves, and a Christmas tree with stacks of toys underneath. The event was a preview of what will take place at children's hospitals around Michigan in July.

"Partners like Meijer are crucial for driving our wish-granting mission forward for Michigan children battling critical illnesses," said Michael Hull, President and CEO of Make-A-Wish® Michigan. "Since 1991, Meijer has partnered with Make-A-Wish® Michigan in many significant ways, from sponsoring Walk For Wishes® and Wish Ball to donating supplies and granting shopping spree wishes. As soon as Jude's wish reveal started to come to life, we knew Meijer would be the perfect partner to help us amplify Jude's incredible wish."

Michael reached out to Jason Beauch, the Mid-Michigan Regional Vice President of Meijer, who has served on the Make-A-Wish® Michigan board since late 2018.

"We worked with our giving team to make sure they could buy more toys for Jude's wish," said Jason, adding that he understands the power a Make-A-Wish® Michigan experience can have in improving the emotional and physical well-being of young patients who need to undergo months or years of treatments.

"We have 386 local kids who are waiting for their wishes right now. We're on target to reach our goal of granting 475 wishes this year, which is the most we've ever done," said Amanda Gove, the organization's Vice President of Marketing and Communications. "We're getting a record number of children being referred to Make-A-Wish® Michigan. Our mission is to grant the wish of every eligible child."

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