THURSDAY'S CHILD

NEWSLETTER

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Caring Beyond the Big Wishes

The "big" wishes—Disney World, meeting celebrities, and going to concerts—are often what we focus on when we share what Thursday's Child has accomplished over the past year. Those wishes are certainly important and will always be a big part of what we do, but they aren't the only way we make a difference.

We dream right along with our kids, fulfilling wishes that provide a respite from treatment or a celebration of completed treatment, but sometimes those wishes have to be put on hold for various reasons. That is the case with several of our young people this year. We've let them know their wish folders are still here, waiting for them, and whenever the time is right, we'll be ready to help make those dreams come true.

We have found, over the years, that sometimes the small ways to help are more important than the "big" wish. The reality is when a child is suffering the family also suffers. Hours spent in waiting rooms and hospital rooms, trips to far away medical centers, tests, labs, treatment, disrupted work schedules, unexpected expenses, trying to keep life somewhat normal for the siblings – all take a toll on the family.

For the past 23 years, Thursday's Child has provided six hospital evening meals each year for parents of seriously ill children who are patients at American Family Children's Hospital in Madison. Each year, we dedicate $3,000 toward these meals, providing comfort, nourishment, and one less worry for families during an incredibly difficult time.

For 42 years we have made the holidays a little more special for children who can use an extra helping of Christmas cheer.

Currently, Thursday's Child's SANTA PROJECT provides $75 Target gift cards for each child in the family. This year we are extending the age limit a bit beyond age 18 to include young adults brought to our attention by the American Family Children's Hospital social workers. This season, we have 100 children and young adults on our list.

Gifts can come in the form of adventures close to home, also. Last year Ron and Sandy Cowan, owners of the Capitol Boat Club, began donating boating trips on Madison's Lake Mendota for some of our children and their families. Their relaxing tour of 23 miles of shoreline, along with a stop at the Daily Scoop Ice Cream Shop at the University of Wisconsin Memorial Union, gives families an enjoyable outing, a day to remember.

Thursday's Child exists because of people like the Cowans, because of the young members of the Mt. Hope Cardinal 4-H Club who understand how important it is to help others, because of UW Badgers Assistant Basketball Coach Lance Randall honoring the memory of his dad with the Steve Randall Memorial Golf Tournament that brought his friends and family together to raise thousands of dollars for us, because of Platteville Elks Club member Sue Vavrika who read about Thursday's Child in the Platteville Journal and set to work to write a wonderful grant for us, because of the Women of Whig Church who recently sent us a generous donation from their very successful rummage sale, and because of all of you who continue to support Thursday's Child with your contributions, notes of appreciation, and encouragement.

-Noël Ferguson



Noël Ferguson, with Platteville Elks Club members Terry Cushman and Sue Vavrika, accepting their $2,000.00 contribution to Thursday's Child.



"Here are the pictures of Evelyn's family from this weekend. What a lovely family. Her sister's family joined her, too. Evelyn is 16 and doing very well. Her mom said "please tell Noël we are so grateful for her." Ron really enjoyed them, too, and invited them back next year!"

-Sandy Cowan, Capitol Boat Club, Madison, September 12, 2026



Evelyn Saevang and her family, Weston, enjoying a day on Lake Mendota, September 16.



Our Mission

Thursday's Child makes wishes come true for seriously ill children and young adults living within and/or receiving treatment in Southwest and South Central Wisconsin.

Your generosity makes a difference. Thursday's Child operates with very minimal administrative expenses, allowing the vast majority of every donation to go directly toward helping children and their families. Approximately 97–98% of contributions go toward fulfilling wishes and providing support to families.

Contributions are tax-deductible and can be sent to:

Thursday's Child, Inc.
PO Box 95
Mt. Hope, WI 53816

www.thursdayschildwisconsin.org

A Wish For Madison

14-year-old Madison, Stoughton, WI and her family will have a Smokey Mountain Christmas this year. A cozy handicapped accessible cabin at the Little Valley Mountain Resort in Sevierville, TN, will provide the backdrop for a family Christmas to remember, with a day trip to nearby Dollywood.



Ivan Hoffland
Prairie du Chien, WI
March 3, 1937- December 13, 2025

Ivan was one of the founding members of Thursday's Child. For 26 years he brought experience, common sense, good humor and compassion to our Board and our meetings.

He also usually brought his wife, Mary, and, with a twinkle in his eye, would announce that he dropped her off at the nearest shopping center where he would expect to pick her up – and her shopping bags – a little later in the day. We remember a good man who believed in helping others. He was appreciated and enjoyed for his suggestions, observations and most of all, his friendship.

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Kids Making a Difference



Scarlett and Cal of Mt. Horeb, WI, hosted a lemonade stand during the Ironman Race in September and raised $76.50 for Thursday's Child! Thank you, Scarlett and Cal, for your generosity and for using your hard work to make a difference in the community! Accepting their donation is Thursday's Child Vice President, Susan Hefty.

The Gift of One More Memory



"My son, Drew Brandt, and our family were impacted by your organization and the giving it does to grant wishes to children with serious illnesses. Drew was only 10 months old when he was diagnosed with a medulloblastoma (brain tumor) and was treated at AFCH with chemotherapy and two brain surgeries. Drew's condition did not improve despite our efforts and he had limited time with us. Through your foundation, we were able to have our families together and have a final family dinner with Drew before he passed away. Our immediate families got to be with Drew one last time and surround him with all the love he deserved. That night with him will forever be a core memory for us. Drew passed away on November 24, 2011.

My mom and dad gave my husband, Ben, and I the opportunity to donate to an organization close to our hearts this Christmas. We wanted to give back to Thursday's Child not only in memory of Drew but also for all of the children/young adults that you will continue to help grant wishes to. We are forever grateful for the kindness your organization showed us. Thank you for the work you have done and continue to do in our local and extended community".

Much Love, The Brandt Family
December 2025

A Note To Share

I still recognize one name in the 2025 Newsletter, Dr. Dvorak. He was at University Hospital with Dr. Trigg in 1983 when our son received chemo for osteogenic sarcoma. He was 53 years old in March! Tell Dr. Dvorak "hi" from us.

-Janesville, WI annual contributors to Thursday's Child since the beginning

GIFTS IN THEIR MEMORY

Each name below represents a story of love, remembrance, and giving. We are humbled by the families and friends who chose to honor their loved ones through gifts that make wishes come true for others.

Drew Brandt
Verona, WI

Dorothy Ferguson
Mount Hope, WI

Valerie Flanigan
Madison, WI
17 years living her dream as Executive Assistant at Thorstad Chevrolet.

Robert Floerke
Platteville, WI

Ronald Hunter
Dodgeville, WI

Andy Kersten
Wisconsin

Jane Lane
Willmette, IL / Cassville, WI

Judy Male
Hudson, WI / Cassville, WI

Kelly Meier
Potosi, WI

Lloyd Mueller
Crystal Lake, IL

James Schmitz
Mt. Hope, WI

Nicolas Seta Ratsimihah
Madison, WI

Gerald Ring
Madison, WI

Ronald Thorstad
Verona, WI

Morgan Turnquist
Madison, WI

Andrea Urbon
Madison, WI / St. Paul, MN

Caleb Wipperfurth
Cambridge, WI

Their love lives on in every wish granted.

If you would like to opt out of receiving our newsletter, please send an email to angelewalsh@gmail.com.