

Karon was diagnosed with a special form of kidney disease, so for this year “Santa” came in the form of Make-A-Wish®. And, like most girls her age, she wanted clothes, lots and lots of clothes! Karon, along with her sister and mother, was driven – by limo, of course – from her home to “Woodbury Commons” mall to fulfill her dream of an extended shopping spree. This mall houses hundreds of outlet stores representing all the famous names in the fashion world. You can also find game stores and places to eat there, but Karon had no time for that. She went straight to “Nautica” where she bought enough jeans for every day of the week and jackets for the winter. Then it was on to “Timberland”, “Nike” and “KB Toys” for tees, sneakers and many more clothing items.

What’s most remarkable, though, is that Karon also considered her family members and bought some presents for them as well. A perfume for her mom and her sister and a couple of T-shirts for her brother made it into her shopping bags. Sharing this special day and wish with her family was really important to her and this was her way of showing it. As they packed all purchases into the limo for their ride home it was obvious that everybody was happy. What a great day! Thanks, Make-A-Wish!

Thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation®, a young boy with a big heart and a daring nature took his adventurous spirit on his greatest dream vacation to *World Disney World*® Resort.

Seven-year-old Domenico told his wishgranting volunteers that he couldn’t wait to hit the rides on his dream vacation. “I’m brave, that’s why I loved the roller coaster rides,” the little daredevil proudly explains.

Domenico, who is diagnosed with Renal Failure, went on everything from *Space Mountain* to the *Tower of Terror* ride and proudly reports that “I wasn’t scared like my mom was; I like the scary rides the best.”

He goes on to explain that he also enjoyed the time he spent at Give Kids the World Village, where he spent countless hours with his favorite Disney characters Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse and was able to have all the ice cream he could eat.

Domenico’s mother admits that her greatest joy was watching her son so happy and carefree. “The trip was outrageous; we had a fantastic time and everything was excellent,” she sums up her son’s wish trip.

If you ask most teenagers what they'd want more than anything in the world, they'd probably answer "freedom and independence" as they grow.

The same counts for 17-year-old Wojciech, who like most teens his age, craves that independence that comes with reaching adulthood.

So in order to get closer to this, his greatest dream, he wished for a laptop computer that would provide him with privacy and independence. "It's great! I have it all to myself because it's in my own room," Wojciech proudly reports.

Diagnosed with Duchenne's muscular disease, Wojciech has had to rely on his family members for help in many areas. Now, with his new laptop, he's afforded lots of the freedom that he has always craved. "I go on the internet and do my homework. I even use it to play games - I use it for so many things," he explains.

Wojciech is very grateful to the Make-A-Wish Foundation® for helping him gain that sense of independence he has longed for. "It feels very good to have something of my very own," He adds happily.

What wish would be the most memorable for celebrating a 15th birthday? That was the difficult decision that Christina had to make. Diagnosed with Lymphoma, she had gone through long, hard months of treatment. Her illness, thankfully, is now in remission. One more reason to celebrate! Christina wished for a special birthday party with all the members of her family and her friends. Since Christina loves poetry, through which she expresses her feelings, and decided that this would be the party's theme.

Through the weeks of party preparation with the wish granters, Christina's mother was impressed by the attention that was given to her daughter and how special the Make-A-Wish® staff made her feel. The party was arranged "exactly the way Christina wanted - with attention to every little detail," her mom recalls.

From the beginning, Christina's big party day was unforgettable. She put on her beautiful dress, stepped into a stretch limo and was off to her party! Once she arrived at the venue, she was overwhelmed by the lovely decorations, infectious

music, and all the great food. The celebration was made even more memorable because her uncle, who is a priest, blessed the event and Christina's cousin, a performer, sang for her. In keeping with the theme of poetry, five guests were chosen to read poems written by Christina. She claims that the best part of the event was "when I was dancing in the middle of the floor and my family and friends were all around!" With a smile, Christina goes on to say: "It was really wonderful that people who I don't know would make a party for me."

Christina's mother agrees, "I thank Make-A-Wish from the bottom of my heart for granting Christina this wish, and for being able to share it with family and friends. It was truly magical, and is something that she will always remember."

Stacy-Ann is a lovely 15-year-old diagnosed with sickle cell anemia and wished to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort because she kept seeing the advertisement on TV and had never been there. Her dream turned into reality as she flew with her mother and sister to see for herself what this magical place was all about.

The "Give Kids The World" resort, where the family stayed, was great, and Stacy-Ann remembers how much she loved that the ice cream parlor was open all day and night. She also enjoyed the pizza which her mom let her have as many times as she wanted.

In addition to the wonders at *Walt Disney World*® Resort Stacy-Ann recalls that the best parts of her wish were the visit to Universal Studios and the roller coaster rides. She says that she just couldn't get enough of the "thrill" while her sister, who is twenty years old, was terrified, while her mother just loved being with her girls – something she had never experienced before.

Stacy-Ann will always remember Universal Studios and the shows and acts she got to see. She loved *Animal Kingdom* but was disappointed when her mother forgot their camera when they got to see the dolphins at the *Wet and Wild* shows and slides.

Throughout, Stacy-Ann had a wonderful time at *Walt Disney World*® Resort and she now wonders what this magical place is like during Christmas time, with all the "special effects" for the holidays. Since she had wanted to go on her trip as early as possible, she didn't get to experience any Holiday magic this time around and plans to hopefully go back some day during Christmas time. Sounds like a great idea and we hope you'll enjoy your stay!

Nine-year-old Nathan grew up in Nigeria, where, at a very young age he was diagnosed with a deadly form of pediatric brain cancer called Neuroblastoma. Together with his family he moved to New York to receive medical treatment from some of the world's best doctors. "I came here to get better" explains Nathan. He was pleased to learn about Make-A-Wish® and the service they provide. Like most 9-year-olds, Nathan loves the "escape" that playing video games provides him, so that's what he chose for his most heartfelt wish.

"They brought so much stuff. I really, really like everything," reports young Nathan proudly. "I received a big TV, a Nintendo Wii, a Nintendo DS and a PlayStation 3...with a whole bunch of games!" – This should allow him many, many hours of the playful escape he so much enjoys. "My brother and sisters like it all, too!" he adds. "Sometimes I watch the Nickelodeon Toons network when I'm not playing, but mostly I like to play video games," he admits with a happy smile.

Sasha loves watching cartoons. So when his mother told him that he could actually meet his favorite cartoon characters, he immediately knew what his most heartfelt wish would be: to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort to meet his favorite characters in real life!

Sasha, 4 and ½ years old, has been through many challenges with his cancer treatment, but his health has significantly improved, and he is still filled with excitement over his wish experience. Sasha, joined by his mother, father and brother for the wish, recounts every detail of his trip as if it happened just yesterday.

During his wish trip, at Universal Studios, Sasha walked right up to Spiderman and shook his hand. "He was very nice," remembers Sasha. "I asked Spiderman how everything was going, and he said 'everything's OK.'" Sasha also enjoyed meeting Mickey Mouse at *Walt Disney World*® Resort and reports that he "saw his home and his office and I met his girlfriend."

Sasha just can't resist to tell us more about his wish. "I loved *Sea World!* We floated on a boat, and *then* I fed dolphins, and *then* we saw sharks and crocodiles."

It seems that the wish experience had a strong impact on the entire family. "Thank you so much!" says Sasha's mother. "We have nothing but praise for Make-A-Wish. We are so thankful for the excellent care and attentiveness given to us. Everything was beyond our wildest dreams."

Sasha follows his mother's sentiments by adding, "And *then* we went riding on a horse, and *then* I ate a bunch of ice cream, and *then* . . ."

What do you think is the best place for a 7-year-old to have fun and be happy? *Walt Disney World*[®] Resort, of course!!! And that's exactly what Calvin, who is diagnosed with truncus arteriosus, a heart condition, wished for. When told that his wish was approved, Calvin exclaimed in big anticipation, "I am going to have fun!" And boy, did he have fun...

As his travel date to his dream destination approached, Calvin got more and more excited. Accompanied by his mother and two adult friends, Calvin remembers that he felt like a celebrity when a limousine picked him up to go to the airport. And this was just the start! The whole experience was great, where should he even begin to tell us about his adventures?

There was a visit to Sea World, where he got wet with Shamu; and he got his picture taken in front of a car named "Lightening McQueen" – this means a lot to him, since he loves cars. Calvin also reports that he went on go-cart rides and that it was a lot of fun bumping into others a few times. Plus, he got to see a big parade at Magic Kingdom, where all his favorite characters were on illuminated floats – what an impressive sight that was!

In addition, Calvin had the opportunity to visit Universal Studios, where he got to see Spiderman, one of his favorite cartoon heroes. Yet, the most memorable thing of the whole trip was the "Expedition Everest" ride. When asked why, Calvin explains, "It goes backwards!" In other words, the entire trip was fun,

exciting and an experience that they will never, ever forget. No wonder that he wants to go back some other time.

Calvin's mother adds that she was overjoyed seeing her son smile and being happy. She confirms that they were treated so nicely by everyone and made to feel so special. "Everyone should experience fun in their lives," she concludes with a smile.

For a little girl with a love of learning the choice for that one big wish to make her dreams come true was as easy as 1-2-3 and A-B-C.

Five-year-old Sarah told wish granters at the Make-A-Wish Foundation® that her greatest wish was for a laptop computer. Her first order of business after receiving the computer was to learn to read. "I can read now," Sarah proudly reports. "I love the A-B-C computer game it helps me with the sounds," she explains the phonetic game.

Yet, it's not just all work for Sarah, who like most children her age also loves to play computer games. Her mom states that the Nickelodeon game is her favorite. "She loves playing it with her older sister," she adds.

Sarah, a bright-eyed kindergartener diagnosed with Neuroblastoma, describes her life after having her wish for a laptop granted as follows: "It helps me learn and makes me smart. I really like it!" We are so glad that you do, little lady!

Due to her illness, 7-year-old Kelly Ann is non-verbal and relies on her mom to tell us all the many details about her wonderful and exciting wish experience. A trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort had been something this little girl had always wanted to do - just so she could meet all the characters that she so much enjoys watching in the many videos she has.

Staying at the Give Kids The World resort was an incredible experience for the entire family, allowing them privacy and the chance to also prepare their own

foods to meet all dietary needs. So daily, in their spacious co-op, food was prepared and cooked to take to the parks. Mom recalls that the hotel was fabulous and even had a game room that the kids loved. She adds that the volunteers and those who work at the resort go out of their way to help.

Kelly loved *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella's* castle where they dined and viewed the castle with all the Disney characters greeting the kids. Pictures were taken, which mom explains with a smile, is usually very hard with a family this size. Mom, Dad, grandmother and two sisters accompanied Kelly on her wish trip.

The best part of her trip, for Kelly, was that it took place over Halloween and that she got to dress up with the costumes that Make-A-Wish® provided for all the kids of the family. Walking around and seeing Disney at its finest, with everyone having such fun, was an unforgettable experience for all. The timing was just right and Make-A-Wish even provided an oversized chair for Kelly to take everywhere and participate in all activities. She's very happy to have met all the fascinating characters she admired on the screen real close up and personal! We are sure that they enjoyed meeting you, too, Kelly!!

There is only one way to describe 7-year-old Sean and that is as a little daredevil with an exploding lovable personality. His mother Kathleen says that he has no fear of anything and even his Optic Glioma can't slow him down. His wish was to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort, but not to ride in the boat or the merry-go-round but to take on the scariest thrill rides he could find. So Sean, along with his Mom, Dad, sister Emma (9), sister Catlin (4) and little brother Brady (18 months), took off together to experience his adventure together.

His wish-trip was over the top from the beginning. Kathleen reports that they family stayed at a place outside of Disney, called; "Give Kids the World". Designed for children with special needs, it was like a miniature Disneyland for kids. As soon as Shaun arrived, he immediately found the "ice cream" stand that was opened from 8AM to 7PM daily. As he remembers, "it was so cool to have chocolate ice cream with whipped cream any time I wanted it," and as his mother adds with a laugh, "he wanted it all the time!"

The steady flow of ice cream provided additional fuel for Sean's over-the-top love for thrill rides. He started with "*Rockin' Roller Coaster*," which flips every way possible, then it was off to the "*Tower of Terror*," of which Sean says, " I went so

high, I could see the Mickey Water Tower and then ‘boom!’ we dropped like a rocket, I loved it!” Yet, this thrilling experience was nothing compared to his favorite of all rides, “*Space Mountain*”. Sean explains, “it was so cool going upside down in the dark, slipping and sliding all around.” When asked if he was scared, Seanea answers after some thought, “maybe a little, the first time but by the third time it was super cool.” He also mentions that his 18-month-old brother was too small to go on these rides with him, but that he told him all about the experience. During his stay, Sean also got to meet several of his favorite Disney characters, such as Donald Duck and – can you imagine – Darth Vader, who took pictures with him and signed his scrap book. One cannot help but smile, when Sean reports that he finished his dream-wish-trip with a late night snack of his favorite food - “A CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM CONE WITH WHIP CREAM!”

It is not every day that one’s most heartfelt wish comes true. But that's what happened to Damaris, a 12-year-old Make-A-Wish® kid. Ever since she was little, she had always wanted to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort and meet her favorite characters - especially Mickey Mouse. When told that her wish was approved, Damaris started to jump up and down, screaming with joy. Her happiness and excitement in that moment had no bounds!

Damaris, who is a very friendly young lady, traveled to her dream destination together with her parents, her twin sister, older sister and her younger brother. The entire family got to enjoy this special trip with her! She remembers that she was treated like a princess and felt like a celebrity when she saw a stretch limo waiting for her and her family to take them to the airport and fly to Florida. She also reports that *Walt Disney World*® Resort is even more magical in reality.

Since she likes animals – dolphins are her favorites – she was very happy to also go to visit *Sea World*, an incredible place that she will never forget. And how could she ever forget the Universal Studios, Magic Kingdom and all the other places she got to visit and explore? As a wish child, Damaris was positively surprised to find out, she and her family never had to wait in line for any of the activities – including rides! Everything was taken care for them. Staying at Give the Kids the World Village, she was treated royally; so all that was really left for her to do was to enjoy herself. And that she sure did... ! Damaris’ mom says that this trip with her little girl and the entire family was “a once a lifetime experience”

that left the entire family with lifetime memories that they will cherish forever. “I’m so grateful to the Make-A-Wish Foundation® for making Damaris’ dream come true,” she adds, filled with emotion.

For a sweet little princess taking a trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort is similar to stepping into her favorite fairy tale.

That was certainly the case for 4-year-old Janai. She has a special place in her heart for the *Little Mermaid* fairy tale and absolutely adores its princess *Ariel*. “Oh mommy, isn’t she beautiful,” Janai exclaimed to her mother upon meeting her fairy princess. The excitement continued for the little cutie when she sat front and center and watched her favorite fairy tale brought to life in the *Little Mermaid* production at the theme park.

Janai, an adorable little princess in her own right, was all but ready to move into her new majestic destination at *Walt Disney World*® Resort. “Janai had such a wonderful time, she felt like this was her new home and didn’t want to leave,” her mother happily remembers.

Little Janai, who is diagnosed with Sickle Cell Anemia, is also a big fan of *Dr. Seuss* and absolutely loved the *Cat in the Hat* ride. Another highlight was a Dolphin show at *Sea World*, where Janai sat mesmerized, watching all the many stunts in the show.

Janai’s mother acknowledges that the Make-A-Wish Foundation® gave them the opportunity of a lifetime. “We always wanted to take her to Disney World and couldn’t... Make-A-Wish® gave us that chance, thank you!”

George is a lovely 6-year-old who loves animals and enjoys having lots of fun – so he says that it was easy for him to decide what his most heartfelt wish would be: A trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort! Accompanied by his parents and younger sister, George felt like a celebrity when the limo appeared in front of his house. “It was so cool!”

Quite naturally, his time at *Sea World* provided the most memorable moments to him. It was an unforgettable experience to watch *Shamu* perform all his tricks! George also reports meeting his favorite characters like Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Goofy, Pluto and so many more.

At MGM Park, his favorite ride was the *Tower of Terror*. The 13-floor drop is simultaneously scary and exciting, he explains. “It was the coolest thing,” George recalls. His father adds with parental pride, “It was more than he imagined and I couldn’t believe that he would do it since he is a little afraid of heights.” George also loved the Animal Kingdom, Magic Kingdom Park with the morning parades, the pony rides, fireworks and so much more. The Universal Studios was another exciting experience and George was a very happy child throughout his entire stay. Every single day was filled with exciting activities and with so many things to see and do without thinking of his illness, Leukemia and treatment schedules. Plus, it was also Christmas time!

“We had the most beautiful time of our lives; I am very glad and very happy that there are people who care, who can make kids' wishes come true and make them feel special,” George’s father sums up the family’s feeling around the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Jayvon is an 11-year-old diagnosed with sarcoma, who wished to go on a shopping spree that would never end. He explains that he wanted a shopping spree because it is a fun thing to do, and because he enjoys having things that will last a long time.

To him, the best part of his wish experience was being picked up at home by a limo, which he shared with his mom, older brother and little sister. Jayvon remembers that the Make-A-Wish® volunteer was very accommodating by “baby sitting” while his mom focused on helping Jayvon shop and browse. With his

limo waiting, Jayvon made sure to get all the important items he had put on his shopping list: A Nintendo Wii, video games, sneakers, clothes and remote control cars. He even thought of his siblings, treating his brother to a pair of sneakers and his little sister to a basketball hoop. A real fun time was had by all and Jayvon was happy that everyone was included in his shopping spree.

At the end of the day, the limo drove four very tired people with happy smiles on their faces home, where Jayvon showed dad, who had been waiting for them, all his many purchases.

Jayvon happily remembers how much fun he had while unpacking the many bags. His excitement and the anticipation of actually using all these items he had wished for and now possessed were great. He wants to thank Make-A-Wish for such a stimulating and stress-free day. Jayvon will never forget this special day on which his wish came true.

According to 12-year-old Jose, there are so many ways in which his fulfilled wish brings him joy, that it's hard to list them all in one sentence. Diagnosed with spinal cord Glioma, Jose had wished for his very own, brand new SONY laptop. Prior to picking his favorite model, Jose did a lot of research to make sure he got a model that could do all the things he so wished for.

Now he uses his laptop to do his homework; listen to music, one of his favorite pastimes; and surfs the worldwide web to educate himself on all subjects that interest him. Jose goes on to explain that he finds the peace and quiet he experiences while sitting at this computer soothing and that he loves the knowledge he is acquiring outside of the regular school day. E-mailing and instant messaging his close friends and relatives always makes him smile, he admits. He enjoys the opportunity to make contact so quickly and to gain information that he would normally not have found out.

Jose can't think of any other wish he would enjoy more. He can use his computer all the time and loves its touch, its instant gratification and the many features it has. He claims that no one else can have the pleasure that he has by spending all the time he wants on his, very-own computer.

“She’s out shopping” Laura’s father explains when we called to learn more about his daughter Laura’s wish experience. “She’s a teenage girl, can you blame her?” he adds with a smile. True, it is quite a normal thing for a 15-year-old girl to be doing, but what’s not so normal is that Laura is diagnosed with Leukemia, a life-threatening form of Cancer.

Laura had wished for a weeklong getaway trip to sunny Orlando, Florida to visit *Walt Disney World*® Resort. “It was so beautiful down there, Laura reports when we get to catch up. “I took my Mom, Dad and my twin sister with me. They even sent a limo to pick us up!” she adds in a still impressed and proud tone of voice.

“I have only been there once before when I was very young, so it was kind of going for the first time,” she continues. “The limo took us to a place called Give Kids the World, which is like a Disney themed hotel, but with so much more. They put us up in a villa, and they had a little amusement park on site. There was even a mini-golf course!” When asked about other favorite memories of her trip she’s quick to say “My favorite part was the free ice cream sundae bar. It was like a mini vacation inside a vacation.” And that’s not all, another thing she will always remember is “that they just let me be myself.....Usually people are always asking me if I am OK or checking on me.....Here, they just let me be, and that was so nice.”

Since her trip took place around Christmas time, Laura and her family got to see the Electric Parade and the special Christmas parade. She remembers, “We also got to visit all of the theme parks. Make-A-Wish® gave us a cool thing, too. It was called ‘Flashpass’ which meant that we got to go to the head of the line wherever we went, even in front of the people with a fast passThe whole experience was awesome!” she explains, sounding like a really cool teenage girl.

When 13-year-old Mansoor had the chance to select his wish, he couldn't think of anything but visiting *Walt Disney World*® Resort—and the week-long vacation he spent there with his parents Tahira and Shalid was everything he had imagined it would be, and so much more. In fact, Mansoor, who is diagnosed with a complex congenital heart disease, had such an amazing time that he has trouble deciding which part was his favorite. “Definitely *SeaWorld!*” Mansoor first exclaims. “I got to see Shamu jumping around in the water, and so many other fish too!”

But visiting *Universal Studios* was also quite a memorable day. “It was my favorite because of all the cool rides, like *Jaws*,” Mansoor explains. And he also loved the *Magic Kingdom*. “We enjoyed *It's A Small World* best,” says Shalid, Mansoor's father. “The costumes, music and dancing were delightful, and it showed how all the world's connected.” Mansoor also recalls how much he enjoyed personal run-ins with his favorite characters, including Donald Duck, Cinderella, Goofy, and of course, Mickey and Minnie.

The family claims that their action-packed trip was magical from the minute it started, when a large limousine escorted them to the airport. “I'm a taxi driver, and I've never had the chance to sit and relax in the back of such a nice car,” remembers Shalid. The family spent their downtime in a beautiful villa in Kissimmee, Florida, in the Give Kids the World Village resort. It featured two bedrooms, two TVs and plenty of exciting attractions; “we could not have ever imagined staying in a place as beautiful as this,” admits Tahira. They feasted on delicious breakfast and dinner every day, and always made time for an afternoon ice cream treat. Mansoor reports that his favorite ice cream was “anything shaped like Mickey ears!”

The family shot videos throughout the entire trip and returned to New York with more than eight hours of tape—footage they cherish and that will help them to always remember this special time. “I had the BEST time,” says Mansoor. “Being in Disney and getting to see and do so much made me so happy.”

Always fascinated with the world of entertainment, 13-year-old Nicole kept saying “Thank God, they approved it,” when she learned that her heartfelt wish to go to the Universal Studios would be granted. It was an unforgettable experience and surpassed all her expectations big time.

Diagnosed with Sarcoma (bone cancer), Nicole has had to undergo chemo treatments and two surgeries which caused her to skip two years of going to school. Then, just when she thought that she could enjoy a normal life, her doctors discovered another tumor in the same place where the previous one had been removed. She is now waiting for additional treatments to start and keeping up her optimistic, upbeat attitude. She likes to think of herself as a survivor and truly acts and sounds like one.

Accompanied by her mother and younger cousin, Nicole remembers feeling “like a celebrity,” when she saw the limo waiting for her in front of her house to take her to the airport. She enjoyed all the parks in Walt Disney World® Resort, but her definite favorite place was Universal Studios. The best ride was the Mummy - “just like the movie and very fast,” Nicole reports. She saw and loved a number of shows like the Fear Factor and even participated in the Disaster show. Since she loves animals, she also enjoyed *Sea World* (Shamu, the dolphins, etc.) and the fireworks at *Magic Kingdom* where she met all her favorite characters. What made her trip even more special was the fact that Nicole and her family were there during the Christmas holidays with all the lights! There are so many moments and memories that Nicole has to cherish and share!

Nicole's mother concurs that the whole experience was “like a fantasy” and that Nicole and the family were treated like “very special people.” She explains, “I am a single mother and everyday I saw how badly Nicole wanted to go over there. And then, Make-A-Wish Foundation® did everything that I could not do for my daughter.” She concludes by saying, “I enjoyed tremendously seeing and witnessing my daughter's happiness!”

Tamara exemplifies the typical 14-year-old, who connects to the world via the computer and the many informational and social networks it allows her to access. When asked why she selected a laptop computer for her wish she explains, "How else do you stay in touch with your friends?" Tamara knew from the beginning that she'd not only wish for a computer, she also knew exactly which one and from which store.

For several years, she had stopped in at the Apple computer store adjacent to where her mother's work place, always looking at the new computers and all their gadgets. So when her wish was approved, she marched off to exactly that store and was so excited to now being able to realize her dream of a state-of-the-art computer to keep her connected.

Tamara decided to go for a powerhouse laptop, "So it can be with me wherever I go." In addition, she obtained a wireless modem, a color printer, scanner and photo booth application to make the most of all of her pictures. Now Tamara was set and ready to go off into the world of the internet.

It didn't take long before she was emailing, scanning pictures and setting up her own site on My Space. The scanner is also cool because it allows her to bring in sonogram pictures of one of her relatives and post them on the internet so the whole family can enjoy the event. She also uses Google to help her with lots of homework assignments that used to take hours to complete - now they take minutes, and Tamara happily reports, "Now it's fun!" It is obvious that Tamara's wish has opened up a whole new world for her and will keep her, her family and friends happy for many years to come.

Owais is a lovely 6-year-old diagnosed with a brain tumor. Although he had already planned for his wish to be granted three years ago, repeat hospitalizations, his grandparent's illness and other family matters prevented Owais from enjoying his wish trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort up until now.

Ever since Owais was two years old and saw the clowns in the hospital with big Mickey Mouse ears smiling, singing and jumping around, he thought that there

sure must be a place where his beloved Mickey Mouse lived. He so wanted to go there! Now, as he was finally well enough, off to *Walt Disney World*® Resort he went, accompanied by his entire family - mom, grandma and grandpa, and his four sisters – what an adventure!

Owais remembers that staying at the famous Give Kids The World Resort was fabulous. The people there were kind, considerate, and so generous of themselves. From-the -heart generosity, with a pure and sincere approach to children.

When asked about the best part of his wish experience , Owais pauses and then smiles, “ it was the ENTIRE EXPERIENCE....the people...the ice cream parlor.....the village....movies....train ride....the fairy who put my ‘star’ in the sky, the one that had my name on it and all the characters that I met there.” His mom adds with a proud smile, “He owned the town.”

All the Disney “worlds” made Owais laugh and want to do more and more, and only his grandparents were able to hold him back somehow. His energy level was amazing. Owais and his family thank Make-A-Wish® for the blessings they gave their family.

When you are still at an age where you believe in magic and fantasy, there is no greater wish than a trip to the magical place that is *Walt Disney World*® Resort!

That certainly was the case for a wide eyed 3-year-old boy named Stephon, who begins everyday with the same question to his mother. “Mommy, when are we going back to Disney World?” His mother laughs as she shares her son’s persistent, daily question.

His excitement began even before arriving in Florida, on the plane ride, when Stephon shouted exuberantly, “Mommy I’m in an airplane.... I’m in an airplane!” When they arrived at their dream destination, his first wish came true when Stephon met his all-time favorite character, Mickey Mouse. “Stephon was so excited; he couldn’t believe he was really with Mickey Mouse.” His mother tells us.

Stephon's favorite park was the *Magic Kingdom*. Especially Fantasy land, where he and his family enjoyed the many rides perfect for a boy his age, his favorite were the *Small World* ride and *Dumbo* ride, which he took again and again.

Now that the family's back home, every day when Stephon asks about returning to his dream location, his mother is grateful that they can go back in spirit and relive the many memories they created on the Make-A-Wish® trip – memories, that she says will last the family a lifetime.

There are some moments in the life of a teenage girl that are hard to top. Going on a shopping spree is most decidedly one of them.

Especially for 13-year old Amber, who absolutely loves to shop. Her greatest dream came true when wish granters accompanied her to the shopping mall of her choice and uttered those magical words to Amber's ears. "Go buy what you want." Buy she did, as she went from store to store filling shopping bags with her heart's desire. "I felt rich," Amber remembers with a laugh. "I can't believe how much I was able to buy," she adds.

Amber bought everything from a wide assortment of clothes to jewelry, sneakers and even a new laptop which she uses to play games.

It wasn't just Amber who had the time of her life; her mother recalls what it felt like to be at her daughter's side on her dream day. "I had such a great time, just watching her on her shopping spree... she had a ball." Her mom adds that she wants to thank the Make-A-Wish Foundation® for making her daughter's dream come true.

Fifteen-year-old Ashley was treated to a full movie star lifestyle experience as her stretch limo picked her and her family up to take them on her wish – a real shopping spree!

Accompanied by her mom and her sister, Ashley, who is diagnosed with Leukemia, enjoyed the glamorous inside of the limousine as she raced off to the mall. What teenage girl wouldn't get excited at the thought of being able to peruse racks of clothes and accessories and choose whatever her young heart desires? Even better: to be able to actually take it all home!!

Pulling up to her favorite clothing store, Ashley tried on many hip clothes and was delighted to even find shirts depicting characters from the movie, *Twilight*. During her shopping extravaganza, Ashley loaded up on jeans, sneakers, a new mp3 player and a Nintendo DS. No wonder, then that the limo seemed a lot less roomy to the family as they rode back to the house! The entire shopping spree day was a movie star adventure that this special teenager remembers fondly. She freely admits that she's still having trouble coming back to the real world and that she will never, ever forget this experience.

Something people may or may not be aware of is that a trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort has been the unrivaled number one wish granted by The Make-A-Wish Foundation® for years. What's more, *Walt Disney World*® Resort is not just for little kids. Ryan, age 17, wanted to go to this magical place because, "I liked it when I was a little kid. It was where I was most happy." But this trip wasn't about riding "It's a Small World" with mom and dad. This trip was about riding "Splash Mountain" with three high school buddies Ryan brought on his wish trip. These close friends of Ryan's stood by him through treatments and are very much like family. Being able to share a teen vacation with them, as well as his parents, made Ryan's wish extra special. While younger kids may be going to bed early to get up for their breakfast with Mickey, Minnie or Winnie the Pooh,

Ryan and his friends were thrilled to learn that the pool and the hot tub of the Grand Floridian, the Disney Resort Ryan chose for his wish, are open all night! Ryan's favorite Disney Park on this trip was *Hollywood Studios*, where he enjoyed "The Tower of Terror," "The Rock and Roll Roller Coaster," and the new "Toy Story," ride.

Ryan and his friends also had fun and fond memories at a side trip to *Universal Studios*. While there, they ate dinner at Potofino Hotel, a favorite place for Ryan and his family. They also went on the "Hulk." Ryan was pleased that the Gold passes at Universal allowed him and his guests to get to the front of the line on all the rides. Ryan went to Florida during New Year's and said seeing the fireworks New Year's Eve from the Grand Floridian with his friends and family is a memory he will always cherish.

Diagnosed with Sickle Cell Anemia, 13-year-old Fatomata wished for something that would be long-lasting, educational and also enjoyable during the days when she has to go through difficult times. Sickle cell anemia is a long-term, chronic disease that can cause frequent pain and fatigue, and Fatomata was looking forward to having electronics that would entertain, just as much as educate her and put together a list of items that would make her happy.

Those included: a TV with a stand; a digital camera and a video recorder; an iPod with speakers, a Wii gaming system and educational, as well as gaming DVDs. She remembers being so happy when all of her items were delivered to her – it was such an exciting moment! Fatomata explains that she's still very happy with her choices and truly enjoys playing and using all of her new electronics items.

The entire family is grateful to the Make-A-Wish Foundation® for granting Fatomata's big wish for education and entertainment, saying that it's so rewarding to see her filled with so much joy as she's experiencing all new items.

Walt Disney World® Resort is truly a magical place for young and adults alike. Nine-year-old Dylan always dreamed of visiting this special dream location. During his treatments for sickle cell disease, Dylan would always think of *Walt Disney World*® Resort and somehow it made him feel better. No surprise then, that when the Make-A-Wish® representatives asked him what his most heartfelt wish was, Dylan replied without hesitation: “Going to Disney World!”

Dylan remembers that he “was very excited” when told that his wish was approved. He could hardly wait for the big day when his dream would come true and he’d fly off to Florida, accompanied by his mother and older sister. On that big day, he couldn’t believe his eyes when he and his family were picked up at home by a stretch limo to go to the airport. “That was so cool” a still excited Dylan remembers, “it made me feel like a celebrity!”

Dylan goes on to explain that he will never forget the moment when he got to meet his favorite Disney character, Mickey Mouse. He was so nice and it was such a thrill to meet him! Dylan also remembers the joy and fun he experienced on the many rides he took during his trip. His feeling of being treated like a celebrity clearly continued. “I didn’t have to wait in any line,” he boasts and adds that “It made me feel very special!”

In addition to all this excitement, Dylan also got to visit Universal Studios, where he enjoyed the *Jaws* ride because “it was very scary!” He also enjoyed his time at *Sea World*, since he really likes dolphins and the village where they stayed: Give Kids the World – an unforgettable place where he could eat all the ice cream he wanted.

According to Dylan’s mom, the entire trip and package was an “excellent, magnificent experience.” She joins Dylan in thanking the Make-A-Wish Foundation® in making his special dream come true and providing the family with happy memories that will last a lifetime.

Although Jessie, a beautiful 16-year-old is unable to speak due to a chronic seizure disorder, Arnold Chlari and a permanent Trach, she still shares all the characteristics of typical teenagers. All the current teen heartthrobs get her interest and attention, and she has, of course, her favorites. Considering that her illnesses require her to live in a medical facility, her family suggested that electronics might be the perfect wish to brighten up her long days. And that's exactly what happened – according to her parents, things are now a lot cheerier and Jessie's days so much happier.

The biggest and most significant part of the wish was a large flat screen television. Jessie can now watch her preferred shows, such as *High School Musical*, and other *Disney Channel* favorites in large and living color. To add more punch and pizzazz to her daily routine, she chose to have a CD player and a DVD player as part of the wish. The room is now transformed into a teenage heaven; filled with the voices of princesses, princes, high school heart throbs and the teen/tween hot star, Miley Cyrus. To make it all visually more attractive, the walls have gone from bare to adorned with large almost life-size posters of the *High School Musical* crew, the Disney Princesses and an array of the sweet characters from *Finding Nemo*.

All in all, the Make-A-Wish® team came through once again with creativity and excellence to make a child feel special. Although Jessie is unable to verbally express her feelings, the big, happy smile that covers her face is proof of her gratitude and satisfaction with her wish. “My husband and I are so thankful to all the Make-A-Wish staff and the people who give money to make these dreams come true. You have made my daughter's days richer and happier and we will always be grateful,” her mom graciously says. Nothing can be better than that!

As a cartoon enthusiast and avid music lover, 4-year-old Mya wished for a brand new laptop computer. Today, the sounds of *SpongeBob SquarePants* and the *Baby Einsteins* constantly filter from her room. The laptop computer is an endless source of entertainment for Mya. “She *really* likes it,” reports Mya's mother, Dora. “It's like her own big screen TV!”

The laptop came equipped with an iPod so that Mya can listen to her favorite songs, including “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” and the “Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Mya

also enjoys her new *Mickey Mouse Club* CD, which she plays over and over again. When Mya returned to the hospital for treatment, the entire staff and some of her neighbors gathered around her to join in singing “Happy Birthday” as the track played on her laptop. Now, thanks to the Make-A-Wish Foundation®, no matter where Mya finds herself, she can always bring her favorite characters and songs along for the journey!

Starting with her wish granting day, 8-year-old Cheyenne is able to escape the weight of being diagnosed with Neuroblastoma for hours on end. Receiving her very own laptop computer was her most heartfelt wish and she was so excited when it came true. “We didn’t have a computer at home, I kept begging for one,” she explains with a big, happy smile.

Cheyenne’s mother is just as excited as she reports that the Make-A-Wish Foundation® not only provided her little girl with a laptop, but also with a printer, a camera, a variety of games, a desk chair and more, when all they were expecting was a laptop! She recalls how happy she was as she put everything together before school let out so that Cheyenne could fully enjoy the additional surprises of her wish.

Cheyenne eagerly describes the magical moment of coming home from school to find all her new treasures. She is very happy that she got exactly what she wished for – and then some! She really likes her cool new laptop and admits that she was excited to show it, along with the other equipment, to all her friends and family. Now, Cheyenne uses her laptop daily for homework and games.

Giovanni is a 6-year-old boy diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy and determined that he will not let any obstacles stop him in enjoying life. When asked what his greatest wish would be, he chose a computer and desk. Giovanni wanted to be able to play games, listen to music and do his homework on the computer.

On the day when his dream was about to come true, Giovanni was very excited to be going to Best Buy in a Limousine that picked him up at his home. He was amazed and astounded as they drove to the store, accompanied by his parents Marcellina and Clemente. Giovanni was so happy. His mom recalls that he was ecstatic as they went through the store and Giovanni got to pick up some games and music.

Now, Giovanni plays happily with his computer and uses it for all it's worth. It makes his parents very happy to see their son Giovanni enjoying his computer and games so much. Mom also states that she will never forget the Limousine ride that first took them to the store, and how wonderful it was for her and her husband to be with Giovanni during this great wish experience. They cannot thank Make-A-Wish® enough for these memories and exciting time spent together on that day.

Living with muscular dystrophy, life for 13-year-old Chris is not always easy. Rooting for his favorite sports team is a way for him to escape his illness, even just for a three hour game on Television. Therefore, when asked what he wanted for his wish, his answer made perfect sense for this young baseball fan from Queens; he wanted to go see the New York Mets at Spring Training.

So Chris, along with his mother, sister and uncle flew down to Florida for five days during his spring break to go visit and watch his favorite Baseball team get ready for the season.

Meeting baseball players is thrilling for any fan, and it's no different for a passionate young fan such as Chris. He began his day going out onto the field and spending time with the Mets players. He was able to speak with some of his favorite players like Johan Santana and Jose Reyes. Chris remembers that Reyes kept jokingly calling him "Papi." After hanging out with the various Mets players, he then experienced the most thrilling part of his day. He was given the responsibility of carrying the line-up cards from the managers in the dugouts to the umpires on the field. This is a very important part of the pre-game ceremonies, and was Chris' favorite part of his wish. After this unforgettable moment, he got to stay and watch the whole game from a special section along the left field line very close to the field. While the Mets lost to the Marlins, Chris

was able to return two days later and see another game! Luckily the Mets won that contest.

While in Florida, Chris also took some time to go to *Sea World*! He really enjoyed that part of the trip as well and particularly loved seeing the dolphins. He happily comments that Shamu is still alive and well. All in all, he had a fabulous and memorable time on his wish and says he wouldn't change a single thing.

Fourteen-year-old Angelo had never been to any of the Florida Theme Parks. When thinking about his wish, he realized that this was what he truly wanted to do the most. He thought it would be a "nice experience for my family and especially for my nine-month-old sister," to visit fun-filled places such as *Walt Disney World*® Resort or Universal Studios. To make things even more fun, he got to bring along his cousin with whom he is very close.

"My favorite park was at Universal Studios and what I'll remember most was meeting the Super Heroes." When asked about his favorite character, Angelo couldn't really decide and concluded that "it is a toss up between Spider Man and Marilyn Monroe." Two *very different* characters but it just goes to show how magical such a trip can be. For Angelo, it certainly was a dream-come-true!

The entire family loved staying at the Give Kids the World village. All were so impressed by how the staff "took time for every detail." "Make-A-Wish® is awesome," said Angelo's mom, Luz; "not only for what they did for Angelo but for all the kids we met during our stay." She added, "We enjoyed every second!" There was not a single thing that Angelo would change about his trip and he said that in the end, the best part of his wish experience was "spending time with my family."

Chanler, a lovely 13-year-old boy, has a difficult time communicating and expressing himself, due to his diagnosis of Sickle Cell Disease and Autism. He very much enjoys watching cartoons and especially Disney movies. So it came

as no surprise that the family chose a trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort as the best wish for him. Accompanied by his parents, older brother (who is also wish child) and younger brother, Chanler was picked up in style by a stretch limo to drive off to the airport.

Upon arrival at the magical place, Chanler was overcome with emotion when he met his favorite character: Cinderella. He was very happy, his mom says, displaying a “smile from ear to ear.” It seemed as if his most memorable park was the *Magic Kingdom* where he met so many of the Disney characters. All the rides were “awesome,” and given the fact that Chanler was a Make-A-Wish® kid, they could skip all the long waiting lines. Mom reports that he was not afraid and crackled with joy. While visiting Universal Studios, Chanler also got to ride “The Incredible Hulk,” a ride that he found to be scary and exciting at the same time.

Another highlight of the trip was to stay at the famous *Give Kids the World* Village, where Chanler got to meet other kids, could have all the ice cream he wanted and, in general, enjoy a wonderful time. The whole family took pleasure in the experience and - for a week - forgot the daily struggles their son had and has to face.

“It made us feel good and I have a different outlook on life,” comments Chanler's father. “I was in tears of joy when we landed in Orlando and we now appreciate more the things that we have.”

“It was a life changing experience. Amazingly, this experience helped Chanler to better interact with the whole family, especially with his siblings. We want to give back to Make-A-Wish Foundation® and I intend to become a volunteer. Because of my position as a celebrity on a TV show, my goal is to raise money so that other kids can have their wishes granted” said Chanler's mother. His father adds, “We are overwhelmed by the kindness of all the people involved and all the help that we received.”

At 5 years old, little Fernando has gone through more tough times than most adults ever will. At birth, he contracted pneumonia. Since then, he has been dealing with an immune system deficiency that has left him unable to speak. In addition, Fernando has been recently diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, a serious and life-threatening genetic disorder.

A counselor at Fernando's school approached Fernando's mother about the Make-A-Wish Foundation®. "The counselor thought that a trip to a place such as *Walt Disney World*® Resort might be great for Fernando. A place where there is a lot of visual and audio stimulation, which is something he really responds to. Plus, he has never been there before, so my husband and I thought it was a great idea," remembers mom the decision-making process. A few months later, Fernando and family were on a plane to Orlando, Florida for a much needed, one week vacation at *Walt Disney World*® Resort.

"Make-A-Wish® had us stay at this great place called 'Give Kids the World' which was like a hotel for kids with an amusement park. My son loved it," recalls Fernando's mother. "We went to *Magic Kingdom*, Universal Studios and *Sea World*. What I will remember most is how his eyes lit up when we went to the Parade of Lights at night. That was really special."

After returning home from the trip, Fernando and family regularly watch the home movies that his dad had recorded during their trip. "Every time we get to the part with our visit to the Woody Woodpecker and Curious George shows(at Universal), he makes us watch it two or three times," mom reports with a smile. "He loves it." It seems that the family has been able to bring the audio and visual stimulation that Fernando enjoys so much back home with them!

Eight year-old Jeremi's wish was to go somewhere he had always thought would be fun. When the Make-A-Wish Foundation® offered Jeremi, who is diagnosed with sickle cell disease, one wish, he chose a trip to *Walt Disney World*® Resort because he imagined it would be cool to finally visit it in person.

And he was not disappointed! Accompanied by his younger brother, and his two older cousins, Jeremi partook in as many adventures as possible. He had such a great time being with his family and going on numerous rides throughout the theme park. Jeremi claims that his favorite part of the trip was when he met Mickey Mouse face to face and even took a picture with him.

Being in the warm Florida sun was the icing on the cake. Jeremi created wonderful new memories with his family, still smiling whenever he thinks of his days in the magical place where his new best friend Mickey Mouse lives.

Visit Mickey's Castle. Touch dolphins. See *Nemo* and countless other treasured characters. With those objectives in mind, it was hardly surprising that KeVaughn, age 7, (known to his friends and family as KE) chose to visit *Walt Disney World*® Resort for his wish. The young man traveled with his mother and grandmother. "The trip was so special," says KE's mom, Colleen. "The first thing that jumped out at us was how friendly everyone was. There was not a single person who wasn't happy to be at our hotel, the *Give Kids the World Village*."

The hotel—and its many entertaining activities, from parades to talent shows—was one of the best parts of the trip for the family. Of course, the rides at the main Disney theme park were not to be ignored either. "KE loved the rides. He went on them over and over," says Colleen. "But I get sick!"

Where to stay may be a bigger decision for KE's family than for others. With his condition, EGID Respiratory Airway Disease, KE has a very limited diet. There are only seven "safe" foods he can eat. Staying in a friendly, accommodating place such as Give Kids the World was key - they came through in spades. An ice cream parlor stored a special treat for KE so that he could order it from the counter just like everyone else. And the dining room chef whipped up an order of french fries just for him even when they weren't on the menu that evening.

There was never a dull moment for KE and his family. KE, who is normally shy about speaking in public, even sang a song during the weekly "Village Idol" talent competition. And he had plenty of fun doling out autographs with the other participants afterward, too. Disney characters came to breakfast every morning, and KE accumulated tons of fun photos with all of his favorites. KE even experienced Christmas in April, during the weekly parade with Santa. "The village was great—you could spend the whole day there," says Colleen. "It was so much fun with all the kids hanging out and playing."

Five-year old Taqueem was the “Belle of the Ball” during her wish trip to Disneyland. The white-glove magic began with her first-ever limousine ride to the airport which made her feel “like a movie star.” Her dream was to go to California to escape the dreary New York weather and experience some fun, sun and princess adventures. Taqueem embarked on her wish trip together with her mom, dad and four older sisters ages 15, 13 and seven. As it turned out, her special wish created lifetime memories for this exceptional young lady and her entire family.

From the moment Taqueem arrived at the Paradise Pier Hotel, she was so excited to see and experience the many exciting details the place had to offer. Her Disney decorated room was a cherished surprise - “I really loved the big, comfy beds!” she recalls with excitement in her voice. After settling in, Taqueem and her family blasted off to “infinity and beyond” during their interactive and intergalactic battle with *Buzz Lightyear*. She was thrilled to pilot her own Star Cruiser and battle the enemy. *Toy Story Mania*, complete with 3-D glasses (which she thought were super cool) was another favorite attraction along with the *Mad Tea Party* ride where she laughed as she spun in circles.

In the end, though, her very favorite, most memorable part of the trip was “meeting all the Disney Princesses in the park.” When asked whom she liked the most, without hesitation, this enthusiastic girl with big dreams exclaims, “Belle from *Beauty and the Beast*!” Taqueem’s mom points out that the vacation was so special because it gave her family a chance to escape their everyday routine and experience a place where wishes become real every day.

Tyler, who is eight years old, is a go-getter and doesn’t let his leukemia or his chemotherapy treatments get in the way of his adventurous spirit. This became very clear throughout his wish trip to his favorite place, *Walt Disney World®* Resort. “The flight down to Orlando was fun and I love flying,” Tyler reports. When he reached Orlando and arrived at the “Give Kids The World” village, he couldn’t believe this magical place that caters so well to children and their imagination.

It didn’t take long for Tyler to get into the action at the village. As fast as he could get into his swimsuit, he and his brother Ryan, who is 12, were at the pool flying

down the slides and getting soaked in the waterfalls. This was just the beginning! There was so much more to enjoy for him and his brother: From the speed boats to the wild merry-go-round and a miniature golf course that sprinkles you with water every time you sink the ball in the hole – Tyler experienced it all! When he wasn't running from event to event he was "in this amazing game room with everything you could think of," playing all kinds of electronic adventure games. To top off the joy and fun, he did this while eating a three-scoop chocolate ice cream cone. All of these activities took place at "Give Kids the World," now imagine what this young adventurer would do in the Walt Disney Theme Parks!

Tyler of course didn't go to just one park; he explored all of the parks in the resort. In each one of them he would look for – and find - the most scary, exciting ride and then throw himself fully into the experience. His favorites were, *Tower of Terror*, *Space Mountain*, and *The Speed Car Test Track*. His mom, Lisa, recalls that he never ran out of energy during his wish trip. After several roller coaster rides and pictures with his favorite Disney character, Goofy, he was on his way to *Sea World*. Tyler was given a front-row seat and was able to pet the dolphins, which he describes as, "the coolest thing because they came right up to you by wiggling their tail fins." At the end of his wish trip, Tyler came home with all kinds of Disney memorabilia – T-Shirts, hats, pictures and a ton of memories. His mom reports that since their return, Tyler keeps asking, "Mom, when can we go back again? Soon, please!"

The famous saying about a person's home being their castle certainly applies to a wish child who thought of her whole family when choosing her greatest wish.

When thinking about her greatest wish, 13-year-old Blimie wanted something that her family could share with her as well. Something, they'd all enjoy for a long time together. So after some serious thinking, she asked the Make-A-Wish Foundation® to have her family's living room redecorated to her own tastes and desires. "I wanted something we could all enjoy," Blimie explains. "I thought it would be a better wish to have something we could share."

Together with her mom, Blimie went on a shopping spree to pick out everything for their new living room – from a new couch to tables. Even small details such as a new chandelier and a lamp were replaced. "It was fun picking everything out together," Blimie recalls the shopping spree. "The room looks beautiful now; it really enhances the whole house."

It is now a place the entire family can share and enjoy their quality time together. That's no small feat because Blimie comes from a very large family. She has two sisters and seven brothers. "It's great to have a place where we can all be together; we can all even sit down together," Blimie laughs, acknowledging that this is not an easy thing to do for a family the size of her own.

In listening to Blimie talk, it becomes obvious that this family-oriented teenager got her wish to create a beautiful environment to enjoy time with her family.

Elliot, like all good 4-year-olds, knows who Mickey Mouse is. He knows the movies, and the ears, and he even recognizes the voice. Yet, what Elliot didn't know, was where Mickey Mouse lived. All that changed one lucky day when Elliot and his family sat down to watch a video about *Walt Disney World*® Resort. After seeing Mickey and his friends in the *Magic Kingdom*, Elliot not only knew where Mickey Mouse lived, but he also knew where he, himself, wanted to go. With help from the Make-A-Wish Foundation®, Elliot, his sister Emily, and their parents all hopped an airplane headed to visit Mickey in this magical place.

When the family arrived in Mickey's hometown they could sense immediately how unlike New York City it was. For one...it was HOT...and it wasn't even summer yet! The heat didn't faze Elliot though. Each morning, he would wake up and ask the day's most important question: "Who are we going to see at the park today?" This was Elliot's way of reminding his family how special this trip was. It was also his subtle way of reminding them how much he wanted to meet another one of his idols, *Spider Man*, over at Universal Studios. When Elliot and *Spider Man* finally met, Elliot couldn't help but stand in awe; he was thrilled to meet his other hero and get to take a few photos with him, too.

As the family explored *Walt Disney World*® Resort, they realized their favorite place was Mickey's own backyard—the *Magic Kingdom*. Here they got to skip lines, go on rides, and enjoyed being honored guests of the Kingdom.

Elliot's parents and sister all enjoyed seeing Elliot's Disney wish come true. It was a special time spent together as a family in a very magical place. They look forward to returning to Mickey's hometown one day and getting to say "Hi" to all their new friends....

Little Jailyn has always loved Cinderella, so it came as no surprise that her greatest wish was to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort and meet her idol in person. Going to the Magic Kingdom, she would not only meet her favorite Disney character but she would also get to live for a while in a world very different from her own.

It was a busy week for 5-year-old Jailyn, her mom, and her aunt. First up was a visit to Cinderella's Castle where she met Cinderella – a definite highlight of Jailyn's trip and her favorite memory. Her mom, Leonida, recalls that she has never seen Jailyn so excited and adds that she will never forget "the look on my baby's face!"

As thrilling as meeting Cinderella was, Jailyn also got to meet Mickey and Minnie along with many other Disney characters, and spent great days at the Park going on all the rides. She especially loved the tea cups and laughed when she saw how scared her mom and aunt Mariana were to go on the rides with her! All days were filled with fun and when the family got back each day to *Give Kids the World Village*, where they stayed, they were grateful for the warmth and caring of the staff. "They couldn't do enough for us and made our stay just great," a still grateful mom reports.

Jailyn also went to *Sea World*, where she got to feed the dolphins, an experience she truly enjoyed and will never forget. Visiting *Sea World* was yet another amazing day for Jailyn during her wish trip. Mom confirms that this was a special trip for her little girl, who's been through so much and for the entire family. "The Make-A-Wish® organization is an angel in our life and has made Jailyn's dreams come true!"

Six-year-old Kaitlyn, like many girls her age, has always wanted to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort. When asked why she chose a trip to this magical place for her wish, she answers that she wanted to go see and experience it for herself, after seeing it on TV so many times.

Kaitlyn, who is diagnosed with leukemia, adds that for her, the best part of her wish was staying at the *Give Kids The World Resort* where the family actually got to spend a lot of time since her father hurt his back during the trip and couldn't move for a couple of days. Kaitlyn remembers that everyone was so nice there and the food delicious. Make-A-Wish® even got a wheelchair for her father and her grandmother came down to help her mother – everybody was so supportive and in the end, it all worked out very well. The traveling party included Kaitlyn, her parents, her sister Lauren and then her grandmother for the last couple of days.

Magic Kingdom was Kaitlyn's favorite resort. She got to see the castle and the princesses and had her hair and makeup done, like a real princess. Of course, she loved having her picture taken with the princesses and some other Disney characters such as SNOW WHITE. Kaitlyn proudly reports that there was even a star with her name shot up high into the sky. That was so cool! She loved visiting *Epcot* and *THE FAST TRACK* car races. Kaitlyn said, "The faster the better" and wanted more and more.

Naturally, Kaitlyn says that the only thing she would change about her magical wish experience is that her dad would have joined them in all the activities. The rest of the trip was pure pleasure. We are so pleased to hear that and glad that this little princess enjoyed her trip.

Three-year-old Marcus, who is diagnosed with Leukemia, had just one, most heartfelt wish – no doubt in his mind: To go and spend some time at his dream destination, *Walt Disney World*® Resort. As Marcus and his family were making their way to the airport, the excitement in him started to rise. Above, a plane flew by, and he gazed in amazement at the size of it. His mom describes how happy little Marcus was at the airport, especially on the plane itself! "The delighted look on his face was touching," she explains.

After arriving in Florida, the family was only short hours away from the big destination: *Walt Disney World*® Resort! Marcus beamed as they rolled up to the gates of the park. There was just so much to do; he didn't even know where to start! Although *Shrek* and some of the rides were a little frightening, Marcus had a wonderful time meeting other famous Disney characters.

Being a great *Mickey Mouse Club House* fan, his two favorites, *Mickey* and *Minnie Mouse*, were just fantastic! But his most exiting moment on the whole trip

was watching “Cars” the movie! Marcus loves cars, and after the movie ended, before she even knew it, he ran right past his mom to the real character standing outside the theater! Thrilled as could be, he enjoyed his dream moment. “The expression on his face was just amazing, he was so happy,” his mother recalls.

Every day of their stay, the family returned to the hotel with big, happy smiles on their faces.

Seventeen-year-old Randi is excited to be starting her college career. Her wish, to make her start even more special, was to get a laptop computer. It was definitely the right wish for her. She says of her new laptop, “I love it so much!” Randi was looking for a laptop that’s as she puts it, high-tech with multi-functionability. Randi chose a Mac, because she says it’s more likely to remain virus free. A smart consumer, and very pragmatic, Randi also got an extended warranty on her computer so if something should happen while she’s away at school she can have it repaired. And though Randi plans on using her computer for schoolwork at George Washington University this fall she also uses the computer to talk to her friends. “It’s better than using up minutes on my phone,” she explains. She also has software that allows for easy downloading of songs onto her iPod. A future student of international business, Randi had fun shopping for computer accessories such as a computer bag, a desk and chair and an iPod case. One of Randi’s favorite accessories is a printer that will allow her to print up photos, along with a scanner, a copier and a fax. She also has cartridges so she can start printing photos of her new home away from home right away! Seems that Randi’s all set to go for a great start at college!

Four-year-old Diondre’s wish experience was exciting from the minute it started. Not only was he going to go to *Walt Disney World*® Resort, he was also on a plane for the first time ever!!! His mom, Denise, was on her first flight, too, and being a little nervous kept pulling the window shades down. Every time she did so, Diondre would say, “Mommy, open the window so I can see the sky!” Seeing

the beautiful sky was just the beginning as Diondre and his three brothers; Darnell (12), Dante (10) and his little brother Davon (2) would soon find out.

When Diondre and his family arrived in Orlando they were picked up and brought to their hotel, "Give Kids the World" - a very special fun place for children. Diondre was not going to let his eye tumor stop him from seeing and exploring everything. As soon as they checked in and got settled in their rooms, he was off and running. Diondre reports that he went on the Merry-Go-round three times, then off to the pool with its many slides where he and his brothers splashed each other until they were exhausted. Yet, the brothers still found the time and energy to go into the arcade and computer game room. They finished up the night by picking up a video and playing it over and over again until they all fell asleep.

Over the next few days it was off to the Disney® Theme Park, *Universal Studios* and *Sea World*. Diondre loves all the various characters and got to meet his favorites. Photos were taken with Mickey and Minnie, Dora the Explorer and his all time favorite, Spiderman, who after taking pictures with Diondre also signed autographs. Mom recalls, "He was smiling from ear to ear!"

The fun didn't end there. Diondre got to have a front row seat at the *Dr. Seuss* and *Elmo* shows, petted the dolphins at *Sea World* and had a front row seat at the Disney parade where Woody from *Toy Story* personally came up to him and gave him a hug. Every night ended with another video and an ice cream treat of the day at their hotel. When the family got home, there was one single question Diondre kept asking his mother, "When can we do this again?"

Benjamin is a 7-year-old diagnosed with epilepsy who hasn't been able to speak since he was 18 months old. Yet, it was obvious that he enjoyed his day of shopping with his mom immensely. Benjamin loves to ride in cars and loves to eat, the two parts of the wish that he enjoyed the most.

Both he and his mom were in a stretch limo for the first time in their lives and that was the extraordinary part of the wish they will never forget. His mom shopped with two Make-A-Wish® volunteers and got lots of DVDs for Benjamin, who loves Elmo, Big Bird, Ernie and all the other characters on his favorite show, *Sesame Street*. A DVD player had to be bought as well, since so far Benjamin didn't have one. Benjamin just loves to watch these characters over and over again and his expressions and laughter reflect his enjoyment of all those DVDs bought for his pleasure. In addition, mom helped Benjamin pick out some clothes, shoes,

sneakers and shirts. The day was perfect and you could see the thrill and the excitement about his new purchases in Benjamin's eyes – no words necessary!

The entire experience could never be duplicated for both mom and Benjamin. Such an experience has never happened before to these two and there was nothing that they would change about that special day.

Mother and son, together, shopping with a limo waiting outside for them to stack all their purchases and bring them back home. What a day!

47 wishes 😊