



Bowde, 4
cancer

I wish to have
a treehouse

ISRAEL WISH STUDY

Putting the Findings to Work for Wish Kids

EVERY SINGLE PERSON who works for Make-A-Wish® understands – on a very instinctive and genuine level – why this organization exists. Each of us knows the importance of a wish.

We've tried to explain to potential supporters. We've worked to make the case for supporting wish kids. We've made every effort to show that their support would provide psychosocial and emotional support for kids with life-threatening medical conditions. Some immediately joined us in this place of understanding, while some others still remain skeptical.

There is good news for those who continually face this challenge: Medical professionals are more interested than ever in their patient's quality of life, and the effect that better quality of life can have on their physical health. Consider these quotes from scholarly journals and medical journals:

By exploring desires and empowering children to make decisions about how to create a dream and make it a reality, nurses can help children discover inner strengths at times when they experience hopelessness.

– Pediatric Nursing Vol. 35 No. 2,
Bonnie Ewing, PhD, RN

The most critical clinical point is that quality of life is what the child says it is, as exemplified by the mission of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

– “Psychosocial Issues in Pediatric Oncology,” The Ochsner Journal, 2012
Joel Marcus, PsyD

Our friends at Make-A-Wish Israel participated in a study called “The effects of the Make a Wish [sic] intervention on psychiatric symptoms and health-related quality of life of children with cancer: a randomised controlled trial.” We'll refer to it as the “Israel Wish Study” since the actual name is a bit long for our purposes.

By any name, though, the study puts hard data behind our gut instinct. The Israel Wish Study shows that a Make-A-Wish experience can put children in a better position to cope with or even overcome their illnesses. The Brand Advancement team worked with the Medical Affairs team to evaluate the



The first few pages of this tool kit discuss the **key takeaways** and the study's methodology. You'll also find a second section devoted entirely to practical examples, and advice on how to craft your own messages to fit the facts of the Israel Wish Study.

data and distill it into key points that will encourage greater public support and understanding.

And remember: This isn't a survey like the previous Wish Impact Study. This is science – which means everything from the study's methodology to its ethical ramifications had to be evaluated by experts in the field. It's fully independent, with no financial ties to Make-A-Wish. It could also be the first step in collecting a game-changing suite of data that makes a deeper, more powerful case for Make-A-Wish than ever before. Data from the Israel Wish Study should supplement the Wish Impact Study in future collateral.



RESEARCHERS USED **THREE**

RESPECTED ASSESSMENT TOOLS

– The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule for Children, the Life Orientation Test-Revised and the Herth Hope Index – to collect data. That tells us that medical **researchers have evaluated the importance of emotional health** long before this study was commissioned.



ABOUT THE ISRAEL WISH STUDY PROCESS

RESEARCHERS EVALUATED all participants to collect baseline data that measured: positive and negative emotions; optimism and expectations of favorable future outcomes; and hope.

Younger participants answered questions verbally, while older participants filled out the survey. Make-A-Wish then sent trained interviewers to each child's home; they were interviewed individually in a quiet room separately from their parents.

The study then split participants into two groups: the first (intervention) would receive a wish within six months of the evaluation, and those in a control (waiting list) group that would be placed on a wait list. This brings us to a key point that we'll discuss later: All the children and their families knew they would receive a wish at some point.

Researchers re-evaluated study participants five weeks after their wish. Here are a few relevant findings:

- Intervention group experienced significant positive changes from

baseline to follow-up evaluation in:
– hope, positive emotions, health-related quality of life and anxiety.

- The data showed a significant difference between the intervention and waiting list groups.
- Physical limitations are one of the most distressing aspects of oncological treatment – and with other serious illnesses, as well. The intervention group showed a decrease in their perception of physical limitations.
- The findings reinforce the need for interventions that enhance and promote quality of life.
- Key Quote: “A wish is beyond mundane desires or goals that are obtainable. It is possible that wishing enabled these children to dream about something that seemed unobtainable, out of reach, and thus created an experience of achieving the impossible.”

→ MORE ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

66
total
participants

Children
ages
5-12

Diagnosed
with various
types of
cancer

Being treated
at three large
Tel Aviv-area
hospitals

All children
and families
were aware of
the study and
consented to
participate



Emersyn, 7
neurodegenerative
condition

I wish to see
butterflies

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISRAEL WISH STUDY

The big news is that a medical research study says wishes can make a medical difference in kids with cancer.

Obviously, Make-A-Wish serves kids with a multitude of life-threatening medical conditions; the takeaway from this is not “for kids with cancer only.” The key for Make-A-Wish is that medical professionals are finding a link between the care they provide and the psychosocial, emotional care that others provide – meaning medical social workers, and frankly, us.

KEY MESSAGES

HERE ARE SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS.

These are points to use in your messaging to convey the impact of the Israel Wish Study – you do not need to use them verbatim. You can be flexible with your word choice as long as you maintain accuracy:

- Medical professionals want to learn more about the link between emotional health and its effects on medical treatments.
- A study from Israel measured emotional and physical health factors in pediatric cancer patients ages 5-12 who were having a wish granted by Make-A-Wish Israel.
- Make-A-Wish has helped children with serious illnesses improve

their emotional health more visibly and more successfully than any other organization.

- The study found that a Make-A-Wish experience led to increased emotional and physical health.
- To give your statements added credibility, citing the study goes a long way, especially with your medical referral sources. Here is how you correctly cite this study: *Shoshani, A. Mifano, K. Czamanski-Cohen, J. (2015). The effects of the Make a Wish intervention on psychiatric symptoms and health-related quality of life of children with cancer: a randomized controlled trial. Quality of Life Research, 25(5), 1209-1218. doi 10.1007/s11136-015-1148-7*

With a bit of creativity, you can use this information everywhere from wish stories to sponsor pitches to brochures.



HOLD ON A SECOND

There are **a few limitations** to the study.

For example, this was not a blind study. Children in the waiting list group knew they were likely to receive a wish at some point. This could positively alter the data measured via the research tools versus children unaware that they could receive a wish. The researchers couldn't really measure children who had no possibility of receiving a wish.

Also, the researchers were not able to complete a third evaluation to examine the lasting effects of a wish experience.

Finally, some potential participants were ill enough that they were referred immediately for a wish. This means that the study is not fully representative of the overall population of children eligible for a wish.

WRAPPING IT UP

PAIRING THIS INFORMATION with the See3 Supporter Personas is a great strategy for winning new supporters. Each persona will be able to picture themselves in helping children heal physically and emotionally. This has the potential to make a powerful statement backed by medical research data – an advantage that has never been available to Make-A-Wish before.

We welcome your ideas or questions in using this information to reach toward granting the wish of every eligible child. Feel free to contact Jono Smith at 602-792-3304 or jsmith@wish.org at the national office about the study.

USING THE STUDY IN PERSONA-FOCUSED MESSAGING

Let's take a look at how you can tailor the bullet points to **communicate with our supporter personas**. Again, these are examples. You can take these concepts and create phrases that fit your own needs. The Brand Advancement team welcomes your questions about crafting your own – and we'd like to see any examples you create.

1 *When you grant wishes, you do even more than bring joy to critically ill children. You also give them an edge in conquering their illnesses.*

This message emphasizes in very simple terms that wishes can help a child's physical recovery. Some people may not have considered this before, and it could shift their perception to realizing the importance of wish kids' emotional health. This could work very well in a general information brochure.

PERSONAS: This spans the range of personas, but may not have enough scientific qualification for Sarah and Dinesh.

2 *Researchers studied the effects of granting wishes on children with cancer, and found significant improvements in hope, positive emotions, health-related quality of life and anxiety.*

This starts to introduce hard science into the first message. It would work well in a philanthropy brochure, a donor pitch or a medical brochure.

PERSONAS: Margaret, who views philanthropy as an investment; Sarah and Dinesh, especially if it's followed by even more specifics.

3 *In a recent study, researchers used the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule for Children, the Life Orientation Test-Revised and the Herth Hope Index to measure the effects of wishes on children with cancer.*

This invokes some specific, existing tools used in medical studies. Some healthcare professionals may even be familiar with these measurement tools. This is perfect for use in a medical brochure or presentation.

PERSONAS: Sarah and Dinesh

4 *Critically ill kids who are emotionally healthy are more likely to overcome their medical conditions, and you can stand with other caring people to restore their optimism and joy.*

Mental and emotional health are nowhere near as misunderstood and stigmatized today as they were even a decade ago. People recognize the importance of emotional health. This message is geared toward people who are not yet supporters, and it emphasizes that they're part of a greater whole.

PERSONAS: Manuel and Vanessa

5 *The people who founded Make-A-Wish weren't doctors, and they couldn't prescribe medication or treatments. But they found a way to lift the optimism and determination of critically ill children, and thousands of supporters like you have continued their work.*

It's good to remind potential supporters that people just like themselves pulled together to do something extraordinary. Make-A-Wish doesn't exist because of lifelong philanthropists – we're here because everyday people saw a way to make the world better. This messaging would work for brochures or website content.

PERSONAS: Manuel, Vanessa, Eddie, Gina

6 *From building treehouses to planning travel, people with time and abilities make wishes come true in every community nationwide.*

Sometimes, people take their own ability for granted. This is a great message to work into social media posts or even story content (for example, if you have handy volunteers who pitch in for a room redecoration, make sure your content mentions the people who offered their carpentry, painting and decorating skills). This can remind potential supporters that they have abilities that can make a meaningful contribution to a wish.

PERSONA: Eddie

SOCIAL-MEDIA SPECIFIC MESSAGING

Using the Israel Wish Study information in social media channels requires a bit of thought and nuance. Healthcare professional personas Dinesh and Sarah are less likely to frequent Twitter, Instagram or Facebook. So what are ways to make the Israel Wish Study work on social media? Here are a few possibilities.



TWITTER

Gina is definitely a Twitter user, and you have good odds of reaching Manuel and Vanessa there, too. Twitter presents the challenge of its character count – with only 140 characters, you don't have much time to get very detailed. Your best bet may be a shortened link driving them to content that uses information from the study.

EXAMPLE TWEETS

Optimism helps critically ill kids get better – and you can create hope by granting wishes. Find out how! [shortlink]

Hope and wishes help sick kids get better, and you're the key to granting wishes. [shortlink]



FACEBOOK

Gina, Amy, Eddie and Margaret are likely to be on Facebook to keep in touch with friends and family. It doesn't have the extremely short character limit of Twitter, but it's still best to be succinct.

EXAMPLE POSTS

When you grant wishes, you do even more than bring joy to critically ill children. You also give them an edge in conquering their illnesses.

What do wishes do for critically ill kids? Research says wishes increase hope, which can improve their physical health. Thanks for all you do to help kids get better!

There's a connection between emotional and physical health – and healthcare professionals are recognizing the wishes you grant as effective, quality-of-life treatment for critically ill kids.



INSTAGRAM

This will be a favorite channel for Manuel, Vanessa and likely even Gina. Instagram is built around posting photos. It also allows text, and much more of it than Twitter. But keep your audience in mind: They seldom like long posts as they skim their feed. Keep it short to avoid a case of TLDR (too long, didn't read). This audience also responds well to posts that show real people having fun – connecting with people who share their interests and values motivates them.

EXAMPLE POSTS

You can help critically ill kids get like [X] better. Join others like you to restore the hope of wish kids in your community! [Possible photos – wish kids, volunteers/participants at events]

Volunteer X saw wish kid Y completely change throughout his wish experience. And research can explain why – hope can help critically ill kids heal and cope.