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What I learned from the 10,000th Make-A-Wish - by Kimberley Rinaldi

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The mission at Make-A-Wish Foundation is “Together, we create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.” Their website tells more of the story: Wishes are more than just a nice thing, and they are far more than gifts, or singular events in time. Wishes impact everyone involved - wish kids, volunteers, donors, sponsors, medical professionals, and communities. For wish kids, just the act of making their wish come true can give them the courage to comply with their medical treatments. Parents might finally feel like they can be optimistic. And still others might realize all that they have to offer the world through volunteer work or philanthropy.

Make-A-Wish Massachusetts and Rhode Island granted 400 wishes this year, and is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Our team at Brennan Consulting had the privilege of working with W.T. Rich on Kyle’s Krib, the 10,000th wish for the chapter. Treehouse planning began in September 2022 for Kyle Osterman, an amazing 9-year-old from Grafton who is battling acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Kyle helped design the space with his new construction team and friends at W.T. Rich. Partners such as saam architecture, Foley Buhl Roberts structural engineers, Cardi’s Furniture, the town of Grafton and many subcontractors, businesses, neighbors, and friends brought this project to the finish line. The team also set and later surpassed their fundraising goal of \$25,000 and countless material and labor donations were made. Ribbon cutting day included a party and visits from Jeff Kinney, author of Diary of a Wimpy Kid; Smiley from the Worcester Red Sox; Brendan Tassej from the Basketball Hall of Fame; former Red Sox player Darnell McDonald; and all of Kyle’s volunteers!

While I’m learning more about our state-of-the-art technology in construction survey services here at Brennan, Kyle, his new treehouse, and our client W.T. Rich gave me insight into how we as an industry can pay it forward. Building on existing relationships, overcoming hurdles and networking to bring a pro bono venture to completion can be just as rewarding as any large-scale project. Pro bono work as a consultant seems to create a different team energy, a sense of urgency and fulfillment. I hope to have the opportunity to work on more of these in the future with my colleagues.

To find out ways you can help Make-A-Wish, visit: <https://wish.org/>.

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