

<b>Page: Entry Information</b>
<b>Chapter</b> CAI New Jersey Chapter
<b>Chapter Size</b> Extra Large (1201+)
<b>Category</b> Public Affairs
<b>Program Name</b> Make-A-Wish New Jersey Partnership with CAI-NJ
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Each question is worth 20 points and will be scored using the following rubric:</b> <b>(1-5) Poor</b> Didn't effectively answer the question <b>(6-1) Fair</b> Answered the question <b>(11-15) Good</b> Answered the question with more detail <b>(16-20) Excellent</b> Went above and beyond with proven results and visible data</p>
<p><b>Describe the program and why it fits the category. (20pts)</b></p> <p>"The Wishing Place is the only one of its kind. It provides an environment that is free of limitations, confinement, and stress. It stimulates the imagination and reveals to seriously-ill children the imaginative possibilities of a wish." – Make-A-Wish New Jersey</p> <p>Since 2015, the CAI-New Jersey chapter has maintained a committee of young professionals, who take on a different approach to the community association industry. While many young professional committees find themselves at brew pubs, distilleries, and happy hours, this committee set out to distinguish themselves with the sole mission of giving back to local charities. They called themselves the F.A.S.T Committee (Future All Star Team), and at every event they have hosted, 100% of the proceeds went towards their charity of choice.</p> <p>In 2016, the F.A.S.T Committee hosted for the first time an adult style field day, The CAI-NJ Olympics, which brought teams out to a local park, to face off in team building challenges. Since this event brought members back to their younger days at recess, it was a natural fit to partner up with Make-A-Wish New Jersey, where critically-ill children's wishes come true as they navigate through their toughest challenges.</p> <p>From that year on, CAI-NJ committed to fundraising for Make-A-Wish New Jersey, with the mission to grant as many wishes as they could and spread awareness of this amazing organization throughout the industry. This outreach project has made a tangible impact on the New Jersey chapter, Make-A-Wish New Jersey, the F.A.S.T Committee volunteers, and all those who donate to this fundraising effort each year.</p> <p>CAI-NJ added a philanthropic entity to the chapter that members embrace and want to support. Over the years, the committee not only added new events to raise even more money but also introduced a 'Slime the Board Challenge' to put the fun into fundraising for Make-A-Wish. In 2024, they reached a significant milestone with their partnership with Make-A-Wish New Jersey.</p> <p>Since the inception of the committee, the New Jersey chapter has raised over \$100,000! On November 21, 2024, during the Make-A-Wish Check Presentation and Castle Tour, the chapter had the very special honor of granting an in-person wish to Avory, a little 7-year-old boy who wished to go to Puerto Rico with his family.</p>
<p><b>How did this program meet the mission and vision of the chapter and CAI as a whole including fostering an inclusive environment that reflects and serves our diverse community? (20pts)</b></p> <p>"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." - Elizabeth Andrew</p> <p>Partnering with Make-A-Wish New Jersey has greatly enriched the experience for members who volunteer on the F.A.S.T. Committee. From organizing and fundraising for events like the Olympics and Kickball Tournament to fostering a sense of belonging among participants, this partnership creates opportunities to make a meaningful impact. During the Olympics, two representatives from Make-A-Wish New Jersey joined us to kick off the day, raising awareness for their inspiring mission and giving our members a firsthand look at how their donations make a difference. The representatives have become integral to the membership organization, participating in activities such as judging the games, helping with setup, and fully immersing themselves in the CAI industry. Their involvement continues to strengthen and elevate this partnership year after year.</p> <p>It's very easy to join an industry organization, pay your dues, and maybe attend a networking event here and there. The New Jersey chapter challenges that lack of involvement and asks its members, "How can we make the most of your investment within CAI and what does that look like?" This association has member type diversity with each category looking to get something different out of the organization. For some, educational programs might not always feel tailored to their needs, and networking events may not always be conveniently located. It can be easy to say, "I'll go to the next one." When it comes to giving towards Make-A-Wish New Jersey, unification of the members comes automatically because no matter where you live, no matter what member type you are, there is power in giving back-especially to children and to a foundation with such a powerful impact. Through this philanthropic partnership, members gain more than education, networking opportunities, and access to CAI National resources. They know they're making a difference. By participating, they amplify the impact of this meaningful collaboration.</p> <p>"I love participating in Make-A-Wish events with CAI-NJ because it's an incredible way to give back while connecting with our business partners in a fun, active atmosphere. Coming together for such an amazing cause brings a sense of joy and fulfillment, especially knowing we're helping bring hope and happiness to children and their families. It's a rewarding experience that strengthens relationships, builds community and creates lasting memories for everyone involved." – Dharmi Shah, CAI-NJ Manager Member.</p> <p>The CAI mission is to build better communities, and by giving back to those communities-especially to the families and children that live in them who are going through the hardest time in their lives- makes the partnership that much more fulfilling.</p>

**What was the impact on the chapter and its members after completing the program? (Growth of membership, financially, public awareness, membership value, better chapter/member relationship, chapter operations, etc.) (20 pts)**

This year, New Jersey has a record number of volunteers who have joined our F.A.S.T Committee. What began in 2016 with just nine members has now grown to 23 members. This growth alone has come from those members who see the value in giving back, getting involved, and making the most of their membership. They believe in the mission that this organization has come to partner with, and each year are committed to seeing more wishes get granted.

Not only has their committee grown, but their events and participation have also expanded, creating multiple opportunities to give back to Make-A-Wish New Jersey, as well as engage with other members in the chapter. The committee started with one event, The Olympics, to bring in money as the sole fundraising initiative for Make-A-Wish. In 2021, the committee introduced a Kickball Tournament to drive more funds towards Make-A-Wish, which proved to be an incredible success. It appealed to our young professional members, but also never lost sight of the mission – giving back. In that year alone, CAI-NJ fundraised \$10,866 for Make-A-Wish New Jersey, with 100% proceeds going directly to the cause. Beyond the significant donation, the event provided opportunities for networking, team building, a little friendly competition, and great sponsorship opportunities. This increased member value moving forward and allowed multiple wishes to be granted.

**Provide quantifiable data supporting the rationale for success. Include why this data is significant. (20pts)**

To quantify the data for the success of this partnership dates to the first check presentation and castle tour and donated \$6,856.04. Through the years, the growth of this fundraising has been:

2016: \$6,856.04  
2017: \$10,020.24  
2018: \$12,272.01  
2019: \$3,680.00\*  
2020: \$13,230.00  
2021: \$13,313.04  
2022: \$21,133.00  
2023: \$17,554.81  
2024: \$18,226.63

\*COVID-19 prevented events, but through virtual paint and sips and a tricky tray, we were still able to fundraise to ensure a wish was granted that year.

Since 2016, a total of \$116,285.77 was donated to Make-a-Wish New Jersey, which equates to these direct wishes:

2018 – Cameron a five-year-old boy from Bergen County wished to go on a Disney Cruise!  
2019 – Gaius an active six-year-old boy got his wish to go to Hawaii!  
2020 – Kylar a three-year-old boy got his wish of a puppy!  
2021 – Avyan a six-year-old boy got his wish of a game room makeover!  
& Priscilla a seventeen-year-old girl got her wish of a she-shed!  
2022 – Naema a seven-year-old girl got her wish of a room makeover!  
2022 - Brandon a thirteen-year-old boy got his wish to go to the Star Wars Galactic Star cruiser Resort in Disney World!  
2023 – Keilyn is a sixteen-year-old girl who wished to go to Disney World!  
2023 - Johnathan a sixteen-year-old boy got his wish to have a shopping spree!  
2024 – Avory a seven-year-old boy got his wish to go to Puerto Rico, which we got to be a part of granting in person which was truly extra special!

A total of 10 wishes. When shared with the members, it allows them to be a part of something much bigger than just CAI-New Jersey. When hosting the check presentation and castle tour, it gives the members an opportunity to visit the castle, learn what Make-A-Wish does, the history behind it and the future of what they can do if we continue to work together. It's a visual experience that allows members to see exactly where their registration, sponsorship, or volunteer time made an impact that year.

**What are your plans to maintain the momentum of this program moving forward? (20 pts)**

The F.A.S.T. Committee is committed to their partnership with Make-A-Wish New Jersey, and they will continue to host events that raise funds so CAI-NJ can continue to grant wishes every year. This is a partnership the New Jersey chapter has fostered, and it's a cause that members are proud to support. The committee is already thinking ahead for 2025 of a new event where 100% of the proceeds will go to benefit Make-A-Wish New Jersey. They are looking to host another upbeat, out of the box style event that will draw membership attention but also allow the chapter to bring in the same, if not more money than the kickball tournament which ultimately will go to Make-A-Wish New Jersey.

Additionally, the committee plans to work closely with Make-A-Wish to ensure each year the chapter will have access to the castle, so members can see where their donations go and to learn more about the organization itself. Having surpassed the \$100,000 fundraising goal, CAI-NJ is now committed to aiming even higher, so even more wishes can come true. Like the song in Cinderella says, "a dream is a wish your heart makes," and these incredible, strong and inspiring children have a lot more wishes to dream up with CAI-New Jersey.

Supporting documents including flyers, postcards, pictures, videos etc. can be uploaded below. While they aren't required for your submission we certainly encourage it.

**Would you like to upload additional documents?**

Yes

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