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## The House of Make-A-Wish Culture

Built on a Framework of Five Essential Values

### Introduction

#### Welcome to the House of Make-A-Wish Culture!

The principles of **respect**, **good governance**, **excellence**, **dialogue** and **accountability**, and consequently the expected behaviors within Make-A-Wish\*, were derived after extensive dialogue and sessions with the Make-A-Wish community, in particular its leadership. This document is intended as a useful cultural framework, overarching the entire Make-A-Wish community. It provides an overview regarding commitments and responsibilities for all its members and the way we interact, with volunteers, wish families, donors, staff and board, and the public at large.

Our hope, and indeed our expectation, is that every person who is involved with Make-A-Wish around the world will recognize these inspirational principles, and adhere to these as a representative of Make-A-Wish. We share the same responsibilities regarding wish children, donors and ourselves. This document is aimed to help discuss ethical issues, and structure the right, accountable behavior within the Make-A-Wish community.

What is the difference between policies and this code of ethics? Our policies focus on concrete operational processes (office management, program principles, finance procedures, fundraising, marketing and governance), and our code is based on the foundation of **respect**, **dialogue**, **good governance** and **accountability** described in this document.

This Code of Ethics and Good Conduct also incorporates the essential principles & behaviors we aim to follow.

#### Definitions

#### Respect

***Child focus, empathy, acceptance, integrity and transparency.***

**Respect** means that we accept every human being as a unique person with their talents, passions, abilities and competencies and with their ambitions, dreams and desires.

#### Excellence

***Ambitious, impact, innovation and improvement.***

**Excellence** is a constantly moving target that can be pursued through continuous improvement with one goal: the best service for the children and their families.

## Dialogue

***Community, collaboration, understanding and active listening.***

**Dialogue** is an attitude which implies that one carefully listens to another person, working to understand them and their reality.

## Good Governance

***Integrity, transparency, effective and mission-focused.***

**Good governance** prescribes how public or corporate life 'ought to be'. It strives to embody our industry's best practices to insure the integrity and effective management of our organization.

## Accountability

***Honesty, transparency, disclosure and responsibility.***

**Accountability** means acknowledging and taking ownership of our individual and collective responsibilities.

*\*Reference to Make-A-Wish throughout this document refers to Make-A-Wish International and its global community. Members of Make-A-Wish America were not included in our Culture and Values project.*

## From our President and CEO

Our Code of Ethics and Good Conduct is the cornerstone upon which we will build a fortress. This code will keep us on the path of mutual respect which will develop into an unbreakable trust among us. It will strengthen our weakest links, and bring to life our core values, beliefs and culture. In essence, it is our DNA.

This code is a compass to support, guide and monitor our culture and behaviors as we work to achieve our vision through our strategic plans in the coming years.

Currently, our four strategic imperatives – (1) Increase Fundraising (2) Strengthen our Affiliates (3) Continue Digital Transformation (4) Improve Inter-Connected – can and will be achieved if we conduct ourselves with the principles and behaviors outlined in this Code of Ethics and Good Behavior.

As we have discussed with all of you when we first developed this Code of Ethics, the purpose of writing this document is to codify what we all agreed to do in our conferences and roundtable discussions, surveys and zoom calls. Keeping in mind our goal of building an ethical and collaborative culture that benefits employees, volunteers, the children and their families and all other stakeholders and keeps us on a positive and productive path towards achieving our vision. This ethical culture will be reflected in the reputation that we will build of a transparent, impactful, high-achieving, global organization as we carve our way through the cluttered world of brands who seek to make a difference in the world.

Doing the right thing has its own reward. Our rewards are multiplied in the lives we touch through our mission delivery. Our Code of Ethics and Good Conduct will drive our actions and the principles that underlie decision making. This is not an ‘instructional’ manual. It is a reminder to make good choices and to treat each other with respect.

By agreeing to abide by this document, we are committing to the many values we agreed on, including professionalism, transparency, respect, collaboration and trust, just to name a few.

I applaud each of you, as you were an integral part of building this Code of Ethics and Good Conduct, and I feel very proud to work and prosper with each of you!

Thank you and best wishes,



**Luciano Manzo**

President and CEO

Make-A-Wish International

March 2022



## Our Mission, Vision and Values

### Our Mission

**Together, we create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.**

Our mission is our common starting point and ending point. It's what unites us, what we strive for and ultimately what we do – every single day.

### Our Vision

**To grant the wish of every eligible child.**

We're on a quest to bring every eligible child's wish to life – a goal that is born from the idea that a wish is an integral part of a child's treatment. Our vision is our roadmap.

### Our Values

Our values are the basis for how we behave and operate as an organization. They should be represented in everything we do.

#### Child focus

We always put our wish children first

#### Integrity

We are honest, transparent and respectful.

#### Innovation

We are bold, imaginative and creative.

#### Impact

We deliver life-changing work.

#### Community

We are a diverse group of people working together towards a common goal.

## Our Commitment to Our Stakeholders

**Our stakeholders are our wish children, our group of staff and volunteers, our boards, our donors and our communities.**



Our primary stakeholders are our wish children. Our commitment towards our wish children is to provide wish granting services of the highest quality, within a safe environment.



Our group (also called the Make-A-Wish community) is the worldwide network of affiliates, International office, volunteers, staff, and members of our various boards who give their time to work for Make-A-Wish. Our individual commitment towards our group and our external stakeholders is to respect this code of ethics and good conduct on which our Make-A-Wish culture is built.



Our donors are essential for us to provide our services. Our commitment towards our donors must be to use their funds transparently, sustainably and wisely according to their wishes.



Our communities (medical partners, our volunteers, the public at large, etc.) are important to us. Our commitment to our communities is to share the power of a wish, touch them with the joy of a life-changing experience, and to work collaboratively with them in the wish journey when appropriate.

## House of Make-A-Wish Culture

Summary written by Albert Jan Stam, consultant and ethics specialist, based on the input of the international community.

The house of Make-A-Wish culture is the result of the dialogue process among the members of the Make-A-Wish community, consisting of its various boards, and International and affiliate staff members.

The house of Make-A-Wish Culture is built on five essential principles: **respect**, **excellence**, **good governance**, **dialogue** and **accountability**.



The principle of **respect** means is respect for each individual connected to the organization. We accept every human being as a unique person with their talents, passions, abilities and competencies and with their ambitions, dreams and desires. A foundation of respect seeks to appreciate the contribution of each single person, treating each other with dignity and taking into consideration their perspective.



**Excellence** is Make-A-Wish's standard of performance. It is a constantly moving target that can be pursued through continuous improvement with one goal: the best service for the children and their families.



**Dialogue** is an attitude which implies that one carefully listens to another person, working to understand them and their reality. Only after close connection with each other and after profound attempts at clarification, can we come to a shared opinion of the situation.



**Good governance** prescribes how public or corporate life 'ought to be'. It serves both to keep in balance economic and social standards as well as individual and common values within organizations in interaction with society. It strives to embody our industry's best practices to insure the integrity and effective management of our organization.



Holding each other **accountable** implies a mutual relationship between individuals, among each other and between staff, volunteers, and board. It means acknowledging and taking ownership of our individual and collective responsibilities.

# Our Commitment and Expected Behavior

All members are called to recognize and adhere to these principles as representatives of our Make-A-Wish community.

The following pages describe our commitment and expected behavior based on the pillars of the house of Make-A-Wish culture. We have deliberately chosen to replace the “we” for “I” in some parts of the text. This is to emphasize the personal commitment and ownership of each and every one of us of the promises and pledges we describe.

## In this section

Principle of Respect

Principle of Excellence

Principle of Dialogue

Principle of Good Governance

Principle of Accountability



## Principle of Respect

Respect is the foundation of the house of Make-A-Wish culture.

### How do we respect the various aspects of our operations:

#### General

We are supportive of each other as we all work towards a common goal and mission in each of our territories.

We take the time to listen to each other as a caring organization, making sure that everyone is heard and respecting the appropriate channel of communications. Active listening and understanding is essential as we are a global organization.

We acknowledge that we each have a role to play within the organization. Everyone is equally important and we value their commitment.

We respect and celebrate the differences in our respective local cultures, languages and customs.

Our important documents may be edited in several languages although the working language is English.

As a member of a global community, we attend meetings and calls as a sign of respect for each other, and participate constructively in the discussions. We acknowledge that this may be difficult due to time zones, language and busy work/life schedules.

As a representative of Make-A-Wish, I commit to respect each member, as we are all part of the same team.

We are clear about the roles and responsibilities of the board, staff and volunteers.

#### Program

We respect our wish children and their families, and treat them at all times as individuals and not as statistics or goals.

We aim to take them on a wish journey that builds their resilience, at a difficult time in their lives.

The wish journey focuses on the child's personal dreams and aspirations.

Empathy is essential as we work with our wish children.

#### Donors

We respect our donors by promptly acknowledging their donations, in accordance with our mission and values.

We are transparent with our donors, respecting their intentions.

We are responsible, both fiscally and ethically, with the funds we receive.

#### Marketing

Public image – our media coverage respects our wish families and their privacy, and gives a faithful image of our mission.



*“We are one, but with a different appearance.”*

– Affiliate Member

## Principle of Excellence

*We are passionate about what we do at Make-A-Wish! We bring the heart and the brains together in our organization – child focus first and foremost, with professional standards.*

### General

As representative of Make-A-Wish, I adhere to the highest legal and ethical standards, protecting the name, reputation, and intellectual property of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, ensuring sound nonprofit management and governance, and maintaining positive relationships within the Make-A-Wish Foundation network and its stakeholders.

*“Targets are not scary; they are a way to learn and push yourself to focus on the children.”*

– Affiliate Member

We admire the courage of our wish children and their families, and we embrace this by being courageous in our strategic plans.

We aspire to excellence and are open to discussions on how to improve. We are not afraid of change in a sustainable manner, knowing that all organizations evolve throughout time.

We value our reputation and aim to be inspiring. We consistently work to exceed expectations.

Our strategic plans are ambitious in order to reflect our vision of reaching every eligible child.

We aim to be the benchmark children’s charity by striving to adopt our industry’s best practices.

In our race towards excellence, we need to be mindful that our affiliates require sufficient time and resources to reflect and implement actions.

Each member of Make-A-Wish aspires to a standard of excellence in their daily activities.

In order to perform at the highest standards, our recruitment of staff and volunteers is based on competencies of the position, in order to find the best person for the job.

Creativity and innovation in all fields is encouraged, in our wishes, the manner we present our activities, in our daily operations.

### Program

We strive to create an unforgettable wish journey for our wish children. First, we put forward the impact of a wish for our wish families.

We focus on the child and their personal interests.

We partner with our hospital and medical contacts to ensure that the child’s physical and emotional needs are protected during their wish journey.

We ask our wish families to provide feedback to ensure that the wish journey fully met their expectations.

We carry out or participate in research to better understand the life-changing impact of our mission.

We train our volunteers and staff to create unique and life-changing wish experiences and happiness. Out-of-the-box thinking is encouraged.

### Donors

Our fundraising practices follow acceptable customs in each country.

Our objective is to have a well-proportioned mix of donor profiles to ensure a sustainable source of income and in-kind contributions.

### Marketing

We understand that in our world, reputation defines the value of our organization.

We work hard to preserve our brand reputation.

## Principle of Dialogue

*Our members and stakeholders come from various backgrounds, and reflect the diversity of our communities. Dialogue takes into consideration the variety of languages, geographical differences, the developmental phases of our affiliates, and the various levels of communication within our international community.*

### General

Our dialogue with each other should be on an equal-to-equal basis.

We challenge each other to always go the next step. We use benchmarks to measure and to discuss how to improve our performance.

We have open and honest conversations on how to best improve our organizations and have healthy interaction in our relationships with each other.

We love to share best practices and learning experiences within the international community.

We encourage open and constructive dialogue at all levels to best address issues. We invite responses and listen in an atmosphere of collaboration and tolerance.

We use all our means of communication wisely and clearly, including our use of emails.

We bring together our collective strengths towards our mission. Teamwork is essential to our operations, at all levels, from board to volunteer.

We are actively inclusive and believe in the strength of diversity, from the board level to the volunteer level, thus ensuring there is input from all levels of the community.

We gather feedback through our various group channels on important decisions impacting the Make-A-Wish community.

We aim to encourage a highly effective dialogue throughout the international community.

### Program

We are always in communication with our wish children and families as we accompany them on their wish journey.

We involve our medical partners (hospitals, doctors, etc.) in the preparation of the child's wish journey, and share the joy of a wish come true with them.

We rely on our medical partners to help plan the wish in the best possible manner, having regard to the child's health condition.

### Donors

Where possible, we show the use of the funds to our donors in publicly available documents and/or one-on-one dialogue.

### Marketing

Dialogue is about communicating the right message that is appropriate for each audience; we work hard to provide the right level of content to all our stakeholders.

## Principle of Good Governance

*Make-A-Wish aims to be a high performance organization.*

### In order to reach this goal, three important building blocks are needed:

- Excellent boards of directors
- Highly effective and efficient CEOs
- Highly effective management teams (recognizing that for our smaller affiliates this may be a combination of staff and volunteers)

They should connect in a collaborative manner to assure effective communication and to complement each other in their specific roles, tasks and responsibilities.

### We categorize the specific responsibilities as:

- Board: Oversight
- CEO: Leadership
- Management Team: Implementation

Many thanks to Markos Tambakeras for his contribution to this section on good governance.

### General

Leadership is strategic in its management and driven by our vision. Good management includes setting SMART\* goals, performance indicators, and targets.

Essentially, the board's role is governing, not managing.

### The Board:

- Selects and supervises the CEO, sets the CEO compensation, and conducts annual performance evaluations
- Approves annual and long-term strategies and performance goals
- Approves resource allocation to support implementation of the vision
- Approves annual budget and ensures financial monitoring and practices
- Oversees the legal and ethical integrity of the Make-A-Wish brand and public image
- Monitors implementation of the strategic and annual plan
- Maintains a current succession plan and conducts annual self-performance assessment
- Recognizes the CEO's responsibility to supervise staff and oversee operations

## The CEO:

- Manages the functions of the organization by overseeing planning and implementation of programs, allocating of resources and supervising staff.
- Has immediate and operational power and responsibility
- Manages the day-to-day affairs of the organization
- Communicates effectively with the board on a regular basis

Within each Make-A-Wish organization, we shall implement sound human resource practices to ensure recruitment of high quality volunteers and professional staff, proper management, training and recognition of our staff and volunteers.

We believe long term investment in our staff is essential as we seek to achieve professionalism in our operations. Our human resource management contains elements like fair pay, performance reviews, transparency, work/life balance, clear job descriptions and clear SMART\* goals.

We are mindful of how we portray ourselves as representatives of Make-A-Wish, on social media and in all public arenas.

Our boards make decisions collectively, and represent the diversity of the local and greater international community.

We believe that it is beneficial for the organization to be continually on the lookout for new board members from different facets of the community.

We recruit independent board members who are capable of neutral and independent thinking.

Our board members evaluate their performance both individually and as a team, knowing that as the organization develops, the need for certain profiles changes.

We acknowledge that each affiliate is in its own developmental phase, and that structural change may at times be necessary.

*\* Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely*

## Program

Legally our governance is structured within our Affiliation & Licensing Agreement, Policies and Bylaws.

We do not tolerate fraud, theft or unethical behavior.

I agree that it is our responsibility to implement and maintain sound financial controls, accounting procedures, and asset management policies that promote good stewardship and help ensure fiscal viability.

Just as we aim to build resilience in our wish children, our responsibility is to build sustainable organizations for the long term.

Sustainability is the focus of all our operations, from fundraising to wish granting.

Good governance includes measurement metrics and strategy, sound policies, good financial planning, and identifying and managing risks.

Our actions must reflect the global community's best interests and best practices, and therefore we agree and comply with our International and affiliate's policies.

## Principle of Accountability

### Integrity and Honesty

We pride ourselves on the integrity of all members of our Make-A-Wish community.

Specifically, as an individual, I seek to act honestly and with probity at all times as a representative of Make-A-Wish.

I agree that it is important that our fundraising activities are ethical, constituent sensitive and consistency with our mission in order to create growing capacities and resources.

I sign and live out the conflict of interest statement. If there is a probability that I could benefit in any way from a contract envisaged by Make-A-Wish, I signal this out immediately and refrain from voting or influencing the vote.

### Legal Compliance and Transparency

Our annual accounts are audited and published on our websites. We are transparent about the way we handle our funds for the good of our mission.

We proactively comply with all laws and regulations in our respective countries.

We have checks and balances in our organization to counter the risk of fraud and theft.

We have insurance coverage for our activities.

Our wish granting process includes the appropriate consent forms from parents and medical personnel.

We do not divulge any personal information without the required legal consents.

We carry out criminal background checks on all persons working or volunteering with Make-A-Wish to ensure our children's safety is protected.

We take full responsibility for our actions and remain accountable to our stakeholders.

We are open to constructive criticism and self-reflection.

Between ourselves, we show a value of accountability by:

- Staying informed of developments
- Supporting and developing your team according to your role
- Raising issues and consulting with others in your team without fear
- Leading by example

## Case of Unethical Behavior

### What to do When Confronted with a Case of Unethical Behavior

Within your affiliate and the International office, you may discuss or report it to:

- Your supervisor in the first instance. If that is not appropriate, then:
- The CEO or Chair of your affiliate. If that is not appropriate, then:
- The Ethics Officer of your affiliate, if any.

Across the International community for issues concerning more than one affiliate and/or between an affiliate and the International office, you may discuss or report it to:

- The CEO or Chair of the International office. If that is not appropriate, then:
- The Ethics Officer of the International office

Behavior that is inconsistent with the values and commitments in this document should be immediately corrected. If this is not the case, this may be reported to the International Office, attention Ethics Officer. Every member of the Make-A-Wish community is responsible for addressing unethical behavior.

Be aware that if you are found to have behaved in a manner contrary to this code, you may be asked to step down from your responsibilities, subject to the relevant laws of your country and any other disciplinary proceedings within the organization.

For many years, we have put in place a fraud signaling mechanism available to all (hyperlink to MySafeWorkPlace guideline in policy document).



## Conclusion

### **Thank you for reading our Code of Ethics and Good Conduct.**

We sincerely hope that you, as a volunteer, staff member, or board member recognize these principles as part of our DNA at Make-A-Wish.

We encourage you to live these principles and values daily as you conduct your activities on behalf of Make-A-Wish. They are based on a foundation of respect, cultivated through dialogue, shown by good governance and accountability, so that together, we achieve excellence for Make-A-Wish.

Remember, you are our ambassadors first and foremost, and we truly thank you for your dedication and commitment to Make-A-Wish!

This Code of Ethics and Good Conduct is a living document based on agreed principles and values by the Make-A-Wish leadership community, including our affiliates and the International office. Please check that your version is the most up to date document from time to time.