



Grace Bieber, Maeve McCoy

Big Give 2024

Story by Isabella McAtee
Photos courtesy Isabella McAtee
Design by Rachel Birdsall



Sisters Who Serve The World

UNO'S CHI OMEGA SORORITY SISTERS CHAMPION THE MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION

According to the Make-A-Wish (M.A.W.) website, Chi Omega women are the “Sisters Who Serve The World” because of the endless work they do. Members of Chi Omega Zeta Delta, the chapter at University of Nebraska at Omaha, use their time and energy toward giving back.

Nationally, the Chi Omega sorority has been partnered with Make-A-Wish since 2002 and is one of Make-A-Wish’s biggest sponsors, also known as a “Cause Champion Sponsor.”

Make-A-Wish grants wishes to children and families struggling with illness to bring hope and joy during a stressful time. Whether that’s sending a little girl to Disney World in full princess attire, a shopping spree, or even meeting a celebrity, Make-A-Wish grants wishes for children and makes their dreams come true.

The Omaha Chi Omega chapter, Zeta Delta, has been granting wishes and working with wish kids since the partnership began. “In these 22 years, we have been able to attend wish-granting parties, host large events to support Make-A-Wish, and truly see the

impact that Make-A-Wish has on children and their families here in our community. Our chapter has volunteered over 7,000 service hours and donated \$114,000 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation,” said current Zeta Delta President, Marissa Danauskas.

All proceeds raised through events and volunteer hours go directly to Make-A-Wish Nebraska. Chi O sorority sisters not only have the opportunity to meet the children they are helping, but they also experience an impact that is both local and visible.

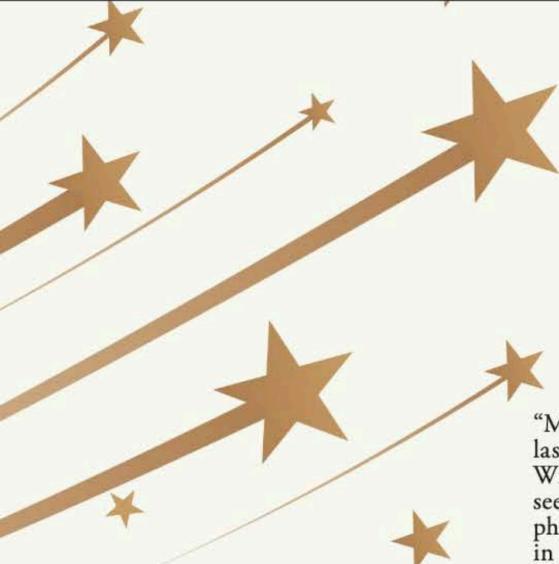
For many, the reason they are drawn to Greek Life is the philanthropic pursuit of the community. Chi Omega is the largest national sorority by membership. There are 181 collegiate Chi Omega chapters, each filled with young women who actively work toward granting Make-A-Wish wishes and brightening hard days for wish kids within their communities.

Active member and Social Chair Assistant Courtney Withers spoke about why she joined Chi Omega, reflecting: “Going into college, I knew that I wanted to be involved with my community, and it was encouraged within my family and friends to join a sorority. With that in mind, I decided that I wanted to rush in order to fulfill that desire.

“At UNO there are four amazing sororities, each with their own perks and philanthropies. Despite each sorority having its unique qualities, I was specifically drawn to Chi Omega because of its philanthropy, Make-A-Wish,” Withers continued. “Make-A-Wish aligned perfectly with my values as I work with oncology patients at Bergan Mercy as well as at a daycare. Being able to provide kids with an opportunity to experience something they have always wanted to do is extremely rewarding and fulfilling. It is evident that M.A.W. plays a massive role in Chi Omega.”

Chi Omega sister Alexandria Adams has a personal connection to Make-A-Wish. “I myself suffer from a life-altering and life-threatening illness that prevents me from living a normal life. Being able to volunteer my time and help raise money for a cause that helps children just like me is indescribable,” she shared. “Chi Omega has given me a chance to give back to a wonderful organization that lets kids who are going through the unimaginable be kids again—and there is no better cause than that.”

Emma Munter, the Zeta Delta chapter’s director of community engagement, organizes all philanthropic events, arranges volunteer days, and serves as the chapter’s Make-A-Wish liaison. ▶



“My favorite event was Waffles for Wishes last spring. It was my first large Make-A-Wish event that I planned. It was special to see how many people came to support our philanthropy and raise thousands of dollars in a few hours,” Munter said.

At the chapter’s 75th Eleusinia (founders day) earlier this year, the family of a wish kid spoke about Chi Omega’s impact. They had just returned from an all-expense-paid vacation to Hawaii provided by the charity. “The family spoke about how Make-A-Wish is a big family who lifts each other up and brings happiness to those in a trying time. It was inspiring that we as Chi Omegas are able to help make children’s dreams come true,” Munter said.

Not only are the Make-A-Wish families grateful, but Chi Omega women are also thankful for the opportunity and skills they gain. Using their time putting on philanthropic events helps them to be more compassionate for others and to find strength within themselves and the community around them.

Sister duo Grace Bieber and Maeve McCoy recently graduated in May and credit their work with Make-A-Wish for inspiring them to give back to the communities they will be a part of in the future.

“Contributing to Make-A-Wish with Chi Omega showed me new avenues to give directly to the Nebraska community beyond my time in college. There are both big and small ways to give back in your day-to-day life, ranging from fundraising

to volunteering at Make-A-Wish events. Incorporating these efforts into your life is easier than it seems and allows you to be part of something bigger than yourself,” Bieber detailed.

“Working with Make-A-Wish through Chi Omega has greatly helped me grow as a woman and I see myself continuing to help others beyond my time in college,” McCoy added.

Through volunteering, Chi Omega women develop skills such as leadership, management, and communication alongside a better understanding of how teamwork and collaboration enhance both the efficiency and efficacy of large organizations such as Chi Omega and Make-A-Wish. All this combines to prepare them to enter a collaborative workforce.

“College is such a unique time in a person’s life, as it is largely selfish and focused on one’s own goals and aspirations. To be an active member of my community greatly helps me put my life in perspective and commit to giving back throughout my future career,” said Alaina Lorkovic, Zeta Delta’s recruitment chair. “Especially as a future health care worker, service and compassion for others is at the heart of all we do. I am beyond confident that my experiences through M.A.W. Nebraska will forever inspire me to be a change-maker in my community.”

For information about Make-A-Wish visit wish.org, or learn more about the Chi Omega sisterhood visit chiomega.com.

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—MAEVE MCCOY

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