Race for a Wish

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Last minute preparations are underway for a 5-K this weekend that will help make a wish come true for a child with a life-threatening medical condition.

The co-chair of the race, sponsored by WKU’s Chi Omega chapter, has a unique perspective on the Make a Wish Foundation, as Amy Bingham reports in this week’s View from the Hill.

When Mary Catherine Kirkwood was going through rush three years ago, she had no idea the National Philanthropy for Chi Omega was the Make a Wish Foundation. But she says that made her decision super easy and now everything is coming full circle.

Mary Catherine Kirkwood \ Co-Chair, Race for a Wish

Ellie Jolly \ President, Chi Theta Chapter

“My doctor, child life specialist at Vanderbilt, my nurses, were really a God send to me and really what molded me to want to be a pediatric nurse practitioner.”

Bowling Green Junior Mary Catherine Kirkwood is well on her way to a career in nursing.

It’s a path she began charting when she was just a child.

“When I was eight years old, I was diagnosed with ALL leukemia and started my treatments at Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital.”

Thankfully, Mary Catherine went into remission after two years and has been cancer free ever since but her caregivers made a lasting impact on her.

“They were a great source for my family just to comfort everybody and educate us and heal me essentially.”

One of her memories of that time was an all expense paid trip to Disney World.

“About a year through my treatment they approached me and asked if I would like a wish granted through the Make a wish foundation.”

Now, fourteen years later, Mary Catherine is helping make another child’s wish come true by co-chairing a 5 K run this weekend.

“When Mary Catherine was chosen as our Make a Wish chair, I was thrilled for her because I knew on the inside how much more this race meant to her than the rest of the members of the chapter.

“For every dollar I raise, I just kind of think about what it meant to me and I just hope it will mean the same for whatever child we get to grant a wish for.”

Meanwhile Mary Catherine continues pursuing her wish to be on the frontlines for other children battling illnesses in the future.

“I would love to go back to Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital, back where it all started, maybe even work with my doctor. That would be my dream job.”

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The Race for a Wish includes a 5K Run and 1.5 Mile Walk. The event is this Saturday, April 5th at ten am at Keriakes park. The fee is 30 dollars and registration opens at 9. All proceeds benefit the Make a Wish Foundation.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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