



# Kaydence's Story

*I wish to visit Hope for Wildlife*

**Kaydence 14**  
heart condition

Kaydence has a soft spot for four-legged friends. She also has a green thumb and in her spare time the 14 year old plays video games.

At 23 ½ weeks in utero, little Kaydence was diagnosed with a hole in her heart. The family traveled to a children's hospital to undergo further tests and six months later, on Canada Day, Kaydence was born via an emergency c-section. Her first open-heart surgery was at 31 days old, and she remained in hospital until Christmas Eve. Since then, Kaydence has had several surgeries to place stents in her heart and she's waiting for a valve replacement.

Relying on a ventilator damaged Kaydence's vocal cords and hearing. After seven tries, Kaydence finally received a successful extubation (removal of the endotracheal tube from mechanical ventilation) and she's able to breathe on her own. She also has a pacemaker. She received nutrition from a feeding tube for the first two and a half years of her life and the day she tried pizza for the first time was "amazing", said her mom, Vida.

"We told her about her diagnosis as soon as she was able to process the information," said Vida. "She is able to articulate why she has a pacemaker and understands that she will still need another surgery. We have kept her fully informed so that she is able to advocate for herself around others when she feels unwell or unsafe." Kaydence still gets out of breath easily and is always at risk with damaging her pacemaker that sticks out under her ribcage. She knows she has to be careful walking down the hall at school and does alternate activities in gym class. Despite those precautions, she's still able to enjoy her favourite sport badminton!

Kaydence's parents were told by doctors that their daughter would never speak or do anything without assistance. Vida said, "She is thriving and is noisy and active from the time she wakes up until she goes to bed". Kaydence is a happy Grade 9 student and relies on a full-time education assistant.

Vida said the family didn't influence Kaydence's wish. They wanted to ensure that their daughter decided on something that was meaningful and valuable to her. After watching hours of animal rehabilitation documentaries, Kaydence decided on visiting Hope for Wildlife, a charitable wildlife rehabilitation and education organization located in Seaforth, Nova Scotia. Kaydence went on her wish in July 2022 and the experience was life-changing for her.

Hope is essential for children with critical illnesses, and its life-changing power is unlocked when wishes like Kaydence's are granted. Together we can continue to transform lives, one wish at a time.