



# Makena's Story

*I wish to go to the Calgary Stampede*

**Makena, 9**  
nervous system disorder

Makena enjoys singing, dancing, swimming, and riding her bike. The nine-year-old loves watching live performances and seeing parades.

Makena has had a difficult journey in and out of the hospital battling a drug-resistant nervous system disorder. When she was two years old, she began having seizures that could not be controlled by medication. At the age of three, her seizures escalated to the point where she had to be admitted to the hospital for observation. Soon, she was having over 100 seizures a day and was put into an induced coma in an attempt to stop the pattern.

Makena underwent emergency brain surgery that gave her some relief from the severity of seizures and a second surgery – just over a year later – was a complete success. She is now seizure-free.

Makena's epilepsy put an immense amount of stress on the family. Her twin sisters were only six months old when she got sick and juggling the newborns and the seizures felt like an impossible task. Fortunately, Makena has resumed a more typical childhood. Her physical strength on her left side continues to improve through physio and occupational therapies.

Makena's special wish to see the Calgary Stampede took place in July 2022. The family explored the park with unlimited midway, and games passes. They also attended the Stampede Evening Show that features the Cowboys Rangeland Derby chuckwagon races, the Bell Grandstand show and finally the signature fireworks finale. Makena's time in Calgary left such an impression on her and her sisters that they've even asked their parents if they could move to the city!

"From the bottoms of our hearts, we wanted to send an enormous thank you for granting Makena's wish," said Makena's mom Annalisa. "She had the most wonderful time in Calgary." Annalisa added that an old friend of hers was their WestJet flight attendant and made the family feel even more special.

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