

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to the Rainbow Society of Alberta

Thank you for your interest in the Rainbow Society of Alberta and for choosing us for your volunteer experience. Volunteers are considered the foundation of the Society and are most valued. Our volunteers serve in a variety of ways, either by helping out at various fundraisers or by joining a committee. We really couldn't do it without you!

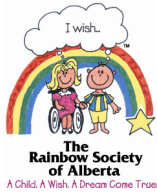
We appreciate and value the dedication of all our volunteers. This support does not go unnoticed. Four times a year we take the opportunity to honor individuals for their ongoing and outstanding contribution to our cause over the quarter. Each year we also recognize one individual for going above and beyond to help the Rainbow Society reach out further to make more wishes a reality for Alberta children.

This handbook will provide insight into our mandate, our history and much more. If you have questions about volunteer opportunities or about the Rainbow Society in general, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Craig Hawkins
Executive Director

780-469-3306
craigh@rainbowsociety.ab.ca



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Our Mandate

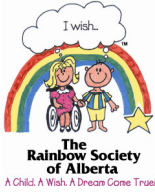
To provide wishes for Alberta children, between the ages of 3 and 18, who have been diagnosed with a chronic or life-threatening illness. For our purposes, we have further defined chronic to mean a medical condition that severely impacts and restricts the child's activities of daily living. The impact of illness and restrictions may result from a variety of factors including, but not limited to:

- recurrent hospital stays
- use of oxygen and/or ventilator machines
- the need to use a wheelchair for mobility
- high doses of medications
- the need for a considerable degree of medical intervention

Any child, however, who has been in remission or off treatment for a period exceeding two years, will not qualify for our program.

Although there are similar organizations in the province and across Canada, we are the only wish granting organization to focus solely on Alberta children. We are also the only Alberta based wish granting organization to include chronic illness as part of our mandate.

The wishes we grant are not a reward or a cure for illness. They do, however, provide a once in a lifetime experience or gift to the child and their family; a chance to escape the stress of daily life, create memories and bond together.



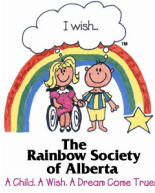
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Wishes

- Must be in the best interest of the child. This is determined through consultation with the family and the child's physician.
- Include the immediate family, whenever possible.
- Are granted quietly and without publicity.
- Are not solicited. We work strictly on a referral basis.
- Referrals cannot be made anonymously since we will not proceed without the prior knowledge and approval of the family involved.
- Referrals can be made by the families themselves, a friend, relative, teacher, or by someone from within the medical community.
- Applications are completed during an interview with the family either by way of a home or hospital visit, at our office or, when necessary, by telephone.
- Wish requests involving weapons, dangerous animals, hunting endangered species, motorized vehicles or medical equipment fall outside our mandate and will not be considered.

This year, to date, we have granted **52** wishes at a total cost of **\$309,486.31**. These dreams have included: a trip to watch the Oilers vs. Phoenix Coyotes in Phoenix and a special meeting with Shane Doan, a trip to Universal Studios in Hollywood, an all-inclusive trip to Negril, Jamaica, six trips to Disney World, Florida, a bedroom makeover, four family trips to Disneyland, California, three Disney cruise packages, a trip to Hawaii and surfing lessons, two West Edmonton Mall shopping sprees and stay in the Fantasyland Hotel, an all-inclusive trip to Turks and Caicos, two hot tubs, five computer systems, a Hawaiian vacation, an all inclusive trip to the Mayan Riviera, a family trip to Costa Rica, two adapted bikes, a digital piano, a trip to see a Maple Leaf's Game in Toronto, a Universal Studios and Hollywood Highlights tour, a trampoline, a trip through British Columbia, a skateboarding half pipe and work shed, an adapted stroller, two playhouses, a music video making package, a camper trailer, a train set expansion kit, a Sears shopping spree, a Wal-Mart shopping spree, a Bass Pro Shop shopping spree, a dream 14th Birthday party, a chance to attend the David Beckham Soccer Academy camp, went to cousin's wedding in San Francisco, and a big screen TV. We have a further **27** dreams in the process of being fulfilled.

To date, The Rainbow Society of Alberta has made **785** dreams come true.



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Our History

The Rainbow Society of Alberta has been making dreams come true for Alberta children since 1986.

Our main office is located in Edmonton. We have branch offices in Calgary and Grande Prairie. Our staff members consist of an *Executive Director* (Edmonton), a *Fund Development Manager* (Edmonton), a *Regional Manager* (Grande Prairie), a *Regional Manager* (Calgary), a *Communications & Events Specialist* (Calgary), an *Office Manager/Volunteer Coordinator* (Edmonton) and a *Wish Coordinator* (Edmonton). For full list of staff member names and contact information please go to the website at www.rainbowsociety.ab.ca

We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors elected from our membership. The Board typically meets monthly to review current applications and grant wishes, as well as provide direction for the Society's business.

Membership

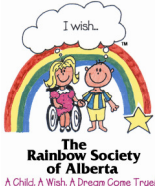
As a non-profit organization we need a foundation from which to operate. We see our members as stakeholders in the Society, and are the basis of our growth. Without them, everything else would start to crumble.

We call upon members to volunteer at special events to raise awareness and funds. This past year's success in the number of wishes granted is a true testament to their work.

Your membership gives you the right to vote on important matters at the Annual General Meeting. From our membership we elect the Board of Directors. Thus, your participation determines the ***very future and direction*** of The Rainbow Society of Alberta.

A membership is \$10.00 annually and can be paid by cheque, cash or Visa/MasterCard. You will also receive a membership card, lapel pin and our Quarterly Newsletter.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact our Head Office at **780-469-3306** or by mail **The Rainbow Society of Alberta 6604-82 Avenue Edmonton, AB T6B 0E7**.



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Donations

Our funds are raised through private donations either from individuals, service groups or companies. We organize several fundraising events throughout the year, and are fortunate to receive donations from many third-party events. We *do not* receive any agency funds from the United Way (but we can be chosen as a preferred charity), and we do not receive program funds from any level of government. We are proud to report that only 16% of our expenses go toward our administrative costs.

Donations:

- Are tax deductible under the Canada Customs and Revenue Act.
- Can be applied towards the granting of a specific Wish.
- Offered “in memoriam” can be acknowledged if the name and address of family members is provided.
- Can be applied to our Endowment Fund which goes towards the greatest need and builds an ongoing source for future Wishes.

We protect the identity and privacy of the families in our program. Their names or pictures are never used in the media unless approved by them. We respectfully protect our donor base by not selling or sharing our lists with other groups.

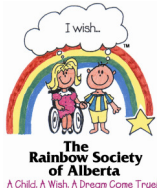
The Rainbow Society of Alberta Wish target for **2009**: 55

Total number of Wishes approved to date in 2009: **43 (78% of goal)**

Wishes completed to date in 2009: **52**

Wishes approved and awaiting completion: **27**

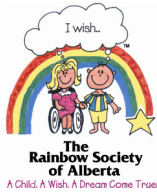
Cost of Wishes completed in 2009: **\$309,486.31**



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Volunteer Criteria and information

1. Unless otherwise specified, volunteers must be 15 years of age or older.
2. There is no minimum requirement on the number of hours a volunteer may contribute to the Society.
3. Volunteers will be called upon as needed or they may feel free to contact the office if they wish to offer their assistance in connection with a specific event or project.
4. Expenses incurred as a result of volunteering with the Rainbow Society will be approved, on a case by case basis, by the Staff Supervisor for compensation.
5. Volunteers will be asked to become members of the Society but this is not a requirement. Any individuals interested in becoming a member can review the rewarding benefits in this handbook or on our website at www.rainbowsociety.ab.ca.
6. We will require that each volunteer complete an application containing some personal information along with any special skills, employment history, volunteer history, areas of expertise, etc. All information will be kept on file and will remain confidential; available only to the Board of Directors, and staff of The Rainbow Society of Alberta. This will allow us to select volunteers best suited to assist with any given wish, event or duty.
7. Some volunteers may be required to complete a Volunteer Police Information Check and an Alberta Children Services Intervention Record Check as part of our screening process, depending on the volunteer assignment (i.e. working directly with the wish children and their families)
8. If a volunteer decides to withdraw their services, all information on file will be returned to them upon request.
9. It must be stressed that **confidentiality is strictly enforced**, to protect the privacy and dignity of the families we work with. Volunteers may be asked to provide service in assisting the Board with the logistics of a wish (i.e. transportation, fundraising functions and other special needs as required). Only under very special circumstances would a volunteer of the Society become directly involved with a family, the child or the actual wish.
10. All volunteers will be asked to sign a waiver, release and indemnification in consideration of being allowed to participate as a volunteer.



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Volunteer Rights and responsibilities

As a Volunteer, it is my right:

- TO** be informed and have an understanding of The Rainbow Society's program;
- TO** receive, as appropriate, adequate information, preparation, orientation, training, or resources to meet the responsibilities of the position;
- TO** be given a suitable assignment with only as much responsibility as I can handle;
- TO** be recognized for my service;
- TO** receive reviews and/or feedback on, my performance and to have the right to respond.

As a Volunteer, it is my responsibility:

- TO** carry out my volunteer responsibilities with professionalism, dignity and integrity;
- TO** decline work that is not acceptable to me;
- TO** respect confidences of The Rainbow Society of Alberta and those of the recipients of my services;
- TO** be considerate, respect competencies and work as a team with all staff and other volunteers;
- TO** accept the guidance and decisions of my supervisor;
- TO** follow guidelines established by the organization; code of dress, decorum, etc.;
- TO** fulfill my commitment or notify my supervisor early enough so that a suitable substitute can be found;
- TO** provide feedback, suggestions and recommendations to the supervisor and staff, if these might increase the effectiveness of the program;
- TO** refuse gifts or tips, except when the recipient makes or offers something of nominal value as a way of saying 'thank you'.

Thank you for volunteering with The Rainbow Society of Alberta.