

Zayden's Wish – FACT SHEET

Background

Small Boy; Big Heart

When Zayden Wright was only two days old, he was diagnosed with a congenital heart disease. His condition has required him to endure 38 echocardiograms, six heart catheterizations and four open heart surgeries during his first seven years of life. And while his condition does pose daily challenges, Zayden retains the outgoing spirit, energetic personality, and infinite imagination of an extraordinary 7-year-old boy. When Make-A-Wish Georgia approached Zayden and asked him what he wanted in the entire world, he replied that he wished to blast off to outer space and visit Saturn in a red rocket ship.

Granting an Impossible Wish

Make-A-Wish volunteers, entertainment industry veterans and VR enthusiasts Veronica Sheehan (former senior vice president of global television operations for Turner) and Craig Heyl (currently of Pinewood Atlanta Studios) one afternoon had a thought: what if Make-A-Wish could harness the power of virtual reality to grant wishes for children? They shared this big idea with Tim Earley, the CEO of Make-A-Wish Georgia who loved the concept of using technology for wishes. This began the search for wishes that could benefit from the use of virtual reality.

One very special and unique wish surfaced to the top: a seven-year-old Augusta boy named Zayden Wright wished to blast off to outer space, more specifically Saturn, in a red rocket ship. Upon hearing about this wish, Veronica, Craig and Tim looped in another entertainment industry powerhouse and Make-A-Wish Georgia supporter, Candice Alger, VR expert and former CEO of Giant Studios. Candice immediately thought of TRICK 3D, an expert 3D animation and virtual reality studio founded by Chad Eikhoff, producer/director of "An Elf's Story," the hit The Elf of the Shelf Christmas Special.

Virtually Possible, Truly Magical

With roots in 3D animation and virtual and mixed realities, Chad Eikhoff's creative and technical teams at TRICK 3D made the studio the ideal fit to fulfill Zayden's wish. Chad draws upon more than a decade of experience producing virtual worlds and content, including the creation, production and direction of CBS' hit animated children's special, "An Elf's Story." Chad and the TRICK 3D team immediately began work to fulfill Zayden's wish, while at the same time ***granting the first virtual reality wish ever.***

The creative vision for the wish was set by Zayden himself: a boy with infinite imagination and boundless energy and creativity. Zayden described what his space expedition would be like with his mother, LaShonda "Shonda" Wright, and his Make-A-Wish Georgia Wish Coordinator, Hilary Sherman. In vivid detail, Zayden describes how his rocket ship will be red, how he will see countless stars along the way, and how he will encounter friendly aliens who greet him with the sound of "Bee Bo!" Zayden's imaginative vision of travel to outer space has inspired this special wish community's journey.

Preparing for Blast Off

Naturally, one cannot blast off to outer space (even virtually) without expert astronaut training and guidance. Growing Zayden's wish community even further, Commander LeRoy Chiao, former NASA astronaut and founder of educational not-for-profit OneOrbit, heard about Zayden's wish and joined the effort. On January 16, 2017, Commander Chiao led Zayden through an "astronaut training program" in preparation for his mission at TRICK 3D studios in Atlanta.

Now, on May 1, 2017, Commander Chiao will accompany Commander Zayden on his expedition to Saturn, departing from Dobbins Air Reserve base.

Zayden's wish is just one of the 350 wishes Make-A-Wish Georgia is granting for children and families in need this year alone. Since 1995, Make-A-Wish Georgia has been granting the wishes of local children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich their lives and experiences with hope, strength and joy. This wish represents the first VR wish granted ever and exemplifies the strength of building communities of people around wishes to make the seemingly impossible, possible. To learn more about Make-A-Wish Georgia, visit georgia.wish.org.

FACTS

Launch: Monday, May 1, 2017; "blasting off" from Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Marietta, Ga.

- Seven-year-old Zayden Wright will "blast off" to outer space on Monday, May 1, 2017 powered by virtual reality technology content created by TRICK 3D and made possible by Make-A-Wish Georgia, TRICK 3D studios, OneOrbit, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, UP TV and a squadron of volunteers affectionately called, "Zayden's Squadron."
- Over 27,000 children are diagnosed annually with life threatening illnesses. Every 34 minutes, on average, a wish is granted to one of those children.
- Make-A-Wish has 62 local chapters around the United States that grant wishes; wishes are granted in 36 countries across the world.
- Just in the state of Georgia, 700 wishes are waiting to be granted.
- The Make-A-Wish Georgia chapter is pioneering Zayden's wish, the first-ever VR wish to be granted; the chapter is helmed by chief executive officer Tim Earley. Veronica Sheehan is Zayden's wish-granting volunteer and former Turner executive; Veronica connected Craig Heyl of Pinewood studios and Candice Alger, former CEO of Giant Studios, to Zayden's Wish.
- Zayden Wright lives with congenital heart disease. He is seven years old and enjoys playing, reading, drawing, dancing and, of course, dreaming about outer space.
- Zayden and the Wright family reside in Augusta, Ga. in the United States.
- TRICK 3D is an Atlanta-based 3D animation and virtual reality (VR) studio founded in 2007 and is owned by founder and CEO Chad Eikhoff. TRICK 3D created the "Zayden's Wish" virtual reality experience; the production was directed by Chad Eikhoff and produced by Candice Alger, Laura Rea, Brandy Drew and Fatimah Abdullah.

- Chad Eikhoff directed the virtual reality content for Zayden’s Wish; the production’s full credit list is included the “Zayden’s Wish” press kit.
- Commander LeRoy Chiao is the former NASA astronaut who is guiding Zayden along his cosmic virtual reality journey. Commander Chiao is the founder of educational not-for-profit OneOrbit.
- The launch will take place in Marietta, Ga. at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, the largest multi-service reserve training base in the world. Located 16 miles northwest of Atlanta, Dobbins ARB supports more than 10,000 guardsmen and reservists from the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines.
- Goldman Sachs predicts that virtual reality will become an \$80 billion industry by 2025; they estimate that \$5.1 billion of that will be healthcare related.
- Initial studies from the [University of Washington, Seattle](#) indicate the virtual reality is effective in distracting away from pain.
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- 98 percent of wish parents report that a granted wish fosters a sense of hope and an improved outlook, as well as an enhancement in the overall mental and emotional health of their child.

Style Guide

Make-A-Wish Georgia (state always spelled out and hyphens always after “Make” “A” “Wish”)

TRICK 3D (always two words and always all caps)

OneOrbit (always "O" capitalized and always one word)

rocket ship (always two words)

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