When I was in a fourth grade, a limo came to my school to pick up a kindergartener. Seriously. In the middle of the day, a big black stretch pulled up to the empty bus loop. A six-year-old named Jeffrey and his siblings climbed into it and drove off. The rest of the kids rushed to their classroom windows to watch and wave as it pulled away.

As if his ride wasn't big time enough, his destination was even better. That limonene took Jeffrey to the airport, where his family boarded a plane to Chicago and went to a Cubs game. But he wasn't just going as a regular fan. Jeffrey was the special guest of Sammy Sosa. The little boy from Williamsville got to hang with the baseball star before the game, and even toss out the first pitch.

Jeffrey is not around anymore to tell the story of the memorable day made possible by the Make a Wish Foundation. It was one short experience in his thirteen year life, a life filled with exploring his love of sports, cooking, and surrounded by loving family, teachers, aides, and friends at school. It was also a life filled with hard fought battles, hospital visits, surgeries and lots of prayers. But the day he got in that limo and later took the mound at Wrigley Field wasn't about any of that. It was just about a kid getting to do something he had always wanted: to meet his favorite baseball player.

Earlier this winter, the Buffalo Sabres hosted a little boy on a similar Make a Wish experience. A die-hard fan from out of town, Austin knew everything about all of the players on the roster. He shouted each of their names while watching their practice at First Niagara Center. He walked right up to the ones he knew in the locker room afterwards, and each of them seemed just as excited to host him as he was to be there. I like to think that's how Sosa probably treated Jeffrey. He was the biggest celebrity at the game, and I was honored to spend a couple moments with him during an intermission.   
  
 Not every Make a Wish experience is sports related, though. Last year, I met a 10-year-old from Amherst named Denton, who had beaten cancer twice. Denton and his family and friends used to watch their favorite movies in the hospital doing his treatment. Make A Wish turned a bedroom in his house into a state of the art movie theater so they could keep the tradition going in happier times.

In December, I got to know a 16-year-old named Mariana from Kenmore. She recently suffered a stroke, and found that writing helped her cope through her recovery. With the help of Make A Wish, Mariana gained a publisher for her first book. It's coming out this spring.

Some wishes are ambitious. Others are downright whimsical. There is a five year old from Buffalo who will soon head off to Disney World for a makeover from Ana and Elsa themselves. Another little girl in Western New York just wanted a backyard play set big enough for to climb, slide, and swing on it with her three best friends: her golden retrievers! As difficult as that sounds, Make A Wish made it happen.

That's because the only rule of Make A Wish is that there are no rules. No child is told their wish is too difficult or too much. These children hear enough of that already. They're allowed and encouraged to be as creative as they can.

Creativity requires a lot of bravery. It can be scary to commit to your dreams and share them with others. Luckily, Make A Wish kids don't have any problem with that. They're some of the bravest people in the world. Most of the time, they don't even know it. I bet if you ran into Sammy Sosa today, he would remember that little boy who came to visit him in the summer of 1998, and that he would agree.