

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Mush on, wish on! Make-A-Wish® Alaska partners with Donlin Gold to grant girl's Iditarod wish

WHO & WHAT

ANCHORAGE- Fourteen-year-old Hannah loves animals, adventures, and the great outdoors. But after her diagnosis with a life-threatening genetic immune disease, her adventurer spirit was challenged by a new routine of doctor's appointments and medical treatments.

Hannah will journey across the country from her small hometown in Glastonbury, Connecticut to Anchorage, where she will experience her one most heartfelt wish—to ride in the ceremonial start of the Iditarod! Hannah will have an exclusive Iditarod experience, sponsored by Donlin Gold, a principal partner of the Iditarod, and her friends at Make-A-Wish Alaska.

Media interested in sharing Hannah's story should contact Nicole Sheldon, regional director of Make-A-Wish Alaska at 907.258.9476 or nicole@nwwishes.org.

WHEN & WHERE:

Day 1

Feb 28th

- 12pm:** Hannah attends a pizza lunch at Millennium Anchorage Hotel (4800 Spenard Rd) with dog sled musher, Ramey Smyth, to give Hannah a few tips and tricks on the journey ahead.
- 5:30pm:** Off to the Musher's Banquet at Dena'ina Convention Center (600 W 7th Ave)! Hannah will have a chance to interact with the mushers as a special guest and watch first-hand as they choose their positions for the big race.

Day 2

March 1st

- **Time TBD (dependent on Ramey Smyth's starting position):** Today is Hannah's dog sledding debut! Hannah heads to downtown Anchorage (W 4th Ave) to meet with Ramey Smyth as a fellow musher for the Ceremonial Start of the Iditarod! Hannah will lead her family through the crowds to join the mushers on the street. At the sound of the horn, Hannah mushes off into the Last Frontier—knowing this is the moment her wish comes true.
- **One Hour Later:** Family and fans cheer for Hannah at the finish line as she ends her ride at the Campbell Airstrip (4700 Blm Rd).

Day 3

March 3rd

- 2pm:** The official start of the Iditarod! Hannah's Idita-Rider VIP pass will take her to the front all the action for the "Re-Start" at Willow Lake (Willow Community Center: George Parks Hwy, Willow). Hannah will wish her favorite fellow musher, Ramey Smyth, good luck and bon voyage as he sets off on the 10-day race.

Day 4

March 4th

- 11am:** Hannah heads over to The Alaska Zoo (4731 O'Malley Road, Anchorage) for a unique animal adventure. Because of her known love for animals and wildlife, she will experience a behind-the-scenes, up-close encounter with the harbor seals!

ABOUT MAKE-A-WISH ALASKA

Celebrating 26 years of granting wishes to local children, Make-A-Wish Alaska will grant 30 wishes this year, and additional 30 to children from all over the world who will visit Alaska as part of their wish. A wish-come-true provides children and their families with an opportunity to return to normalcy while it also strengthens their family, as well as the community. The wish experience also provides children living with life-threatening medical conditions with a sense of greater happiness, improved strength and a desire to overcome their illnesses.

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