

Lillian Barnes

Virginia Tech's Wishmakers Club presents the Mr. Wish Pageant to fundraise for Make-A-Wish

The Wishmakers Club at Virginia Tech will host its Mr. Wish Pageant at 6:30 p.m. April 5 in Squires Student Center's Haymarket Theatre.

"Mr. Wish is all about bringing the Virginia Tech community together to raise money for Make-A-Wish Greater Virginia," said Virginia Chandler, co-president of Wishmakers at VT.

"Along with supporting a really special foundation, the event itself is exciting and fun."

During the pageant, participating contestants will compete in three rounds in front of a panel of judges. The contestants must answer interview questions, model evening wear, and perform a talent. The winner of the competition will earn the Mr. Wish 2023 crown and receive a \$250 donation for the charity or organization of his choice.

According to Chandler, the Wishmakers Club is currently taking applications for contestants on its social media. Each contestant can have five coaches, and the registration fee for each team is \$25. The club hopes to feature between five and eight contestants. The club's Instagram account will reveal the names of the contestants once registration closes March 29.

Co-presidents of the club, Jake Clifford and Virginia Chandler, will emcee this year's sixth annual Mr. Wish Pageant. The pageant will have four judges from the Virginia Tech community, including Chris Hogge, winner of the 2022 pageant. The other three judges have yet to be confirmed, according to Chandler.

"Our main goal for Mr. Wish is to increase awareness about the Wishmakers Club and encourage people to join our mission in fundraising for Make-A-Wish Greater Virginia," Clifford shared.

Virginia Tech's Wishmakers Club raises money annually for Make-A-Wish Greater Virginia which grants wishes to children with critical illnesses across the Commonwealth of Virginia, including a trip to Disney World, an opportunity for the child to meet their favorite celebrity or athlete, a new swingset in the child's backyard, or the child's request. Fundraising and donations fund these wishes. According to Clifford, a common misconception about Make-A-Wish is that "Wish Kids" are solely children with cancer.

The club fundraises through events such as its Fall Basket Raffle, Mr. Wish, and Percentage Nights at local restaurants in Blacksburg, Virginia. In Fall 2022, the club raised over \$3,300 in just one week through its Basket Raffle, according to Chandler.

"Over the past two years, we have been working to get Mr. Wish back as a prominent event on campus after the two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic," Clifford said.

Ticket pre-sales for Mr. Wish will be available March 13 through GobblerConnect for \$5. Tickets can be bought on the day of the event and will cost \$7 at the door.