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Posthumous Gift to Make Kids' Dreams Come True

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By [SHELLY BANJO](#)

After Jean Watson died, the medical writer made a posthumous request of her longtime accountant: use her \$2 million in savings to help make children's dreams come true.

To help fulfill that decree, Long Island accountant Peter Wunsch is forming a partnership with Madison Square Garden's Garden of Dreams Foundation to host "Dream Week," a weeklong summer program for 40 children from Women's Housing and Economic Corp., a family support, housing and economic development nonprofit in the Bronx.

"For one week, we get kids out of their environment and show them what it's like to work for a TV station or backstage at a concert. It's our way of giving them a little push and showing them there's more out there in the world than the streets," Mr. Wunsch says. "Jean would've loved the idea that we're showing these children a better path for the future."

For more than 25 years, Mr. Wunsch helped Ms. Watson fill out her tax returns. She would bring him Krispy Kreme Doughnuts and the two soon became close friends.

A single woman with no children, Jean Watson was never rich, Mr. Wunsch says. She lived frugally and eventually sold her apartment in Greenwich Village, which generated a large portion of the trust's funds. Before she died in 2007, she was active in the Times Square Church and donated to a number of orphanages in Haiti, he says.

"I welled up with tears when I found out she wanted me to oversee the trust," he says, who also consults Ms. Watson's niece when choosing which charities to support.

While Ms. Watson kept her trust's mandate broad, she wanted Mr. Wunsch to give to charities that didn't receive large amounts of government funding and that

helped impoverished children work toward a better life, she did stipulate that he give away all the money within five years of her death.

So Mr. Wunsch, a New York Rangers season ticket-holder for 39 years, approached the Garden of Dreams Foundation to create a week where kids could "do the things they never even dreamed of doing."

The week begins July 6 with former New York Rangers player Rod Gilbert, who will host an ice-skating party on the Rangers' practice ice.

Other events include a visit to MSG Sports Properties to see Derek Poundstone, deemed the "World's Strongest Man," a tour of Radio City with the Rockettes, and a day with the New York Knicks led by former Knicks shooting guard John Starks. Over the weekend, children will eat dinner at Planet Hollywood Times Square and attend a Lady Gaga concert.

On Sunday, other family members are invited to join the children at the New York Liberty-Chicago Sky basketball game, where they will participate in the ceremonial ball tip, high-five line and Liberty Torch Patrol dance team.

"It's better than Disney World for these kids. They feel like stars and get a sense of self-confidence that people are rooting for them to succeed," says Kristine Burton, Vice President of Community Relations for Madison Square Garden.

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