

A Season of Hope and Joy

The holidays are a magical time for spreading hope and joy. For Wish Kid Ferlando and his family, the season came a little early last year. Four-year-old Ferlando, who was battling late-stage retinoblastoma was brought to the U.S on a medical visa in March 2017. Ferlando came from an orphanage in haiti that didnt have the resources to care for him given his extenuating circumstances. Ferlando's new family worked hard to get him the best medical care available. When his Make-A-Wish volunteers met his family, they brainstormed possibilities for Ferlando's wish. Because he did not have a "normal" childhood, they thought about the best parts of being a kid and quickly decided on Christmas in October! An outdoor lighting company lit up Ferlando's house. His neighbors took notice of the holiday decorations and all put up their Christmas lights early to celebrate with him. On October 18, Ferlando's Christmas Eve, our staff waited for Ferlando to fall asleep before transforming the house into Christmas morning.



Outside, a snowman and reindeer were added to the lawn. Inside, the tree was trimmed, stockings were hung and presents were placed under the tree. Throughout the night, neighbors and friends dropped by to bring their own Christmas gifts for Ferlando. The next morning, Ferlando's Christmas Day, everything was ready. Friends and family took off work and took their children out of school so they could celebrate with Ferlando. The children in the family came downstairs in their pajamas and marveled at the festivities.

Santa and Mrs. Claus came through the front door. Ferlando was excited to see Santa, and spent the majority of the time holding his hand. He fell asleep wearing two of his new presents - light up sneakers and a Superman costume. We were sad to learn that Ferlando lost his fight to cancer on October 29, just 10 days after his wish. Ferlando's Christmas Wish gave him a chance to experience something he never had before. His family was able to have a special day and make lots of memories.

