



Summer festival giving back to kids

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A field of wishes waits to be granted for seriously ill children.

Sunflowers among about 90,000 growing on a Gulf Harbour hillside can be picked by visitors to the Field of Dreams Summer Festival there from February 28 to March 24. A gold coin donation for every flower goes to the children's charity Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The festival at Gulf Harbour Marina's Fairway Bay and Hobbs Wharf will raise funds so the foundation can grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. This is one of the most ambitious fundraising programmes undertaken by the foundation, Make-A-Wish New Zealand chief executive officer Carolyn MacDonell says.

"It has the potential to raise more money, which will fulfil more wishes, than many other activities the organisation has previously undertaken," she says. Visitors can dine at cafes, play in the water, shop at markets, picnic, and enjoy open-air movies every evening from Thursday to Sunday, with family movies playing on Saturday.

Mrs MacDonell says Make-A-Wish is thrilled with the support coming from organisations in the Auckland region and around Whangaparaoa.

"We're so excited to be able to use Fairway Bay for these activities," she says. "It's a beautiful setting right next to the water which makes it a brilliant place to run these events that will be fun for everyone."

Mrs MacDonell says wishes are essential for sick children. The impact of a wish is not limited to the immediate emotional effects on recipients, as it also impacts "thousands of people" who have been involved with Make-A-Wish, she says. "Our mission is to enrich the human experience with hope, strength, and joy.

Make-A-Wish expects to grant more than 200 wishes this year.

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