

Wishes granted

By [Kirsten Ballard](#)

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Tyler Mendygral had three wishes.

He wanted to sleep on a train.

He wanted to go to Hogwarts.

He wanted to drive a train.

And on May 28, his dream is coming true.

Tyler is the 3,000th Make-A-Wish recipient in Eastern North Carolina.

Make-a-Wish volunteers Kelly Barber and Michele Woodard orchestrated his wish reveal this past

week. His parents, Justin and Jordan Mendygral, and his 8-month-old brother Grayson will accompany him on an overnight train ride to Orlando, Fla. The family will then experience the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Tyler's favorite movie series, before taking an overnight train ride back home.

Tyler will celebrate his seventh birthday while on his Wish trip. The family will return on May 30.

On the return ride, from Cary to Raleigh, Tyler will be the conductor of the trip.

"He keeps asking if it is time to go yet," Mendygral said.

Tyler is keeping track of the days on his Christmas advent calendar.

Ms. Woodard handed Tyler a conductor's hat and train whistle at his reveal party in Herman Park.

"Remember how we talked about going on an Amtrak to Florida?" his dad asked him. "It's happening, buddy."

Tyler's face lit up as it slowly dawned on him that his wish was coming true.

Goldsboro Kiwanis Club members started the train in the park on Saturday to kick Tyler's "Big Train Adventure" off to an early start.

Tyler's family and friends boarded the train as it began puffing around the loop.

Harlon Neal has been helping with the Kiwanis train in Herman Park for 20 years.

As Tyler boarded the train, Neal told him it would take him anywhere in the world he wanted to go.

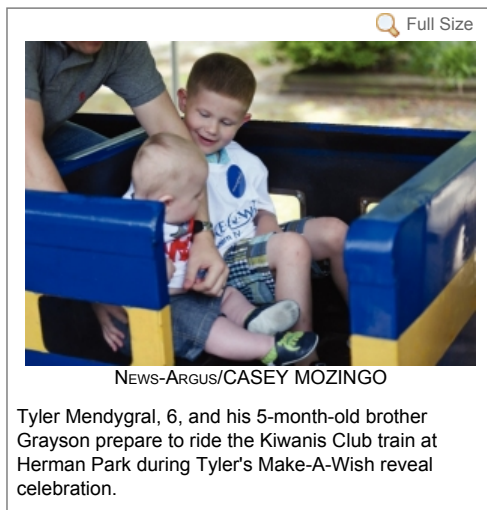
"Florida!" Tyler said.

After his ride to "Florida" in the Kiwanis train, Tyler got the honor of blowing the train whistle.

Mrs. Mendygral said it was hard to keep the secret from Tyler. She and her husband knew about a month before Saturday's reveal.

The Mendygrals submitted the Make-A-Wish application while Tyler was at Duke Hospital receiving treatment.

Last year, Tyler kept getting nauseous at school. Months later, he woke up screaming about a pain in his head.



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Tyler Mendygral, 6, and his 5-month-old brother Grayson prepare to ride the Kiwanis Club train at Herman Park during Tyler's Make-A-Wish reveal celebration.

His mother took him to Wayne Memorial Hospital, where a CT scan showed a mass beneath Tyler's skull.

He was airlifted to Duke Hospital and diagnosed with cancer.

The surgery left him unable to walk and talk.

The family often took trips out of the hospital to take train rides.

"He has loved trains ever since he was born," she said.

Now, the family is in a holding pattern, waiting to see if the four cycles of chemotherapy worked.

Tyler finished chemo in November and underwent radiation.

His dad says that he is technically cancer-free, but they are now waiting out the five-year cycle to see if it comes back.

Tyler still goes to have regular MRIs, hearing tests and endocrinologist appointments.

But for right now, Tyler is only excited about one appointment.

His date with the train.

Barber and Woodard presented Tyler with a train cake.

"Smell the cake, Tyler, does it smell good?" his dad asked, as he gently shoved Tyler's face into the vanilla icing.

Tyler laughed as he licked the frosting from his face.

It is the train part of his trip that he says he is most excited about.

"The driving the train and riding," he said.

Mrs. Mendygral is excited for the whole experience.

"This is his dream, and it came true," she said.

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