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A Thousand Dreams have come true

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Ashlyne Rosalin, 13, of Wailuku poses for a portrait as an angel at Red Door Portrait

A teenage girl's fulfilled wishes on Sunday marked dream 1,000 in the 16-year history of A Keiki's Dream.

Ashlyne Rosalin, 13, of Wailuku, was treated to a limousine ride, lunch at her favorite restaurant, a hair- and-makeup session and a photo shoot, all part of a program designed to make dreams come true for children in crisis.

"I haven't seen her so happy in months," said Ashlyne's mom, Carolyn Rosalin.

The teenager's father, Jerry Rosalin, smiled proudly as he watched his daughter become the center of attention for the day.

"I'm really happy for her," he said.

Ashlyne, an 8th-grader at Maui Waena Intermediate School, had been living a normal life until March when she discovered she had swollen feet. Her mother said Ashlyne initially felt no pain, but when the swelling wouldn't go down, they decided to see a doctor.

Physicians immediately found abnormalities in medical tests and diagnosed Ashlyne with kidney failure.

With no significant improvement after six months of drug therapy, Ashlyne was recommended for a kidney transplant. Carolyn Rosalin said she's hoping she'll make an appropriate match and donate one of her own kidneys to her daughter very shortly.

In the meantime, the Rosalins try to live a normal life along with Ashlyne's younger siblings, Brandee, 12, and Christian, 8. Because of her condition, Ashlyne has not been able to enjoy activities such as going to the beach or shopping at the mall.

She tires easily, and so a shopping spree from A Keiki's Dream has had to be done in short spurts.

"It's hard. You just got to take it one day a time," Carolyn Rosalin said.

Sunday's dream day started with a ride in a limousine from her home in Wailuku to Ashlyne's favorite restaurant, Genki Sushi. She then was whisked to The Salon Executives to get her hair and makeup done. The photo shoot at Red Door Portrait Studio in the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center rounded out the day.

Dream 1,000 happens to involve a child in a medical crisis, but A Keiki's Dream, modeled after national wish granting organizations, has expanded the qualification to receive a dream beyond a medical crisis.

A Keiki's Dream accepts referrals for children who are facing a crisis of any nature - abuse, neglect, homelessness, catastrophic medical problem, major loss, psychological concerns and others.

Only professionals working with children can refer children to the program.

Ashlyne's dream was sponsored by the Maui Thing and its owner, Saedene Ota. Other major contributors were Janine La Fleche of Wailea Limousine, Jo Ann Kojenlang of Red Door Portrait Studio and Iris Kimura-Carpio of The Salon Executives.

Darby Gill, the founder and director of A Keiki's Dream, said he'd love to see his program fulfill dreams for children around the state, but keep the nonprofit based on Maui.

"The reality is kids are always in crisis," Gill said.

Normally, A Keiki's Dream averages between 80 and 100 dreams per year. Another dream expected to be fulfilled by the end of this month will actually mark the 100th for December and 1,001st for A Keiki's Dream's entire operation.

Gill said A Keiki's Dream's goal is always to be child-centered and directed. Ashlyne's wishes mirror many past recipients who simply want to have a special day to themselves, often eating a favorite meal and doing something they normally wouldn't do.

"Our message is life sometimes sucks but good things can and should happen," Gill said. "We want to tell them they're worthy to have their dreams come true."